



# Airport BUG

*Brisbane Airport Bicycle User Group*  
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Aviation White Paper Branch  
Domestic Aviation & Reform Division  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.  
Via email to: [aviationwhitepaper@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:aviationwhitepaper@infrastructure.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Aviation White paper terms of reference.

We ask that the scope and themes for the white paper to include landside transport, particularly active transport, in airport development planning processes. We ask that the white paper consider mechanisms that ensure provision for active transport in airport developments which is best practice and at a minimum, aligned with that required by the state and local governments in which airports operate.

## **Rationale**

Brisbane Airport is home to 425 businesses and 24,000 workers, making it one of Brisbane's largest employment attractor after the CBD and the University of Queensland. The airport's transport environment is characterised by high speed, multi-lanes roads which are hostile for active transport users. Many of the roads at Brisbane Airport do not have footpaths. Pedestrians and cyclists are banned from using some of these roads. There is no footpath connections to many airport workplaces, including the terminals. People must walk on the road to access the terminals. Pedestrian access to the general aviation terminal was recently banned by the airport corporation as they neglected to include pedestrian facilities in the new underpass.

## **Local and State planning laws do not apply at the airport**

Whilst Brisbane local government and Queensland state government planning regulations mandate provision of footpaths and bicycle infrastructure in new developments, the airport, being on federal government land, is exempt from these regulations.

Since privatisation, airports have had a free hand to do as they like. The lack of regulations around airport development and planning processes at leased federal airports are causing negative outcomes for the community Queenslanders who work at Brisbane Airport are impacted by lack the of active transport infrastructure. Many workers at Brisbane Airport are not involved in aviation. Brisbane Airport has a large shopping centres, several office blocks, three hotels, numerous industrial warehouses and other non-aeronautical developments which have been approved with no determining input by local decision-makers.

Brisbane Airport has fallen behind the surrounding local government area in regard to provision for active transport. Although the Brisbane Airport Corporation argues they provide for active transport users in airport developments, the examples outlined below refute this argument.

### Example 1. Dryandra Rd underpass bans pedestrians.

In early 2017 the Brisbane Airport Corporation released artist's impressions of a taxiway underpass planned for Dryandra Rd, which is the only access to the General Aviation Terminal and businesses at Airport North. The taxiway underpass plan had no provision for cyclists or pedestrians. BAC confirmed pedestrians would be banned in the underpass. Airport BUG raised a petition to the Federal Government and provided BAC with evidence and data from the Strava cycling app that people regularly walk and cycle along Dryandra Rd. Airport BUG also provided BAC images of a similar taxiway underpass at Schiphol Airport, Brisbane Airport's parent airport in the Netherlands, which had provision for cyclists and pedestrians. Airport BUG also provided BAC with examples of taxiway underpasses with pedestrian facilities at Manchester Airport, Guangzhou Airport, Frankfurt Airport and Calgary International Airport.



Brisbane City Council, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, The Australian Heart Foundation and many airport workers and citizens wrote to BAC asking that the Dryandra Rd underpass include facilities for active transport users. The [local newspaper](#) also raised the issue. Sadly BAC ignored these requests and constructed the underpass with no facilities for pedestrians or cyclists. When the underpass was completed BAC had to erect numerous signs at the terminal and along the Dryandra Rd to stop pedestrians walking through the underpass as there is no other access to the Airport North Precinct.



*Schiphol Airport taxiway underpass with bike path*

### **Example 2. DFO End of Trip facilities closed**

The original DFO facility at Brisbane Airport was built without end of trip facilities. If the DFO had been built in the Brisbane City Council jurisdiction it would have had to have end of trip facilities for workers who cycle, walk and jog to work. However in 2014 the DFO expanded and end of trip facilities were included, however these end of trip facilities have not been available to DFO staff for some years as BAC have closed off access to all but their own staff. Airport BUG has been lobbying for over 6 months to have the end of trip facility opened to DFO staff again.

### **Example 3. Poor facilities for active transport users at the Brisbane Airport terminals.**

There are no footpaths to the terminals. Bicycle access to the terminals is informal on roads with no cycle facilities, some of these roads are hostile to cyclists and pedestrians due to traffic speeds and volumes. The bicycle parking for staff and visitors at the Domestic Terminal is poor, with no security and little shelter from the weather. By comparison Sydney Airport and Brisbane's parent airport, [Schiphol Airport](#) has good bike parking.



*Poor security and substandard racks for staff bike parking at Brisbane Airport*



*Good security and high standard facilities for staff bike parking at Sydney Intl Airport*



#### 4. No pedestrian connection to the Airport West precinct

Brisbane Airport Corporation developed Airport West Estate where the hire car companies and staff car parking is located. BAC have not connected active transport infrastructure to the precinct. Walking and cycling to and from Airport West is extremely difficult due to the lack of any paths and the construction of a large, two lane, roundabout and freeway ramps at the entrance to Airport West. Never the less, staff still walk the short distance to the international terminal and the BNE Service Centre likely because the staff bus has a long turnaround time.



## 5. Major Development Plan ignored public consultation.

The Major Development Plan for Airport Industrial Estate Stage 2 identified that construction vehicles for the project would use Lomandra Drive. Lomandra Drive is a route used by cyclists commuting to and from the airport from the Gateway Bridge. The pathway beside Lomandra Drive has not been completed and Lomandra Drive does not have a safe shoulder for cycling or walking.

Airport BUG made a submission to the draft Airport Industrial Park Stage 2 MDP stating: “The MDP plans for 16 earth moving vehicles per hour, that is one every 4 minutes. Anyone cycling or walking will have regular interactions with these vehicles. Considering the heightened risks heavy vehicles pose to cyclists, borne out by the tragic deaths of Brisbane cyclists in recent years, the plan has obviously not considered the safety of active transport users”. Airport BUG suggested the Lomandra Drive shared path could be completed through to Sugarmill Rd giving cyclists a safe route on Lomandra Drive.

Airport BUG was disappointed to see the final MDP was unchanged in this respect. The MDP is supposed to take account of public submissions, however the final MDP did not address Airport BUG’s concerns regarding cyclist safety. The Airport Industrial Estate Stage 2 project team did not respond to subsequent queries from Airport BUG and has ignored our all correspondence to date. The MDP process has failed to protect the public as intended as no measures have been taken to keep cyclists safe from the increased heavy vehicle traffic on Lomandra Drive generated by the Airport Industrial Estate Stage 2 development.



*Narrow lanes and lack of shoulders on Lomandra Dr can bring cyclists and vehicles into conflict.*



## 7. Airport Masterplans

Airport Masterplans are supposed to guide airport developments, and the airport masterplans do espouse support for active transport. The 2014 Brisbane Airport Masterplan committed the Brisbane Airport Corporation to: “maximise connectivity and accessibility” (Ch 12 p.215). Active transport initiatives in the Airport Masterplan include: “Expand the active transport network across the airport”. and “Improve footpaths, aiming to improve pedestrian connectivity between key precincts” (Ch 12. pages 262 and 269). Initiatives for active transport in the Brisbane Airport Ground Transport Plan 2012 included: “encourage employees to use alternative modes” and “enable a mode shift to public transport, walking or cycling”.

Sadly, at the end of the 2014 masterplan period, many of the neighbourhoods of Brisbane Airport still remain inaccessible to people using active transport, including Airport North where pedestrian access was banned despite the masterplan’s promise to improve pedestrian connectivity between precincts.

The following Airport neighbourhoods have no footpath connections to the rest of the airport:



Terminals #1, Airport West # 4, Airport North # 5, Airport Industrial Park # 8 and Airport East # 9. (There is a footpath connection from the public transport stops at the International Terminal to the BNE Service Centre which was installed following a year long letter writing campaign by airport workers lead by Airport BUG).

### THE NINE NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE

- 1 Terminals
- 2 Skygate
- 3 Airport Central
- 6 Export Park
- 7 Da Vinci
- 8 Airport Industrial Park
- 4 Airport West
- 9 Airport East
- 5 Airport North

People riding bicycles can legally access these airport neighbourhoods if they are prepared to ride on high-speed roads and two lane roundabouts. The lack of bicycle parking or end of trip facilities at many airport workplaces are also a barrier to active transport use.



Left – a bicycle locked to tree in garden at Airport Freight Depot. Many Brisbane Airport workplaces do not have formal bicycle parking.

The 2020 Masterplan promises less than its predecessor for active transport, maintaining that: “Brisbane Airport will continue to stay abreast of best practice in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure design” and “Brisbane Airport Corporation aspires to have a combined on and off-road cycling network, with high quality and accessible end of trip facilities and well connected pedestrian infrastructure”. These are aspirational policy statements, not a plan with goals and a timeline. It is evident that Airport Masterplans have been ineffective in obtaining good outcomes for the community in regard to active transport. There are no audits of masterplans at the end of the 5 year period and no consequences for airports who do not abide by their masterplans.

#### **There is no incentive for airports to provide for active transport.**

The Brisbane Airport makes over a million dollars a year from car parking. Both airport staff and passengers pay the airport corporation to park. In 2018- 2019 Brisbane Airport earned \$107 million from car parking, of which \$72 million was profit. Sydney and Melbourne had car-parking operating profit of \$91 million and \$77 million respectively.

<https://inql.com.au/business/2020/02/24/brisbane-airport-among-top-money-spinners/> The airport has no incentive to provide active transport options because any person riding a bicycle, scooter or walking to the airport is one less car parking fee collected by the airport corporation.

#### **Conclusion**

The above examples illustrate Brisbane Airport’s failure to provide for active transport users. People who want to live healthy and sustainable lifestyles, to save money by not owning a car or are too young to drive, should be able to choose active and sustainable transport to travel to work. Brisbane Airport has been failing active transport users for many years, and has even reduced the amenity for active transport users at some airport workplaces. To address this issue and to reverse the decline, airports must be required to abide by local planning regulations in respect to active transport with significant penalties for non-compliance. This would ensure airports do not become active transport black holes in otherwise vibrant, active transport friendly cities.

We ask that the scope and themes for the white paper include landside transport, particularly active transport, in airport development planning processes. We ask that the white paper consider mechanisms that ensure provision for active transport in airport developments which is best practice and at a minimum, aligned with provision required by the state and local governments in which the airports operate.

Yours sincerely

Mitchell Bright  
Airport BUG Inc.