



Brisbane CBD Bicycle User Group

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**Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group**

**CBD BUG**

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The Right Honourable Adrian Schrinner  
Lord Mayor of Brisbane  
GPO Box 2287  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Via email to: [lord.mayor@brisbane.qld.gov.au](mailto:lord.mayor@brisbane.qld.gov.au)

Dear Lord Mayor

I write on behalf of Brisbane CBD BUG members to request improvements to BCC's management of temporary footpath closures, particularly the longer term closures typically sought by builders and property developers in the CBD and surrounding suburbs.

The issues created by these footpath closures for people cycling, walking, scootering etc around the CBD were raised in the CBD BUG's submission on the City Centre Interim Action Plan. However, the depth of feeling about this issue is such that members wanted this issue taken up with you directly.

The perception of our members is that BCC seemingly allows builders and property developers to close long sections of CBD footpaths entirely for their convenience and profit - while footpath users are simply fobbed off with signage that can be summed up in terms of "go another way".

**The first area of concern is the fees charged by Council for footpath closures.** The current fees of \$150 for a footpath closure application plus \$22/m<sup>2</sup> per month permit fee that enables an applicant to erect a hoarding and gantry on a City Centre footpath appear to be only nominal charges. Your advice is sought on: 1) whether the application fee reflects BCC's actual processing costs, and 2) if the permit fee is truly reflective of the commercial value of this limited space and the loss of amenity experienced by the community.

**A second concern is the nature of the closure of footpath allowed by Council in the Brisbane City Centre.** These closures seriously impede active travel movements and make the CBD less attractive for people to visit, while principally serving the narrow commercial interests of builders and property developers.

The extra street crossings required of footpath users (a proportion of which occur mid-block) delays active travel users and we question why they are so readily inconvenienced. We can only speculate about the additional burden footpath closures must place on people with more limited mobility such as the disabled and the elderly.

We propose two alternatives to simply allowing the complete closing of footpaths. Both would be less of an imposition on the community and have been used previously in Brisbane.

1. Pedestrian gantries. These were formerly used widely to keep footpaths open and limit the extent of temporary disruptions to the safe passage of pedestrians, but of late seem to not be as commonly installed. The gradients of the ramps generally installed for footpath users as part of these installations would need to take account of people of all abilities.

2. The provision for footpath users of a bypass via closure of the nearest road lane in front of the construction site using concrete or water-filled traffic barriers with temporary kerb ramps also installed. We have seen these bypasses applied in other Australian capital cities and locally (by Urban Utilities).

**The lengthy duration of Brisbane City Centre footpath closures is another area of concern.** While larger developments may require longer closures, we note the City of Melbourne generally only issues footpath closure permits for a maximum period of three months, with proponents then required to re-apply. We see this permit time limit as a highly desirable approach as it places emphasis on applicants to minimise the duration of their requested footpath closure, while also obligating Council to regularly review the situation.

The duration of these closures routinely stretches over many months with multiple footpath closures also occurring in the same vicinity and without obvious coordination by BCC to take account of impacts on footpath users. This leads to footpath users being required to cross backwards and forwards repeatedly when travelling along a street.

**The lack of public notification of footpath closures is a fourth area requiring improvement** - as people visiting the Brisbane CBD currently have no way of knowing from one day to the next about the availability of footpaths and the impacts on their travel from the footpath activity permits granted. To address this situation prior notifications of footpath closures should be posted at the site before closures occur. This would enable footpath users to adjust their journey accordingly, instead of encountering these trip obstacles without warning and then having to a backtrack, cross the road mid-block or make some other forced manoeuvre to cope with suddenly not being able to use a footpath.

BCC should also provide a map on their website showing the locations of footpath closures, with notes detailing their commencement and end dates and indicating the nature of the closure/permit (e.g., "full closure", "gantry installed", "on-road pedestrian by-pass installed"). This would allow people to plan their travel and would be especially useful for people with restricted mobility. The additional administrative costs of this information service should be borne by the permit holders and reflected in the fees for footpath closure application and permits.

We look forward to your response on these concerns.

Yours sincerely



Paul French  
Co-convenor  
Brisbane CBD BUG  
6 June 2021

Cc: Bicycle Queensland  
Space4Cycling Brisbane  
Queensland Walks  
Inclusion Moves  
Cr Jared Cassidy - Leader of the Opposition  
Cr Jonathan Sri - The Gabba Ward  
Cr Nicole Johnston - Tennyson Ward