



MEDIA RELEASE

Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group CBD BUG

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Double whammy cuts off New Farm from city

Residents of New Farm and other inner northern suburbs were dealt another blow this week following the sudden and indefinite closure of their remaining off-road pedestrian and cyclist route to the city.

Since Riverwalk was washed away earlier this year the alternative pedestrian and cyclist route to the city included a pathway between the Story Bridge and Ivory Lane, behind the Medina apartment building. However, this route was far from ideal. It was too narrow for the number of people using it and Ivory Lane is so steep it is difficult to walk let alone cycle up. But it was the only real option for the several thousand people that previously used Riverwalk each day. This made it a critical off-road route not just for residents of the immediately adjacent suburbs of New Farm, Fortitude Valley and Teneriffe but also people from nearby northern suburbs such as Ascot and Hamilton. It allowed them to ride to the city in relative safety compared to using busy roads such as Ann Street.

However, Council's indefinite closure of the laneway on Tuesday this week due to "land slippage and retaining wall collapse" has demonstrated the vulnerable nature of Brisbane's still largely undeveloped cycle and pedestrian path network. This is a major deterrent to people cycling or walking to the city from the northern suburbs. The only available detour requires people to go all the way to the top of Ivory Lane, and then down two flights of stairs. This will put off all but the most determined.

Brisbane CBD Bicycle User Group spokesman Paul French said this isn't just an issue affecting pedestrians and cyclists, but everybody who travels to the city from those areas. The lack of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle paths means people are likely to switch back to cars and public transport, causing more traffic congestion and further straining peak bus and train services.

The path's closure is also another major blow for Council's *CityCycle* public bike hire scheme, as New Farm was a key area for the scheme. Now the suburb has all but been cut off from the city, usage will drop significantly. Previous experience has shown that when cycleways are closed many people stop cycling. With no timeframe for the re-opening of the just-closed temporary route the scheme's viability is under threat.

"The Brisbane City Council is currently saying they won't start rebuilding Riverwalk until 2013, and it won't be open until more than a year after that. This closure highlights the need for the re-instatement of the Riverwalk to be accelerated to re-establish a safe and reliable off-road link between the inner north-eastern suburbs and the CBD". "Before the destruction of the floating walkway the residents of these inner suburbs had started embracing walking and cycling as a healthy and convenient alternative to clogging the roads with cars".

The CBD BUG wrote to the Lord Mayor to indicate its four essential design elements for the new Riverwalk: segregating cyclists and pedestrians (safety factor); design for commuter cyclists (safety factor); ensuring clear sight lines (safety factor); and enabling it for use during king tides (reliability).

"While the vital work of correctly designing the replacement structure to re-establish the link between the inner northern suburbs and the CBD continues, it is key for the Ivory Lane path to be reopened as soon as possible to keep alive important options for people to travel to the city from New Farm and surrounding suburbs" Mr French stated.

Ends (2 x photos follow of the stairwell to now be shared by pedestrians and cyclists)

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