

Queensland Police Central District Bike Squad

The Central District Bike Squad is currently the only full time Police bicycle squad in Queensland. The squad has been in operation for over ten years and expanded in 2007 to consist of eleven push bike riders and four trail bike riders.

The areas patrolled by the squad include the City CBD, Fortitude Valley, Milton, Paddington, Spring Hill, Kelvin Grove, Herston, New Farm and more.

There are many advantages of having Police utilising bicycles as transport which include:

- a fast, covert response to incidents difficult for vehicles to access (parks, bikeways, one way streets – especially in the CBD!)
- Can easily negotiate traffic in peak hour (often arriving at jobs before Police in vehicles)
- Makes Police more approachable to the public
- Good for fitness and morale of officers in the squad

To become a bike squad member, an officer must have some general duties experience and then applies for a vacancy when one exists. If successful, they then complete the Bicycle Patrol Course which consists of:

- Theory component (legislation pertaining to bicycles, fitness, nutrition)
- On - road component (including stairs, gutters, bunny hops etc)
- Off-road component (usually at Mt Coot-tha mountain biking trails)

Each officer is then issued with their own bicycle, which is a mountain bike fitted with hybrid-style tyres.

The main focus for the bike squad in 2007 was Operation ‘Echo Shine’ (sexual assaults on bikeways in north Brisbane). During this time, an average of 30 to 50 km was covered per shift on bike tracks and parks around Downey Park, Ashgrove, Kedron Brook and The Gap.

The bike squad attends every protest, march and parade that occurs in the district and provide a ‘rolling barricade’ providing road closures and traffic control. The squad also assists with traffic management during every match held at Suncorp Stadium.

The squad also provides operational support to general duties crews in the district and attend any jobs occurring near to their location. Currently, areas such as the Goodwill Bridge and the Bicentennial Bikeway are being targeted to educate both cyclists and pedestrians about their obligations and responsibilities when using these paths.

A particularly topical focus is insufficient lighting displayed on bicycles in the shorter winter weather.

A common complaint received by the bike squad from members of the public is the dangerous speeds travelled by cyclists on bikeways. Unfortunately, current legislation does not allow Police to take any action other than verbal cautioning of speeding cyclists, as most bicycles are sold without reliable speedometers.