



5 March 2021

Cr Ryan Murphy
Chair, Public and Active Transport committee
Brisbane City Council
GPO Box 1434
Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Cr Murphy

**RE: Submission to Brisbane City Council:
Response to Draft Brisbane's e- mobility strategy**

Queensland Walks welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to Brisbane City Council's draft e-mobility strategy. Queensland Walks has a keen interest in ensuring the planning, design and management of the city's transport infrastructure and public spaces will support and encourage walking in the short term, and particularly in the likelihood of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2032.

The e-mobility strategy

Queensland Walks welcomes the initiative shown by the Brisbane City Council in seeking to prepare an e-mobility strategy in recognition of the significant growth in the use of e-mobility devices. **Queensland Walks is concerned, however, that without a comprehensive walking strategy in place, the e-mobility strategy fails to acknowledge or address the issues in pedestrian safety and the repeated concerns by vulnerable walkers, and has the potential to discourage people from walking.**

Brisbane City Council needs to ensure that the introduction of this strategy does not increase the risk of harm to people who walk in our city and in our suburbs. We encourage Brisbane City Council to review crash data, and conduct reviews of hospitalisation and injury data, and include this detail in the strategy and reporting to enable appropriate review of pedestrian safety.

Queensland Walks recently commenced an online community survey on e-mobility and walking. Thus far, **the survey has revealed that 26% of Queensland walkers had either chosen not to walk, or changed their location of their walk due to the risks of e-mobility devices.** When asked specifically, the respondents answered that **23% had changed the location of where they walked and 14% changed the time that they walked.** This indicates that the use of e-mobility devices has impacts on people who walk and strongly suggests that further research of travel modes, safety, comfort and behaviour change is urgently needed.



We would like to highlight the report [Good For Business](#) (2011) conducted by the Heart Foundation and Dr Rodney Tolley, which illustrates the importance of foot traffic to business, which is even more important in attracting people back to businesses in the CBD, a concern we know that the Council is currently addressing.

We also note the comment by the Committee for Brisbane's Advisory Council Member [Harvey Lister](#):

'A study produced by Transport For London showed that...over a month, people who walked to high streets spent 40 per cent more than those who drove. To put it simply, walking means business. The wave of activity in Brisbane over the next five years will create "in-fill" opportunities between the major projects themselves and the new access points for walkers that Cross River Rail, the green bridges and the Metro will bring.'

We call on Council to value the importance of ensuring that everyone who walks feels safe doing so and that their comfort is of importance in our efforts to support a strong local economy. We feel that the Strategy has overlooked the concerns of pedestrians and encourages Brisbane City Council to go back to the drawing board and prioritise and fund a *Walkable Brisbane* strategy.

Walking Strategy

Queensland Walks notes that Brisbane does not yet have a comprehensive Walking Strategy to promote walking. This means that the e- mobility strategy is being drafted without context of the pedestrian network that e-mobility devices currently use and proposes some actions that conflict with measures that support and encourage increased walking. Accordingly, Queensland Walks strongly recommends that Brisbane City Council commits to the funding, consultation and drafting of a Walking Strategy and Action Plans as a priority. We note that much of the current pedestrian network is inadequate for people who walk, and that e-mobility devices puts even more pressure on the network. Our community e-mobility and walking survey has found:

- 52% said footpaths are not connected or continuous
- 49% said footpaths were not wide enough for both walking and e-devices
- 29% said footpaths have cracks and trip hazards which will make the footpath more unsafe
- 38% said footpaths were too narrow.

Prior to the popularity and uptake of e-mobility in Brisbane, the Committee for Brisbane invited guests to a presentation by Dr Catherin Bull (AM FAILA Hon LFAIA AICD), titled **'Walking the talk'**.

One of the primary recommendations for Brisbane was to:

*'Take pedestrian, their experiences and needs not just more seriously **but most seriously** – providing comfort, directness/convenience, shade/shelter, ambience and safety.'*

Queensland Walks would welcome Dr Bull's recommendation of walking in Brisbane to be taken 'most seriously' to be adopted.



Dr Bull further referenced the high value of pedestrians, commencing the presentation with the comment:

'... the pedestrian component of 'active transport' and the fact that by far the most trips are made by foot or similar (13.3m in 2016 vs 2.5m by cycling projecting to 15m and 5m in 2026),' highlighting the number of people who walk in and around the CBD whereby provision and safety measures should be incorporated to make pedestrians feel safe and comfortable.

Accordingly, we encourage Brisbane City Council to:

- Measure pedestrian footpath movements
- Measure pedestrian safety
- Measure pedestrian comfort
- Provide a targeted intervention to support and encourage more people to walk and access public and active transport options.

We acknowledge Council's Move Safe Brisbane report (2018), and more recently the implementation of the Safer Paths for Seniors program. We await information and detail on this program, and look forward to being a stakeholder in the consultation and engagement of the program and subsequent projects. We note that the data from the Move Safe Brisbane report that is still relevant and which will be incredibly useful for the new program, as well as Walkable Brisbane strategy.

Vulnerable members

Queensland Walks notes that there is a significant amount of stress and anxiety among members of the community (such as vision impaired, wheelchair or mobility device users, older people and parents walking with children) about the growing number of e-mobility devices on footpaths (both being ridden and being and stored or parked). In our e-mobility and walking community survey, **38% of our survey respondents said that they had experienced a safety issue, or a conflict with an e-mobility device.** This is a concerning statistic and we would recommend Brisbane consult with vulnerable members' representative organisations prior to the redrafting of any new strategy relating to footpaths. Walking is undertaken by people of all ages and abilities, and we consider it vital that, as a society, we protect our most vulnerable members.

Enforcement

While the strategy broadly outlines the role the various types of e-mobility devices within the 'transport ecosystem', the strategy fails to adequately acknowledge or address the significant issue of interaction of people using e-mobility devices with those who are walking. The draft strategy appears to address this by advocating stronger enforcement by the state government and Queensland police service with regard to safe riding without considering important elements such as infrastructure, separation or segregation of faster moving devices.



The Safe System approach to improving road safety involves a holistic view of the road transport system and the interactions among roads, speeds, vehicles and road users. We believe that the e-mobility strategy does not contain a holistic view of the issues involved, but is limited in its viewpoint. A truly holistic viewpoint would include:

- User behaviour (education campaign)
- Infrastructure (safer or wider footpaths)
- Vehicles (safety standards for all e-devices)
- Speeds (police enforcement).

We believe that Brisbane City Council can take action in the infrastructure and user behaviour areas where there is room for significant improvement.

Road Rules

While Queensland Walks supports the investigation in changing the Queensland Road Rules to allow e-mobility devices to be used in on-road cycle infrastructure, we consider that relying on state government agreement is a significant failing in the Strategy, as it is beyond the control of Brisbane City Council. In this area, we recommend that Brisbane City Council takes on the following options:

- Lower suburban speed limits so it is safer for people walking, cycling or using e-mobility devices
- Reallocate existing road space within the inner city to provide more space for more sustainable forms of transport
- Reallocate City Cycle station sites for designated e-mobility parking and charging bays
- Conduct education programs and training for e-mobility device users
- Review the compensation, liability and insurances framework for all users.

Queensland Walks would encourage the separation of walking and faster moving e-mobility devices, particularly in high pedestrian areas such as the city centre and activity centres. We encourage the combination of rental e-mobility geo-fencing (or equivalent) and appropriate signage banning e-mobility devices for both use and storage. We encourage Council to make it very clear about locations that e-mobility is banned: e.g. in mall areas and footpaths connected to malls, adjacent to Brisbane's famous Brisbane Braille Trail, and reviewing safety for pedestrians in and around locations where people are entering and exiting buses and in places with restricted sight-lines.

Parking

Queensland Walks also considers the statement in the Strategy suggesting capping the supply of e-scooters will '*manage safety and street clutter*' to be lacking. This fails to acknowledge the growth of privately owned devices and the expected continued growth in the number of devices as their use expands from beyond the CBD. It also fails to recognise existing issues on footpath parking. Queensland Walks does not agree with the assertion that capping supply of e-scooters will significantly improve safety for pedestrians and considers the statement highlights concerns over the lack of research and data analysis referenced to support the drafting of the strategy.



Queensland Walks is concerned about the number of dockless e-scooters that are left in unsuitable and sometimes random locations on footpaths and elsewhere in the inner-city. Queensland Walks supports providing designated parking spaces for dockless e-devices (including the future City Cycle e-bikes) but stresses that these should not be provided as a loss to walking space. These should be abundant and visible, and incorporate tactile pavements markers (TGSi) alerting blind or low vision walkers.

Queensland Walks strongly supports initiatives that will incentivise e-mobility users to use these designated parking areas. We would encourage Council to work closely work with hire companies in designing and implementing a fine-based and reward system which will encourage good parking habits, as well as allowing a simple process for reporting e-mobility users for unsafe or inappropriate parking. We would also encourage hire companies to provide appropriate training and regular awareness campaigns.

Consultation

Queensland Walks is disappointed that community organisations were not consulted in the development of this strategy. Queensland Walks is aware of several community organisations that consider that their members have valuable insights into how e-mobility affects their members, especially the more vulnerable members of the community.

Queensland Walks welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the development of a Walking Strategy in concert with the e-mobility strategy to ensure the city's transport network truly provides for equitable and inclusive active and public transport, with walking and pedestrians' safety at the front and centre.

Yours in health and walking,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Campbell".

Anna Campbell
Executive Officer, Queensland Walks

About Queensland Walks

Queensland Walks is a community based organisation which advocates for more walkable places which will mean more Queenslanders walk! Our aim is to improve the conditions and profile of walking in Queensland, support and encourage government, organisations and agencies to improve policy and funding priorities to enhance walking. This submission has been informed by members of Queensland Walks to provide representative perspectives from their particular technical disciplines.

