

CBD BUG MEDIA RELEASE

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Cyclists protest against bikeway and footpath closures endangering lives

Brisbane cyclists will stage a protest ride on Friday 9 May 2008 from 4.30 pm along Bowen Bridge Road in front of the Royal Brisbane Hospital at Herston, to highlight the dangers to cyclists from the closures of bikeways and footpaths on Brisbane's north side.

The protest has been prompted by the latest footpath closure to hit cyclists. Cyclist frustration boiled over when access from the north side, already severely restricted by construction of the North South Bypass Tunnel, was all but cut off when Northern Busway construction commenced. Both projects are not due to be completed until late 2009.

Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle Users' Group (CBD BUG) spokesperson Paul French said that "cyclists had no option other than to take to the streets to underscore the failures by both the State Government and Brisbane City Council to provide safe alternative routes for cyclists while major infrastructure projects are constructed".

"For many cyclists, the dangers of sharing roads with high-volume high-speed traffic are just too great. Cyclists need and deserve appropriate bikeway and footpath access. The disregard for cyclist safety suggests that to project managers cyclists are invisible - the same problem that cyclists have with many motorists. We draw no comfort from the latest footpath closure in front of the Royal Brisbane Hospital meaning that if a cyclist is hit by a vehicle it is only a short distance to an emergency department" he stated.

He went on to say that "the closures are forcing many cycle commuters to go back to using their cars or on to already over-crowded public transport. With Brisbane's current traffic congestion and overstretched public transport you would expect an approach of trying to encourage cycling. Instead, we're seeing the opposite of the many public statements from our politicians of their intent to foster cycling.

Mr French called on the Premier and Lord Mayor to make sure their respective bureaucracies worked together so cyclists are not simply driven off by the current range of large scale transport projects, and for them to cooperatively build a world class cycle commuter network for Brisbane.

Mr French also said that every cyclist means one less car on the road and next month's state budget would be a prime opportunity for the Queensland Government to make a real commitment to alleviating Brisbane's gridlock by putting serious money into cycling infrastructure.

Ends.

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