

2010 Brisbane CBD BUG Co-convenor's Report

Overall, 2010 was another good year for cyclists in Brisbane and the CBD BUG continued to be a leading force for the cycling revolution that is changing and improving this city.

Before the waters arrived uninvited probably the biggest event for Brisbane cyclists during 2010 was the 31 October launch of BCC Citycycle scheme. The scheme still has its detractors but its growing level of usage is proof of its success. The scheme is also delivering side-benefits for all cyclists by simply having more cyclists on the road and the additional signage the BCC has installed in the CBD to remind motorists to share the road with cyclists.

Major new cycling infrastructure completed during 2010 included the bikeways on the duplicated Leo Hielscher (Gateway) Bridge and new Ted Smout Bridge to Redcliffe, plus Stage 2 of the Bicentennial Bikeway upgrade.

On the broader policy front a number of positive outcomes were also achieved during 2010. Via a new section of the Queensland Development Code the Queensland Government delivered on its *Cleaner Greener Buildings* 2009 election policy through introducing a mandatory requirement for end of trip facilities (including racks, lockers and showers) in all new major developments around key activity centres and all new commercial buildings greater than 2,000 square metres,

In March 2010 Brisbane was for the first time included in the annual Super Tuesday cyclist count. The data arising from this process will be an important tool for planning processes and will underpin the already available anecdotal evidence indicating cycling's growth in Brisbane. To the credit of the Brisbane City Council a decision banning cycling in King George Square was quickly reversed in October after the error was realised. CBD BUG members also engaged in a vigorous debate regarding Australia's mandatory helmet laws.

The meetings between CBD BUG "executives" and the BCC's Active Transport Unit continued on their regular two-monthly basis, enabling the CBD BUG to obtain information that would not be available via formal channels. The relationship between the CBD BUG and the ATU continues as strong as it was at the beginning of the year. The CBD BUG was also well represented at the workshop convened by the ATU to commence its major review of the Brisbane Bikeway Plan.

Another milestone for the CBD BUG was becoming only the second organisation (after the Cape York Land Council) to be granted an exemption from Right to Information (RTI) fees. This exemption has now been used to gain access to documents relating to the application to the BCC for a long term closer of the Stanley Street footpath for the construction of the Queensland Children's Hospital.

Important cycling infrastructure improvements that will commence during 2011 are the next stages of the Bicentennial Bikeway upgrade and the upgrade of the South East Bikeway that will more directly connect Brisbane's CBD to Eight Mile Plains. All will be important steps in enabling more people to cycle and reduce Brisbane over-dependence on cars for personal transport.

Cycling's rapid growth in Brisbane is being reflected in the CBD BUG's membership increasing to over 500, while we now have more than 1,000 Twitter followers. This growth will only persist during in 2010 as more people realise cycling is much easier than

they think, cycling conditions improve, and somewhat regrettably, and as the anecdotal evidence already suggests due to dramatic increases in public transport fares.

As a strategic intent over the last 12 months the CBD BUG focused on raising its profile via the media and achieved a considerably level of success in this direction via distributing media releases and responding quickly and positively to approaches from journalists.

While the general outlook for cycling is positive, not every issue went the way cyclists wanted during 2010. One of the more disappointing outcomes for cyclists was the Queensland Government's out of hand dismissal of the call to introduce a new road rule requiring motorists to ensure they allow one metre of space when they are overtaking cyclists. The numerous cyclist-hostile provisions in the current road rules continue to be a major barrier to cycling's growth and the national review of road rules announced towards the end of 2010 will be an opportunity the CBD BUG will use to address this policy anachronism.

Other areas still requiring overhaul are the massive imbalance in the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council transport budgets towards car-based transport, while we continue to be patient in waiting for a State Government announcement of the long overdue northern suburbs bikeway.

In the wake of the 2011 flood we now look forward to the reinstatement of all the damaged bikeways, particularly the Riverwalk between the CBD and New Farm that the Lord Mayor has stated may cost more than \$40 million. CBD BUG members may see delays and/or postponements of previously planned projects, but we are glad to be advised that the next stage of the Bicentennial Bikeway upgrade will now go ahead after only being delayed by two weeks

Our convenors have continued as engines of the CBD BUG. Ian Lister has again worked tirelessly in maintaining and improving the CBD BUG's website and Twitter account – this last approach being invaluable in communicating with members and other interested cyclists, marked by achieving our 1,000th Twitter follower. Aaron Wray has also served us well in recording the meeting minutes – a mundane but highly valuable function. Other significant contributions continued to be made by long standing members John Lister and Donald Campbell, while some new and active talent emerged in the form of Helen Sutherland, Alex Gagel and Paul Martin – all very welcome as additional shoulders for the wheel. Finally, our Memberships Officer, Paul Murdoch, has ensured that enquiries from potential new members were always responded to promptly, vitally important for the purposes of boosting our voice with key decision makers due to our growing membership base.

In closing I would like all CBD BUG members to be aware of the following points for use in day to day discussions with non-cyclists.

- Cyclists don't hold up the traffic, traffic congestion is created by motorists
- Motorists do not pay for Brisbane's 6,300km streets and roads, as only 300km of these are maintained by the Queensland Government. In fact it is Brisbane rate payers who carry the major financial burden of maintain this city's road network

Paul French
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Brisbane CBD BUG
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