

# **Russell Island Association submission on the SMBI ILTP Discussion Paper Pedestrian and Cycleways**

**Friday, 18 February 2011**

## ***Introduction***

At the end of the section on Walking and cycling in the SMBI ILTP Discussion Paper on page 49, we are given a single question

*Q6.7 What would make the islands more walkable?*

The question should leave out the word “more” because the SMBI, with the exception of the small islands of Karragarra and Lamb, are not really walkable or suitable for anything other than passenger vehicles, trucks and buses.

The exceptions of Karragarra and Lamb where traffic is low and the facilities per head of population are relatively good prove the value of a good cycling and walking infrastructure with households on these islands having less need for vehicles.

## **6.7 Walking and cycling – on-island**

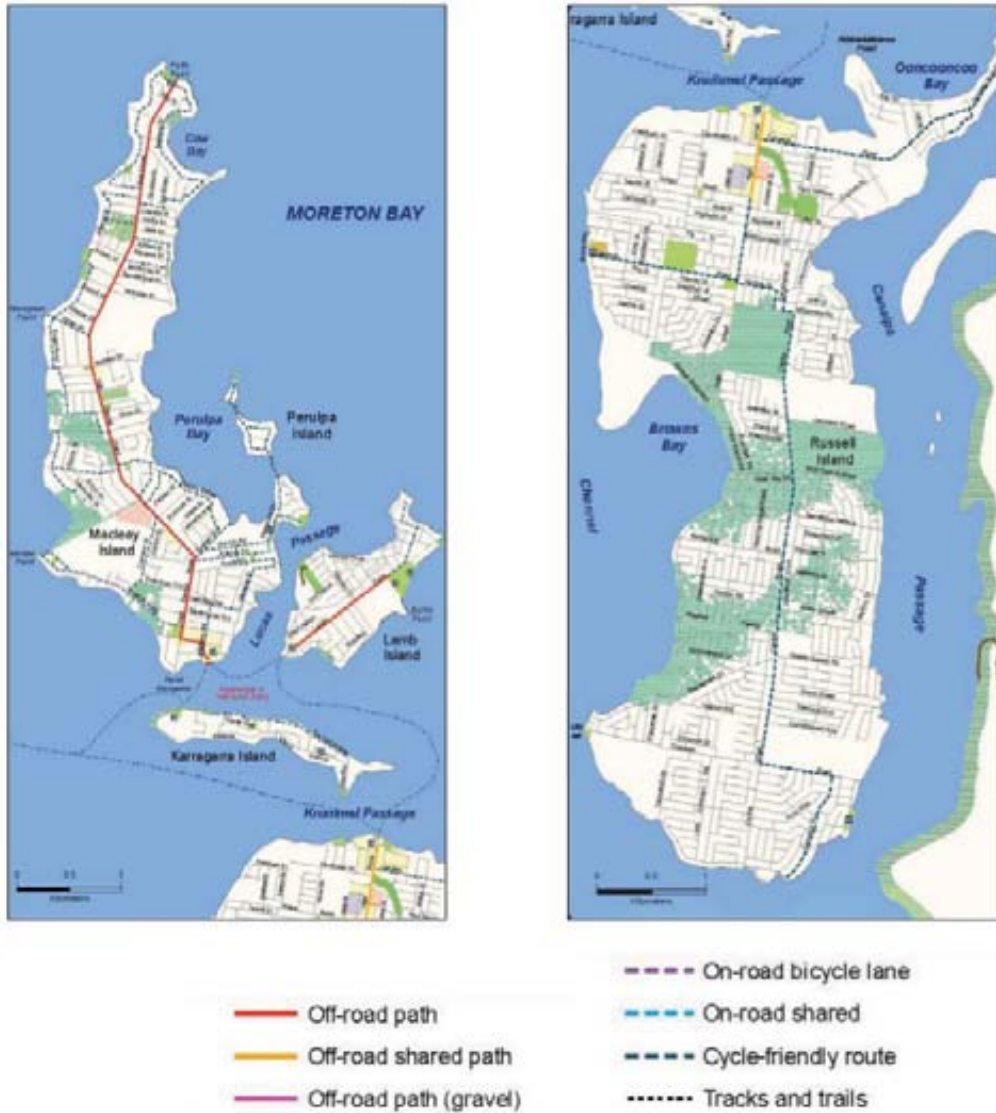
*The Southern Moreton Bay Islands provide an ideal environment for walking and cycling. The pleasant surrounds, easily cyclable/walkable distances and relatively low traffic volumes lend the islands to walking and cycling.*

Anyone with any on the ground experience of the two main islands knows that at the current level of population that describing these routes as being cycle or walking friendly is a cruel fantasy.

1. No cycle or walkways are provided on the islands beyond the main spine. On Russell, the least developed, the cycleway only extends 1.5km.
2. The tarred main roads have broken edges and are too narrow and ill-formed, for either safe walking or for cycling.
3. The volume of traffic is now much higher than when the first ILTP was created. As pointed out in the SocialData mobility study the number of vehicles per household has now close to parity with Redlands and has surpassed Brisbane. In 2001 the census showed that there were far fewer vehicles..
4. Shade is rare and water difficult to get outside of the shopping centres. This is not a country for old people yet most of the population is over 55.
5. Little consideration is given to signage for cyclists or pedestrians. Distances and ease of travel is not given by any available maps.
6. No attempt has been made through road signage to warn other road users of the possible presence of cyclists or walkers. The islands have many blind corners and narrow passes where it is difficult or even impossible for pedestrians to pass without venturing on the road.
7. No points of interest are indicated and no attempt has been made to preserve lookout points which would enable proper viewing of the natural beauty of the islands.
8. The two main islands have many steep gradients with few flat runs as is common on the mainland. It is only two kilometres and four vehicle minutes from the Russell Island Jetty to the Museum. This should be a prime tourist destination and is one of the few places on the islands that has a cycle path all the way. But what we have are no less than three steep hills rising and falling a about 70m. Very few roads on the island follow contours and are rarely cycle friendly.
9. The so-called “off-road” paths do not exist or are unformed and sometimes impassable in all

but drought conditions. For example, the Russell Island cycleway is shown to use Norfolk Street to avoid a dangerous section of Minjerriba Road. This is the only route between the northern and southern parts of the island. Norfolk is currently underwater and impassible for part of its length and the upland section is nothing more than a badly rutted track through grass.

The cycling and pedestrian infrastructure for the islands is shown in Figure 11 on page 43.



**FIGURE 11: PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE**

These maps are badly out of date misleading and the routes indicated of little value to any target group. Children cannot easily ride to school, shoppers find the grades too difficult, and tourists find the roads dangerous, unpleasant and of little interest.

The Norfolk Street example is only one of many issues on Russell:

1. The cycle friendly route at the far south of the island that follows Crescent Road takes the rider or walker into a mangrove wetland. This is better than the last version of the map which showed the cycleway continuing along Centre Road to the bottom of the island but the change is barely an improvement because it is as pointless and impassible. The only worthwhile destination at the southern end is Sandy Beach to the east which has picnic tables, water, a play area, shelters and the only public toilet for eight kilometres.

2. The spur along Oasis drive on Canaipa Point serves no real function. It may have many years ago before the trees grew but there is no view now.
3. One of the prime departure points for cycling and walking is the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron's annex on the end of Canaipa Point. The Squadron has at least a dozen bikes available for visitors to explore the island. On these maps, the annex is not even shown let alone catered for. During a holiday weekend, over 150 yachts will congregate at the club and use the facilities of the annex. The visitors from these boats used to cycle down to the shops and use the restaurants of the island but, with the increase in population and consequent increase in traffic this tradition is slowly dying.
4. Lost opportunities abound. For example the makings of an excellent cycle and pedestrian route is between the swimming pool and the highland intersection of Minjerriba and Central Road. This is only 1.6 km and has only two short pinches compared to the three on the dangerous High Street-Minjerriba 2km distance. Going via Catamaran and Trimaran Street, it is substantially on either trails protected by bollards or extremely low volume ways, A heavy tree cover nearly all the way minimises weather issues. More routes exist like this but have not been discovered by whoever did the maps..

The routes as presented in this document do not fulfil the aim of having 'More cycling and walking more often' as required. In the last 10 years the participation in these activities has fallen on the islands because the increase in traffic is pushing out pedestrians and low speed vehicles of any kind. Such degrading of condition means that advances such as the provision of good lock up facilities for cycles appear underutilised. The hostile reception of people on Macleay Islands to better pedestrian and cycle facilities at the Macleay Island terminal at the expense of even one parking space are symptomatic of a loss in faith in these modes of transport.

## **Mainland**

According to the latest surveys the use of bicycles by islanders for mainland travel is decreasing. This is for many reasons but some can be pinned on the the condition of the cycleways in place on the mainland. For cyclists wishing to travel to or from the islands, there are two outstanding issues:

1. As correctly stated by the discussion paper the 350m flat land link between North and Anita Street needs to be completed to acceptable standards. This is the only stretch of the route between Weinam Creek and the Koala Park Shopping Centre that needs serious work. It is almost perfect even cyclists carrying heavy loads because the only serious grade is the gentle slope from the shops to the Highschool. From there it is virtually all a downhill or flat run for cycles. Travel time for a cycle can be faster than taking a bus during congested times.
2. Secondly, this route is not known. Like on the islands themselves no effort is made to promote this stunningly beautiful route nor is there any signage indicating that it is a route to the islands. Not even school children use it.

The idea that Weinam Creek should be developed with facilities for storage of cycles is another example of the bizarre misunderstanding of the authorities about how the Weinam Creek terminal functions. It is not a destination and does not require facilities such as showers.. If a traveller has a bike journey, the terminal is only a check point. The main requirement of any cyclist both now and in the future would be good shelter, seating, toilet and refreshment facilities.