



9.30 am.

Bicycle Federation of Australia

Senator Gavan Marshall
Parliament House
Canberra

senator_marshall@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Marshall

Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

I am writing to you, in your capacity as the Deputy Chair of the Senate Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Education, about the committee's inquiry into this bill.

The Bicycle Federation of Australia (BFA) has made a submission to this inquiry. The BFA is a non-profit organisation dedicated to expanding choice and opportunity for people who ride bicycles in Australia for recreation, transport, tourism, health and fitness, and fun. It is the national peak body, and directly represents over 20,000 cyclists who belong to its member groups in each State and Territory.

Our concerns are set out in our submission. However, as the BFA was not invited to appear before the Committee, I would like to highlight them to you.

We are most concerned about the proposed changes to the journey and recess aspects of the Comcare scheme.

If enacted, these changes would leave many thousands of cyclists around Australia without workers' compensation coverage as they ride to or from work. The changes would create inequity and not promote uniformity, as claimed. Pedestrians, motorists and public transport users covered currently by Comcare, would also be adversely affected by the changes.

The changes would undermine efforts of all governments to promote cycling. The BFA submission notes a number of Federal Government cycling initiatives. State Labor governments have been even more active. Last October the Victorian Government announced a \$4m Ride2School program to encourage more kids to ride. The South Australian Government recently announced \$1m in funding for more bicycle lanes across Adelaide. The Queensland Government has announced \$3.6m funding to fully develop the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail for cyclists and walkers. WA has long supported initiatives such as TravelSmart, a travel behaviour change program. NSW is supporting a coastal cycleway.

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You would be well aware of the problems that our nation's sedentary lifestyle is causing. Regular exercise such as cycling to work can help alleviate these problems. The proposed changes to Comcare would make it harder to encourage riding to work.

The cost savings are not great when considered in light of Comcare's overall claims budget and the benefits mentioned above.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss these issues with you, perhaps when you are in Canberra in the sitting week of 6-8 February. I can discuss the BFA's key concerns and our suggested fairer solution that provides some equity for both employees and employers, helps to protect employees and benefits our community by increasing overall levels of fitness and activity.

I realise that this request comes at relatively short notice, but the Liberals seem keen to rush through these regressive measures.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Strang', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Strang
Executive Director
Bicycle Federation of Australia

29 January 2007