

30 March, 1999

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

Dear Ms Bailey,

RE: NATIONAL CYCLE ROUTE NETWORK

I am writing to support the creation of a National Cycle Route Network in Australia. Such a network would have many benefits for citizens, tourists (domestic and international) and the future of transport in Australia.

I have listed some of these benefits below:

- a national network of bicycle routes is a key element of a sustainable transport system;
- bicycle tourism can generate income for regional economies;
- long-term health benefits of a more healthy and active cycling population
- cycling can complement other sustainable modes of transport, such as railways.

Cycling can actually be an even better transport option in the country than in the city because the roads may be quieter 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.

The major roads throughout Australia are intimidating for most cyclists. Until we can have ordinary people able to ride in the countryside, cycletouring will remain a sectional activity. Minor roads tend to be poorly mapped, insufficiently signed and not always well networked for touring. It takes considerable expertise to plan a good bicycle tour in absence of specific infrastructure.

Bicycle touring is a highly sustainable form of tourism. Bicycle tourists are good spenders and encouraging them is very cost-effective. Bicycles are also very efficient transport for everyday short trips and networks of bicycle paths can contribute a lot to improving community fitness, and the wellbeing of the community itself.

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Providing for bicycle travel should not attempt to distinguish too strongly between tourist travel and utility travel, but should comprise networks that serve all types of riding, just as roads provide for all kinds of travel.

Easy travel by car has robbed country areas of much of their economic and civic life. Encouraging local travel by bicycle can help bring back some of this vitality.

Working conditions, especially in the cities, need to be improved to allow people more time in the countryside; more time to spend their money on goods and services with high economic multiplier effects, rather than imported luxuries.

Yours sincerely

Bill Loveday
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