

From: Bronwyn Laing
To: rail@pc.gov.au
Subject: submission
Date: Friday, 2 October 1998 5:17PM

Dear Carol,

Please accept this submission from the Greater Lithgow and District Bicycle Advocacy Group (GLADBAG).

GLADBAG would like to take this opportunity to comment on the Progress in Rail Reform discussion document. After reading the issues booklet, we are concerned that dual mode transport bicycle/rail has been completely overlooked. As an advocacy group we promote ecologically sustainable transport and support the Agenda 21(Rio de Janeiro 1992) transport strategy: "Transportation strategies should reduce the need for motor vehicles by favouring high occupancy public transport and providing safe bicycle and foot paths. Municipalities need to be developed in ways that reduce the need for long distance commuting."

Our bicycle advocacy group is in NSW, 160kms west of Sydney and there is only a limited rail service from Sydney (three hours) with spartan provision for bicycles, one bicycle per train. There are no safe bicycle parking facilities at the rail interchange and there is no equitable, easy and satisfactory way of transporting bicycles via the bus services that replace the former rail links.

GLADBAG is concerned that the Commonwealth has no strategic plan of any kind which will reverse the unsustainable transport trends in our cities and rural Australia. Investments in road and rail networks are what determine transport behaviour in the long term, so investment should be targetted in such a way as to increase the use of high occupancy rail vehicles. The Inquiry should recognise that investing in heavy and light rail networks, country and urban rail station feeder bikeways reduces external costs of car use and will make cities and towns more economically efficient and environmentally friendly in the long term.

Two excellent countries to consider when examining intermodal links with railways are The Netherlands and Japan. Here, effective national, strategic planning and coordination arrangements over many years have resulted in intermodal rail passenger transport systems that are far better developed than Australia and in Japan over 4 million rail patrons use bicycles to access railway stations every working day. For Netherlands Railways, when competing with door to door travel by car, the time saving that comes from cycling to a station instead of walking greatly increases their competitive edge. Bike/rail commuting experience on the Danish, Swiss and Japanese railways also indicates this is important (Replogle 1993).

In Japan, by 1980 over 50 million bicycles were regularly used for utilitarian purposes and still are today. Cities grew very fast and trips to work increased greatly in length and the bike/rail trip substituted for many direct bicycle trips to work. Bicycles are used for all, or part of, 20% of all trips to work and a high proportion

of school and shopping trips. 3.5 million bicyclists access stations to make long commuter journeys Australians would make by car. Secure bicycle parking spaces at stations provided since 1975 are valued at A\$3.5 billion at 1990 prices. The bicycle is very well integrated into the transport system. This is the best model of intermodal integration in the world today with the the Netherlands coming a close second.

Here in Australia we do already have policies for reducing car dependency and increasing physically active transport, policies that aim to shift people from cars to cycling, walking and public transport. But what use are policies without a funding commitment on the part of the Commonwealth to implement real change?

In conclusion, we would like to emphasise the need for more Commonwealth funding of railway infrastructure and argue that there needs to be greater priority given to integrating the more sustainable modes of transport with urban and country rail systems. In Australia we need more bicycle access to rail systems, rolling stock designed to carry bicycles, faster trains and safe and secure bicycle access at both ends of a railway trip. Federal funding should be provided for an integrated intermodal transport system that will promote sustainable transport.

Bronwyn Laing
GLADBAG
PO Box 154
WALLERAWANG 2845