

Ms Fran Bailey
Committee Secretariat
Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Regional Services
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra
ACT 2600

Dear Madam,

I wish to submit for the committee's consideration the proposal of a national cycle route network to be developed as essential infrastructure to provide economically sustainable development for regional Australia.

Regional Australia is renowned for its capacity to grasp innovative concepts to ensure that it's vitality and viability. The idea of a national cycle route in regional Australia has many tremendous benefits for the health of a nation and the economic benefits that the cycling and tourism will bring. Bicycle tourism can generate considerable wealth for regional economies and the nature of the income generated is such that it has high local multiplier effects in both money and employment.

Linking cycling routes with rail networks provides an incredible competitive force for attracting tourist from everywhere. Bicycle travel is strongly complementary to other sustainable modes of transport, such as railways and complementary to many European trends in this area of tourism.

Bicycle tourism will by it's very nature encourage longer stays in regional Australia and therefore the spending potential will be greater. As research by Tourism Victoria has shown (Hopkins 1999), backpacker tourists (of which cycletourists are a subset) spend less per day - about \$59 - than the average overseas tourist, but stay much longer and thus tend to spend about double the average per capita. According to data from Bicycle Victoria's Great Rides and the Bicycle Institute of NSW's Big Ride, local cycletourists spend about this amount per day, too. The spending of cycletourists tends to be of kinds that have high multiplier effects - estimated at around 2.6 by the Bureau of Resource Economics - in local economy and employment.

Trails and networks - An important aspect of bicycle touring infrastructure is the creation of named trails such as the Mawson Trail in South Australia, the Trans-Tasmania Trail and the Murray River Trail. But even more important is the linking of trails into a coherent network. Trails and networks may link existing infrastructure and purpose-built paths. The important factor is consistency over the whole system in the signage and the accessibility.

Cycling in the country provides for quieter, safer, family oriented type travel and the trips much more pleasant. Even if trips distances were greater in country areas than in the

city, the relative lack of obstructions and interruptions generally means that such trips might take no more time or effort than a much shorter urban trip. It will provide for families such as mine for the opportunity for great bonding and an opportunity of really seeing the beauty regional Australia has to offer.

I sincerely hope that the merits of a national cycle route will be seriously considered when economically sustainable development is proposed for regional Australia. Regional infrastructure such a cycle network will be far more sustainable than all the noxious industry such a radioactive dumps, prisons and noxious industry which is traditionally considered when try to fix development issues for regional Australia.

I look forward to hearing of the progress your committee will make with the proposed infrastructure planning currently under way.

Yours in cycling,
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