

From: Elaine
To: rail@pc.gov.au
Subject: Whitehorse Cyclists Submission
Date: Thursday, 1 October 1998 8:20AM

On behalf of the Whitehorse Cyclists club, located in the area of Box Hill, Melbourne Victoria, I wish to make a submission to the Rail Inquiry. Our submission has two main points: the usage we make of railways in connection with our cycling events, and the need to consider the safety of cyclists on roads.

1. Whitehorse Cyclists as a train user group -- our patronage for bike+rider transport.

Whitehorse Cyclists are a very strong user group of railways. Our club relies heavily on railway travel in its ride schedule as is detailed in this submission. In considering the issues related to the Rail Inquiry, we wish to point out that "alternatives" such as buses are not suitable nor sanctioned for the purpose of taking us and our bikes to destinations from which we ride.

We normally travel in out of peak times, thus contributing to the viability of the system.

Our club has been in operation for over five years and in that period has run rides generally twice a week for members. We have 60 members at present. On some occasions members and their bikes will take a train to a destination and ride from there; in other cases our rides are planned near train routes deliberately in order to provide for the possibility of a shorter distance for new or less able cyclists.

I have listed the bicycle events we arranged in July and August 1998 which involved train travel for members and bikes. Our rides attract 12-14 people per ride, the people involved being a varied group each time.

July 2 1998 Train to Hurstbridge. Cycle to Yan Yean
July 9 1998 Train to Lilydale. Cycle to Wandin and Seville
July 12 1998 8 am train Box Hill to Flinders Street. Cycle Beach Road for Around the bay in a day practice
July 19 1998 10.38 train to Lilydale for Lilydale to Belgrave cycle
July 23 1998 Train to Flinders Street Cycle to Williamstown
July 25 1998 Ride to Kensington. Train or cycle home
August 2 1998 Train or cycle to Greensborough. Cycle to Plenty Gorge area
August 6 1998 Train or cycle to Heidleberg. Cycle to Mount Cooper
August 16 1998 Train to Lilydale. Cycle along Warburton Trail
August 23 1998 Cycle Box Hill to city via Mordialloc. Train home
August 30 1998 Train to Flinders St and Broadmeadows. Cycle to Gellibrand Park

The amount of use of trains for ourselves and bikes in these months is typical of our general usage.

As the program indicates, we greatly rely on the convenient transport of ourselves and our bikes on suburban trains in the Melbourne area. Occasionally, as in September this year, members and their bikes will also use interstate trains. We have a group travelling to Canberra to cycle during September 18-24 1998.

2. Whitehorse Cyclists and road safety issues

The second aspect of the rail issue which I wish to comment on is that of heavy vehicles on roads - in particular, vehicles such as B-Doubles. These pose an obvious hazard to cyclists with their huge wind draft and turbulence effects, noise, and wide size. In considering them as an alternative to rail transport the issue of safety for other road users is important.

On behalf of Whitehorse Cyclists Inc. I urge the Commission to take into account the specific and irreplaceable value trains have to groups such as ours, and our value to the system as frequent users in non-peak times. If trains are privatised, the requirement to carry bikes and riders needs to be specified in contracts for service delivery. If road rather than rail is encouraged for goods transport, cyclists' safety is more endangered.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Hopper for John Bennett, President, Whitehorse Cyclists Inc.