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## **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**

Prepared by Ambrose Canning,  
Membership Secretary, Bicycle Tasmania  
27 March 2009

Reviewed by Bicycle Tasmania elected executive members.

### **About Bicycle Tasmania**

Bicycle Tasmania is a State wide bicycle advocacy group, and with interests in all forms cycling, and is a non profit incorporated association run by volunteers. We were founded to promote non-competitive cycling to all levels of the community.

One of the key objectives of Bicycle Tasmania is to promote, encourage, foster, develop and extend cycling as a valid and viable transport alternative and leisure activity in Tasmania.

Membership of Bicycle Tasmania is open to anybody who cycles, or has an interest in cycling. Bicycle Tasmania is made up of cyclists with interests in all forms of cycling.

Additional information about Bicycle Tasmania can be found at <http://www.biketas.org.au/>

Bicycle Tasmania is a member of the Bicycle Federation of Australia (the BFA, <http://www.bfa.asn.au> ).

Bicycle Tasmania is represented on Local Government bicycle committees, State Government bicycle committees and road safety committees, and the Federal Road Safety Task force (through affiliation with the BFA).

Bicycle Tasmania holds public liability insurance cover and also provides for all its members personal accident insurance cover while they are involved in any cycling activity, at any time.

## Bicycle Tasmania's Submission

This submission will by necessity be brief due to time constraints and the lateness of its preparation. However, we propose that a quality submission can be short and succinct, covering the topic at a high level rather than delving into details at this stage.

Useful information relevant to cyclists has already been presented to the Committee in comprehensive submissions from Bike Sydney and from Bike NSW, which we have been able to review, and Bicycle Tasmania fully supports these other submissions. We will try to not cover the same ground in this submission. We also understand that a submission has been received by the Committee from the Bicycle Federation of Australia, but we have not yet been able to view this.

To restate the inquiry's title and purpose, to set the context for this submission, this is an inquiry into the investment of Commonwealth and State funds in public passenger transport infrastructure and services.

Bicycle Tasmania does not deal with public passenger transport per se, but we submit that it is vital for the Committee to consider cycling and its integration with public transport. The infrastructure associated with public transport is critical to the successful spread and development of cycling within Australia. In fact, at the interface points between cycling and public transport, this cycling infrastructure is also public transport infrastructure.

Successful integration of public transport and bicycle initiatives is a win-win scenario. The well known benefits of cycling can be realised, to an extent, by related investment in public passenger transport infrastructure and services.

These benefits can be reiterated as:

- **Health benefits:** Cycling takes pressure off the Nation's health systems. It is recognised that the health benefits of cycling far outweigh the risks. Physical inactivity is second only to tobacco as the most significant health risk in Australia. Cycling is a convenient and low-impact form of exercise which, as a daily physical activity, is more likely to be maintained than other leisure activities.
- **Environment benefits:** Cycling takes pressure off the Nation's environment. Reduced noise, reduced pollution, reduced green house gas emissions. About half the greenhouse gas emissions produced by an average Australian household each year are from transport. Cycling is one way a household can significantly reduce its contribution to the pollution that causes climate change.
- **Financial benefits:** Cycling offers a range of financial savings to the individual and wider economic benefits that extend throughout the entire community. For individuals there is low capital outlay, low running costs, no fuel costs, low maintenance costs, no parking costs. For the wider community, relatively smaller investments can make a huge difference. For all three levels of Government, cycling can save capital costs, operating costs and maintenance costs of private vehicle and public transport infrastructure.

There are three aspects of cycling we want to introduce as relevant to this inquiry, commuting cycling, recreational cycling and touring cycling. The fourth aspect, competitive cycling, is not dealt with by Bicycle Tasmania nor relative to this inquiry.

Australia's cities with low population density and sprawling suburbs are a challenge for cycle commuters, and for cycle tourists as well. This is where integration of cycling and other means of public transport should be an objective of infrastructure funding. Realistically all trips cannot be made by bicycle. The integration of public transport and cycling extends the number of trips where either can be used, and increases the flexibility of both to mix-and-match with the public's trip requirements. Improved cycling facilities can increase the reach of, and use of, improved public transport facilities.

But on the other hand, improved cycling facilities and infrastructure, and resultant increases in cycling numbers, benefits by helping to take pressure off existing public passenger transport services, off existing private vehicle infrastructure, and off existing public transport infrastructure.

Also, increased numbers of cyclists make it safer for all cyclists.

In recent years in Australia the number of new bicycles sold per annum has been greater than the numbers of new cars sold. Australians purchased over 1.2 million bicycles in 2008. This is the ninth consecutive year in which Australians have bought more bicycles than cars.

Once considered a marginalised activity, cycling is now our fourth most popular physical activity for adults.

Cycle tourism is an important aspect and is really only in its infancy in Tasmania and Australia. Cycle tourism can take tourists to many diverse regional and rural areas not visited by other tourists. Frequently tourist's journeys require integration with public transport at some point, at beginning or end points, or mid trip.

There needs to be a coordinated nationwide approach to cycling initiatives and their integration with public passenger transport, rather than an ad hoc State by State approach.

Bicycle Tasmania thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make this submission, and we reiterate our view of how the investment in public transport infrastructure and services, and in cycling initiatives, are not mutually exclusive, but rather assist and compliment each other.