



BICYCLE FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA INC (BFA)

SUBMISSION TO

***The Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and
Transport
Inquiry into the investment of Commonwealth and State Funds in
Public Passenger Transport Infrastructure and Services***

MARCH 2009

***BFA Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and
Transport Inquiry into Passenger Transport***

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Public Passenger Transport Infrastructure and Services***

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission addresses the Committee's term of reference: (c) an assessment of the benefits of public passenger transport, including integration with bicycle and pedestrian initiatives. It concentrates on the benefits of improved integration of public transport with cycling initiatives.

The BFA believes that there will be significant benefits from better integrating cycling with public transport. This submission recommends:

1. The provision of a range of key infrastructure enhancements that would significantly increase the transport options for trips by active modes. These include:
 - Cycle-ways to connect public transport hubs with the surrounding community through a comprehensive network of cycle ways and shared paths, including linking existing cycle routes to bus/train stations
 - Bicycle racks on buses
 - Trains, ferries etc that are designed to carry bicycles
 - High quality bicycle parking at train stations, bus stations and other transport nodes
 - Suitable signage at public transport nodes and on vehicles to make people aware of the location of cycling facilities
 - Shared bus/bike facilities. This includes expanding the number of shared on-road facilities in locations where minimum bus/bike lane widths can be achieved
2. Improved rules for the carriage of bicycles on public transport including:
 - Allocating maximum space for the carriage of bicycles on trains, ferries and trams, especially during off-peak periods, including the carriage of folding bicycles at all times
 - Allowing bicycles to be carried by taxis where possible
 - More appropriate rules to allow people to carry bicycles on airlines on top of their luggage allowance
3. Comprehensive marketing support to inform the public of the range of options for the carriage of bicycles on public transport, and promotion of rules relating to the carriage of bicycles on the public transport network
4. Mode share targets for trips from home/work etc to public transport modes
5. Consultation with cycling groups when new cycling/public transport facilities are being planned

INTRODUCTION

This submission addresses the Committee's term of reference: (c) an assessment of the benefits of public passenger transport, including integration with bicycle and pedestrian initiatives. It concentrates on the benefits of improved integration of public transport with cycling initiatives.

Many origin-destination pairs, that are not well served by public transport at one or both ends of a trip, can be easily and inexpensively bridged by starting and/or completing the trip by bicycle.

There is considerable potential to better integrate cycling and public transport. Many trips to public transport nodes/stations are very short. Number plate surveys at key bus/train interchanges, carried out in the last few years by the WA Public Transport Authority PTA illustrate that up to 60% of cars using park and ride facilities during the day on weekdays are travel to the stations from within a 2.5 km radius. This is less than 10 minutes by bike and significantly undermines the intended purpose of park and ride facilities, which are intended to increase the potential catchment of the station and provide access for those without a viable alternative.

This is consistent with research that shows that in our capital cities, most trips involve short trips: 53% of trips in Melbourne are less than 5 km with similar figures in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.

SOLUTIONS

There are a number of ways that bicycle use can be integrated with public transport to increase the efficiency of both modes of travel. Trips made using a combination of cycling and public transport are often referred to as dual mode travel.

Accessing public transport systems by bicycle

Using bikes to access public transport can be facilitated by efficient bicycle routes, bike parking and other facilities at public transport nodes and bike hire schemes.

Access and routes to public transport nodes

Often dual mode (bicycle and public transport) trips are prevented by a hazardous (perceived or real) or circuitous route for cyclists to access these transport nodes.

Improved routes to public transport will mean that more people ride to these facilities. This means linking existing cycle-ways to public transport facilities, and improving access around public transport nodes to allow cyclists to ride to railway stations and parking facilities.

In some cases, routes that give cyclists an advantage over motorised vehicles can make bicycle and public transport integration more appealing and contribute to an increase in both public transport and cycling trips. This may mean more/improved off-road cycle paths and on-road cycling lanes.

Physical improvements in the area immediately around the bus/train station may also improve access and hence use.

Bike parking and other facilities at public transport nodes

Fear of theft or damage is often cited as a major deterrent to cycling. Bike parking facilities should be of a good standard, providing a high level of security and protection from weather. They should also be close to the public transport centres, railway station etc.

At major transport nodes, lockers for spare clothes and showers will increase the number of cyclists using public transport facilities. Brisbane City Council and Queensland Transport recently opened a major centre in the city (www.cycle2city.com.au), which includes bike parking, showers, lockers and other facilities such as a bike repair facility. Cyclists pay to use this facility. It is understood that another centre is soon to be built in Brisbane - the Royal Brisbane Hospital's bus station cycle centre.

Bike hire schemes

Having bikes available for hire at major public transport centres, or within larger cities can increase the reach of public transport, especially for tourists and casual users. Adelaide City Council has such a scheme and a large one is soon to be introduced by the Brisbane City Council.

Carriage of bikes on public transport

Allowing bikes to be carried on public transport increases the reach and flexibility of both modes. Providing facilities to carry bicycles on public transport does not have to be at the expense of other passengers, however, it is recognised that there are sometimes competing pressures for space on public transport. Gradually introducing or retrofitting public transport vehicles with improved facilities to carry bicycles should be considered. The facilities required to carry bikes may be as simple as a space with straps to restrain bikes, or other vehicles such as prams. Precise requirements are beyond the scope of this submission. Each public transport mode has particular issues in relation to integration with bicycle use; some of these are addressed below.

Bikes on trains

Bikes are carried on most suburban and country trains, although a number of restrictions apply in various jurisdictions. In some states bikes are banned from peak-hour services. Such a ban was overturned in Victoria after a strong campaign (<http://modernthings.org/binthebikeban>) conducted by cycling and public transport groups. Banning bikes during peak hours severely limits the utility of dual-mode travel. In other cases, for example Sydney RailCorp Trains, bicycles are permitted free of charge on the weekend and in off-peak periods but a child's ticket must be purchased during the (extensive) peak period.

NSW CountryLink train services have only **three spaces** available for carrying bicycles, surfboards or snowboards, and spaces must be booked. This severely limits the viability of using trains to access country areas for recreational cycling trips. Cyclists are also expected to pack bicycles in bike boxes, a great inconvenience. In some cases, even folding bikes, which are no larger than many other items of luggage, cannot be carried on trains or other forms of public transport.

Bikes on Buses

Bikes are carried on the front (or rear) of buses in many parts of the US. The bike rack trial in the ACT has been deemed a success and is to be extended to all buses in the ACT's ACTION bus service (www.action.act.gov.au/bike_n_ride.html).

Currently, anyone carrying their bike on an ACTION bus does not have to pay a fare, for themselves or their bike. This policy was introduced to promote use of the service.

Brisbane's 'bikes on buses' trial was discontinued last year. Reasons for this failure may have been due to inconvenience to passengers and lack of patronage. The latter was due to the few buses that had racks, so a potential user could not be certain that the rack would be available.

Ferries

Bikes can easily be carried on ferries although sometimes an overcrowded ferry is unable to accommodate all the bikes that passengers wish to bring on board.

Taxis

Some smaller taxis are unable to carry adults' bicycles.

Air travel

Very little bike parking is made available at Australian airports. Although there are some security issues to consider, cycling to airports is a reasonable transport option in many Australian capital cities, including Sydney and Canberra. Providing secure undercover parking would reduce costs for many commuters.

Australian domestic airlines have varying arrangements for carrying bicycles.

Qantas makes no specific luggage allowance for bicycles. They are included in the general 20kg luggage allowance. Virgin treats bicycles, whatever their weight, as 5kg of the 20kg allowance.

Overseas airlines have much more enlightened policies. Air New Zealand allows an extra 10kg baggage allowance for sporting equipment, such as bicycles, on trans-Tasman flights. Virgin Atlantic carries bicycles of up to 32kg at no extra charge.

The BFA proposes that airline licensing policies and requirements should encourage sustainable tourism and transport by requiring carriers to transport bicycles of up to 25kg at no extra charge to passengers.

Sharing public transport facilities

Where dedicated cycling facilities are limited, bicycles should be able to use bus lanes,

In some cases, it should be possible to use train corridors, with suitable fencing and security for cycle-ways

BENEFITS

The BFA believes that there will be significant benefits from better integrating cycling with public transport. Benefits of better integration will include:

- Increased use of cycling and public transport
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduced air pollution
- Fewer road accidents
- Reduced national expenditure on transport fuel

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- Significant transport cost savings for individual households
- Reduced traffic and congestion
- Less space devoted to parking and significant cost savings for transport authorities and local government from providing less parking. The capital cost of providing one parking space in an urban area can be as much as \$10,000
- Increased physical activity and health
- Improved social inclusion and liveability

RECOMMENDATIONS

This submission recommends:

1. The provision of a range of key infrastructure enhancements that would significantly increase the transport options for trips by active modes. These include:
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2. Improved rules for the carriage of bicycles on public transport including:
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5. Consultation with cycling groups when new cycling/public transport facilities are being planned