

22 April 2008

Hon Paul Lucas MP
Deputy Premier and Minister for
Infrastructure and Planning
GPO Box 2644
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Minister

Grey and Melbourne Streets Intersection South Bank

You may recall at the recent Business South Bank CEO lunch, you invited the Association to submit its views on the problematic Grey and Melbourne Streets intersection.

Our members responded strongly to the invitation and provided a range of views, including ideas for improving the intersection. Following is a list of comments for your consideration.

It was clear in the responses from members that the Grey and Melbourne Streets intersection is a significant hazard in its current form. Many of our members have witnessed accidents and near-misses at this intersection, the majority involving buses. Our concern is that Melbourne Street is expected to perform the multiple roles of bus freeway, pedestrian artery, CBD vehicle access and a major linkage to the cultural heart of Queensland. Specific issues nominated as generating higher risks to intersection users include:

- Melbourne Street is a double carriageway in one reserve;
- Intersection signal phasing is extremely biased towards bus traffic;
- Many of the comments we received related to bus driver behaviour, in particular driving through red lights and speeding, presumably to meet timetable obligations;
- Pedestrians must wait for long periods of time before they receive a walk signal, thereby making them impatient and prone to crossing the road against the signal.

Long term assessment

- In the long-term, Melbourne Street's continuing role as bus freeway is problematic. Business South Bank asks that a concept similar to the once-proposed Adelaide Street bus bridge and a grade-separated bus station be considered. This would immensely free up the

- We believe the fluid movement of pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and buses will be rectified with the installation of an underground bus station connected to the bus tunnel.
- As it stands now, and as you and I discussed, we have an unsatisfactory situation whereby our capital city's major tourism and cultural precinct is effectively bisected – the cultural centre on one side and QPAC and South Bank parklands on the other, with the Melbourne Street bus interchange as a significant barrier between the two. Removal of the bus interchange would allow the area to become the open air cultural plaza of Queensland.

Short term improvement ideas

Business South Bank proposes the following solutions for the Government's consideration:

- **Traffic signals** be timed to give greater priority to pedestrians, with a sequence of one bus and one car movement per two pedestrian movements.
- It is our view that the **fencing** at the intersection which is aimed at directing pedestrian flow is inadequate. We recommend that additional fencing be erected to improve this movement. Additionally, the current 'pool' fencing is a visual irony at the 'cultural' centre and increases the clutter at the intersection, adding to pedestrian confusion.
- We recommend that additional (visually appealing) **directional signage** be implemented at the intersection and within a 500 metre perimeter around this area. This will help pedestrians to determine in advance their best route.
- The **underpass** between QPAC and the Museum is underused due to its 'hidden' entrance and exit points, and circuitous entry/exits which turn back on themselves. Another disadvantage is its narrowness. The underpass was designed for movement between the two buildings but could perform a critically important role as a convenient, grade-separated crossing 'opening up' both ends of the underpass to pedestrians and natural light. This could be achieved by:
 - i. At the Museum end, reconfiguring the staircase to create two flights at 90° to the direction of the underpass and thus in line with the Melbourne Street footpath;
 - ii. Repeating the pattern at the Performing Arts end. This would necessitate a partial demolition of the fountain and reconfiguration of the grassed forecourt. Such a reconfiguration has the makings of becoming a major 'people' place, replacing the exclusivity of the current arrangements;
 - iii. A third possible initiative is a staircase from the underpass to the central station platform. As well as its access function, this would significantly improve the 'user friendliness' of the underpass with natural light penetration and greater use.
- Improved signage directing people towards the underpass is required.

- Similarly, the **overpass** over Melbourne Street is largely shunned by pedestrians due to its inconvenience. Better accesses reflecting the direction of pedestrian movement could overcome pedestrian reluctance.
- Additionally it is recommended that a mid-block signalised pedestrian crossing be constructed directly across from South Brisbane Train Station and QPAC which will alleviate some of the pedestrian numbers at the Grey & Melbourne Streets intersection.
- Improved traffic signal timing on the city side could greatly assist the traffic flow on the South Bank side.
- We support the initiative to improve the pedestrian crossing onto the Victoria Bridge by narrowing the vehicle carriageway for left turners off the bridge.

Pressure on this intersection is increasing daily and Business South Bank welcomes every opportunity to engage with you or your officers in trying to resolve the problems.

We would appreciate your advice as to how best progress these discussions.

Yours sincerely

Barton Green
Chair