



# Airport BUG

Brisbane Airport Bicycle User Group  
email: [airportBUG@gmail.com](mailto:airportBUG@gmail.com)

29/11/2023

Director, Aviation White Paper Project Office  
Aviation White Paper  
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts  
[aviationgreenpaper@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:aviationgreenpaper@infrastructure.gov.au).

Dear Sir/Madam

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

We consider there is scope for improved on-airport development through harmonising airport planning with local and state government planning regulations. There is also a need for an audit of airport master planning and major development planning processes and outcomes, as the outcomes are often at odds with what the plan promised. We believe these changes could offer improvements for climate resilience and reduce the impacts of airport developments on the community in which the airport operates.

## **Rationale**

Brisbane Airport is home to 425 businesses and 24,000 workers, making it one of Brisbane's largest employment attractors. 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 has resulted in poor provision for active transport users.

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 the airport refused to include pedestrian facilities in the new underpass.

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, there are many instances where provision for active transport is poor or missing in airport developments.

We have outlined examples where airport developments under the current regulatory regime has resulted in poor outcomes for active transport users:

## 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 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. 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*

### 3. 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.



#### 4. 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.*

## 5. 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:



### 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

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).

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. We ask that the white paper consider requiring airports to abide with local planning regulations, in particular in regard to provision for active transport users. We also request that audits of airport masterplans and major development plans are undertaken against outcomes including 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.