

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

Dear Ms Bailey

Bicycle Queensland has for twenty years promoted the benefits of cycling to the local and global community. Now, with the Federal Government, state and local councils extolling the virtues of cycling for health, transport and environmental reasons, cycling's huge potential benefits for tourism and local recreation needs to be substantiated.

At Bicycle Queensland, we get repeated requests from potential overseas visitors (by mail, phone, fax and email) about the potential for cycle touring on the eastern seaboard. Sadly, we have little to offer that would compare with the infrastructure of either European or US states.

Developing a national bicycle trail for example, such as in the UK with the "Sustains" project, lures thousands of local cyclists towards those parts of the world which provide for cycling. The loss of income should not be underestimated.

Australians would prefer to experience their own country more often but it doesn't have the basic on-road safety of wide road shoulders or quiet secondary road networks that encourage people to cycle and holiday here. Thus, we (Australian cycle tourists) take our bikes and travellers cheques overseas.

It is frankly embarrassing for us to have to give honest but negative answers to the many enquiries about cycling in Queensland: it is not a cycle friendly environment.

Development of regional connected networks would provide an enormous asset to Australia for generations to come. It's absence is a national disgrace for a developed and spectacular country such as ours. We believe the lost revenue is huge.

A national network of bicycle routes is a key element of a sustainable

transport system for tourism, utility travel and recreation with the added benefit of a healthy and active population.

Of course, as a group with its prime emphasis on cycling for transport, we will not be expending great energies to promote this concept as we have an enormous task making our urban areas more cycle friendly - our main objective.

But as long as Australia does not develop its potential as a country that encourages and embraces cycling, then our nation's health, economy and environment will suffer from this government neglect.

The lack of a national cycling route epitomises this failing. We encourage your committee's Inquiry to recognise and rectify this.

Yours in cycling
Ben Wilson
Development Manager - Bicycle Queensland Inc.