

Now is the time to tear up bike lanes blighting Sydney

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Sydney, it's time we got real about bikes and our city. It's a question of priorities – is a multimillion-dollar bike ramp on the Harbour Bridge more important than housing the homeless?

The answer is self-evident and especially obvious when homeless people sleep rough each night at Milsons Point just metres from where the planned bike ramp is to go.

The choice of priorities for

government funding could not be more stark. In fact, it's time Sydney took stock of its overall relationship with bikes.

Let's admit the bike share and bike lane experiment is a fiasco instead of a bold innovation in active transport.

Just look at the daily parade of shared bikes discarded inconveniently and dangerously on city streets, as well as the little-used city bike lanes.

Business Sydney is all for bike lanes where it makes sense and there has been proper consultation with the business community. However, bike share or bike lane arrangements should be put on hold pending resolution of outstanding issues.

Bike share operators must adhere

to their responsibilities to "geofence" their bikes and insist on users parking them with consideration for others. The bike "litter" must stop.

The operation and installation of bike lanes is a shared responsibility of the NSW government and the City of Sydney.

NSW Roads Minister John Graham, Transport Minister Jo Haylen and Lord Mayor Clover Moore should work together to achieve a good outcome for our wonderful city and its economy.

Sydneysiders shouldn't have to put up with the choice of a rarely used bike lane in Pitt St and a constantly jammed single traffic lane.

International guests at a luxury hotel shouldn't have to lug their bags

for city blocks because tourist coaches can't pull up outside their CBD digs.

Nor should theatregoers expect to find the bike lane in King St impedes the operation of point-to-point vehicles.

The King St bike lane has an additional risk. Bike riders cycling down the hill in the face of a one-way traffic flow confront vehicles crossing the bike lane to enter driveways.

Sydneysiders should also be concerned that the Castlereagh St bike lane, now being established, goes past the front door of the city's fire headquarters. Imagine fire engines responding to emergency calls.

Next on the agenda is the proposed Oxford St bike lane and its associated traffic-restricting changes.

This project is already causing division in the local business community with some fearful of its impact during already difficult economic times. The Oxford St project and many others should be put on hold while these issues are thrashed out.

It is good for Sydney to do new and innovative things in how we get around our city.

However, bike share and bike lane arrangements don't have to be a source of division if they're done well.

It's time for everyone, especially government and council authorities, to take a deep breath and find a way to make them work.

Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney.