

Good afternoon Lord Mayor and Councillors. Thank you for allowing me to address the chamber.

My name is Mary Doolan and I am a volunteer co-convenor with two cycling advocacy groups – the Brisbane CBD and the Brisbane South Bicycle User Groups. Our main aim is to lobby for improved and safe cycling infrastructure for all types of people riding bikes, and those who would ride bikes if there was more safe infrastructure in place. We do this in an unpaid, purely voluntary capacity whilst often holding down full time jobs or other commitments. We do this because we know that more people riding bikes as a form of transport or recreation has huge economic, environmental, social connectivity, physical and mental health benefits whilst also reducing congestion on our streets.

On 21 May this year, during Volunteer Week, the Lord Mayor made statements about the role of Bicycle User Groups in response to repeated questions raised by Councillor Massey regarding Nudgee Road, and the lack of safe, protected bike lanes on this road, where in 2023 a man was killed while riding his bike to work. In response to these questions about action being taken to address the safety issues on this road, the Lord Mayor made a number of comments that I thought were inappropriate and disparaging towards Bicycle User Groups, namely that our groups were, and I quote : “political activists in support of the Greens”, “Green mouthpieces” and “infiltrated by Green activists”. He said that Bicycle User Groups “will not be happy until there are bike lanes on every single lane across the city”.

However, nothing was said in relation to what Council was doing to address the unsafe conditions on Nudgee Road.

These accusations made against Bicycle User Groups deeply offended me personally. I saw them as baseless and unfair and truly disappointed me and my fellow volunteers. This was not seen by us to be in any way respectful of our roles as people advocating on behalf of the bike riding community to make Brisbane a more accessible and liveable city. Certainly I have never heard these types of comments levelled against bushcare groups, for whom I also volunteer.

The Bicycle User Groups that I am involved with are groups of ordinary members of the Brisbane community. We are not aligned with any political party, and we will happily support any policies and projects that benefit the bike riding community, and which progress cycling as a legal, convenient, and safe form of transport. We have no interest in which party proposes a policy or project, only the content of the policy or the outcome being delivered. On that basis, we have supported and promoted many projects delivered or proposed by the incumbent Council. Where Council has delivered the outcomes that our members seek we have been vocal in our support e.g. the Breakfast Creek green

bridge, the protected bike lanes in the CBD, the Gabba bikeway, the Kangaroo Point Green Bridge, to name just a few.

However, where we see poor decisions, lack of consultation, unsafe or no outcomes being delivered in the cycling space (e.g. Nudgee Road), we will act without fear or favour in calling these out and asking for better outcomes. This will occur no matter who is in government or city hall and is what our members expect from us.

We are very happy to work with Council or Councillors to ensure connected and safe cycling infrastructure is delivered in Brisbane. Prior to this year's council election, we reached out to candidates on all sides of politics. We offered to ride with them through their electorate to point out where safety or connectivity issues existed that we knew prevented many people riding. We also sought out each party's policy in relation to cycling so we could pass this information on to our members.

Bicycle User Groups will continue to offer our assistance and feedback to Council to ensure the best outcome for Brisbane residents. We will, as always, do this in a respectful but robust manner, and would appreciate the same courtesy be returned to us, as volunteers working for and within the Brisbane community.

Thank you again for the opportunity to raise this issue with the Chamber and we happily invite the Lord Mayor, and every Councillor to take the opportunity to ride with us in your ward, or to meet with us at any time to discuss the needs of people who wish to ride their bikes safely in Brisbane.

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