

## **Pedal Power ACT Inc. Submission to the Rail Inquiry**

We enthusiastically endorse the Bicycle Federation of Australia's submission by Alan Parker and would like to add some comments particular to the Australian Capital Territory.

Unfortunately Canberra does not have an internal rail network, but is connected to NSW by Countrylink, that state's country railway service. Because Canberra does not have a local rail service transport is mainly by the private car which is backed up by an inefficient public bus service and a small percentage of bicycle commuters and pedestrians. The ACT Government has initiated a program of on-road cycle lanes to encourage commuter cycling, but has shown little interest in a light rail transport network for Canberra to seriously reduce the dependence on the car. Funding seems to be the stumbling block as the idea has been promoted widely and has the general support of the community.

Although few of Canberra's cyclists use the Countrylink rail service to commute, our members and other Canberra cyclists want to use the service to get to a touring destination. They find the service lacking in convenience because of the following factors:

1. Only three bicycles are allowed on any one Countrylink service.
2. All bikes carried must be packed in cardboard boxes which require the bikes to be partly disassembled.
3. The trains are not designed to carry bicycles and the carrying of bicycles is not encouraged.
4. Recently a \$10 charge was imposed for the carrying of a bicycle.
5. NSW railway stations are gradually reducing services making it more inconvenient for cyclists. For example the 'cloak rooms' at most stations have been closed leaving no secure areas for travellers to temporarily leave luggage such as panniers, bikes etc.
6. Prospective travellers from intermediate stations cannot find out from rail staff if there are bike spaces available on a particular train. Travellers have to wait until the train arrives at the station so that the quantity of bikes on a particular train can be counted by the stationmaster to determine if there is space available.
7. In Sydney bikes cannot be carried on trains in peak hour. This is because the trains have not been designed to carry bicycles.
8. Many train stations are not designed with cyclists in mind, having long staircases to leave and approach the platforms.
9. With the closure of numerous country railway stations tourists are required to use buses to transport them to the nearest manned station. This practice of closing railway stations and replacing rail with road travel means less convenience for cyclists, and other users. Many former and potential rail customers have opted for the car because of the reduced quality of the rail service.

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