



24 May 2005

Mr Kevin Greene MP  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Public Works  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

**Re: Submission to the Inquiry into Infrastructure Provision In Coastal Growth Areas**

Dear Mr Greene,

Bicycle New South Wales (BNSW) would like to gain the support of the Standing Committee to ensure the ongoing success of the New South Wales Coastline Cycleway.



## 1.0 New South Wales Coastline Cycleway (NSWCC)

NSWCC is a visionary Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) project for a 1500 km cycleway/walkway from Queensland to Victoria - linking 23 coastal local government areas.

The Coastline Cycleway has great potential to link with local cycleway networks, providing safe access to schools, work, community and sporting facilities. It offers outstanding benefits - improved community health and recreational opportunities, an exceptional international tourism drawcard, more sustainable and socially equitable transport, regional economic stimulus and improved coordination of environmental restoration projects. The project also presents a great opportunity for community engagement and an extended venue for major cycling events such as the RTA Big Ride - that currently attracts thousands of riders and injects over \$500,000 into local communities.

## 2.0 Project Background

The Coastline Cycleway was first proposed by retired Urban Planning Professor, Elias Duek-Cohen, who completed preliminary feasibility studies with RTA support.

DIPNR commenced funding the project in 2003 pledging \$15 million over 10 years - commencing with \$6 million to be allocated over 4 years to 2007 - approximately \$1.5 million per annum on a dollar for dollar basis with local councils. (See Appendix A)



### **3.0 Progress to Date**

The first two funding rounds will allocate almost \$3million to 13 councils – generating total project expenditure approaching \$6million.

There is strong community support for these projects and local media coverage is positive. Sections of the Coastline Cycleway nearing completion are presenting as great showcases for the whole project. These include the shared use cycleway /walkway from Tweed Heads to Pottsville (35 kms) in Tweed LGA and the Huskisson to Georges Basin section (17 kms) in Shoalhaven LGA.

The Fernleigh Track section - linking Newcastle and Lake Macquarie LGA - is attracting strong patronage and community pride.

Approximately 15% (225 kms) of the Coastline Cycleway now exists and effective cooperation with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and NSW Forests will ensure that large sections of the route, using existing fire trails and tracks, will be confirmed in the near future.

Project delays have included resource constraints of some councils, land tenure issues and the challenges of achieving the best environmental outcomes in sensitive areas. To date, coastal councils have been enthusiastic in applying for NSWCC funds - in fact they applied for more than twice the \$1.5 million DIPNR funds available under the 2004/5 Round.

As cycle tourism is one of the fastest growing niche markets in the international tourism industry – the Coastline could soon be central to the generation of a new frontier of bicycle related tourism. Cycleway projects such as the Munda Biddi Trail in Western Australia and Rail Trails in Victoria are currently attracting international and domestic travellers and strengthening regional economies. (See Appendix B)

### **4.0 Relevance of NSWCC to the Inquiry**

The key concerns of the Inquiry include:

- Coastal population growth
- Short & long term infrastructure needs
- Coordination of commonwealth, state & local government strategies to deliver sustainable development, and,
- Integration of social, environmental & economic considerations with strategic planning.

The NSWCC is relevant to all of these key concerns. The successful planning and implementation of the project will advance the sustainable development of NSW coastal areas. It anticipates population growth occurring in this region – providing local communities with an

outstanding recreational and sustainable transport network and equitable accessibility to natural and community facilities and the potential of significant regional economic and environmental benefits.

The NSWCC integrates with the announced aims of DIPNR's North Coast and Hunter Regional Strategies.

The provision of cycleway/walkways in developing areas is a sound investment in improving future community health and fitness and in accord with existing commonwealth and state health initiatives.

The successful completion of this project will require improved coordination of local, state and commonwealth programs and initiatives and an increased level of state and commonwealth financial support.

Effective strategic planning saves the community vast resources compared with ad-hoc and catch-up provision of infrastructure. With increasing land values, the cost of implementing this project will likely be almost prohibitive in the future. The present implementation opportunity should be realized as soon as possible.



## **5.0 Recommendations**

In order to advance the sustainable development of NSW coastal areas and the NSWCC - BNSW urges the Inquiry to support the following:

- 5.1 That DIPNR honour their original (\$15 million over 10 years) commitment and continue to fund the NSW Coastline Cycleway beyond the initial 2003-2007 stage - with at least \$1.5 million per annum to local councils over the 6 years from 2007 to 2013.**
- 5.2 That RTA commit a greater level of cycleway funding to coastal growth areas - their 2004/05 allocation of approximately \$1.5 million was disproportionately low compared to the coastal region's fair share of cycling related funding (approximately \$10 million based on population). RTA should increase coastal cycleway funding to a more equitable level of at least \$3 million per annum).**

- 5.3 That DIPNR immediately draft a NSWCC State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) – ensuring that all new developments along the Coastline route take the project into account. This SEPP should also be integrated into new Local Environmental Plans (funded under the Planning Reform Funding Program) and each Council's Bike plans.
- 5.4 That DIPNR encourage coastal councils to incorporate the planning, construction and ongoing maintenance costs of the NSWCC into their Section 94 (Development Contributions) Plan.
- 5.5 That DIPNR incorporate the NSWCC into their Hunter and North Coast Regional Strategies.
- 5.6 That the Commonwealth Government – through programs such as Roads to Recovery and Australian Greenhouse Office be encouraged to contribute towards the NSWCC.
- 5.7 That the Inquiry call for the establishment of a NSWCC Task Force – representing Premiers, RTA, DIPNR and Tourism NSW – to resolve funding, coordination, promotion & sponsorship issues.
- 5.8 That the Inquiry invite all NSW coastal MPs to attend any subsequent hearings where a briefing on the NSWCC is presented– in order to build bipartisan support for the project.

## 6.0 About Bicycle New South Wales

Bicycle New South Wales is an independent, not-for-profit community organization that promotes bicycle use for community health, environmental, tourism and social equity reasons. It has in excess of 10,000 members, promotes cycling through the publication of *Australian Cyclist* and *Push On* and conducts the two high profile cycling events, RTA Big Ride and RTA Cycle Sydney. It was recently admitted to the Federal Government Register of Environmental Organisations and works closely with RTA, Police, NSW Health, Tourism NSW and Local Government to achieve healthier, more sustainable mobility outcomes for NSW.

We would welcome the opportunity to give further evidence to the Standing Committee in support of this submission and can be contacted on 9281 4099 or by e-mail at [ntonkin@bicyclensw.org.au](mailto:ntonkin@bicyclensw.org.au).

Yours sincerely



Neil Tonkin  
Chief Executive

## **Appendix "A"**

### **NSW Coastline Cycleway**

The former Minister for Planning, Dr Andrew Refshauge, announced the NSW Coastline Cycleway project in March 2003 which will provide \$6 million in seed funding as part of a larger Coastal Protection Package. The \$6 million is available from 1 July 2003 and is to be spent at \$1.5m per annum over the next four years. The funding is available for project management and grants for cycleway projects and is to be matched dollar-for-dollar by the participating councils along the route.

The NSW Coastline Cycleway project is based on a 30-year-old vision of retired urban planning academic Elias Duek-Cohen. With assistance from the 26 NSW non-Sydney metropolitan coastline councils and other organisations, he has defined a route stretching some 1500km from the Queensland border to the Victorian border. The route is shown in a set of five studies which were coordinated by Bicycle NSW and largely funded by the NSW Roads and Traffic Authority.

The route aims to avoid major roads and highways and link together the string of communities along the NSW coastline. Approximately 12% of the route already exists in the form of council-provided cycleways, while other parts of the route follows existing back roads and fire trails. The key benefits include bicycle transport, bicycle-tourism and the growth of bicycle-tourism industries.

#### **Further information**

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**The Department is involved in a variety of other coastal protection initiatives. Information on these will be added to this part of the website shortly.**

## Appendix "B"

### ■ TOURISM RIDING ON A PUSHBIKE



**Bush bikers:** CALM officers Theresa Jones and Elise Skillen take a break as friend Geoffrey Logue looks on from a shelter near Jarrahdale along the Munda Biddi cycle trail's first section to Dwellingup. PICTURE: NIC ELLIS

## Tourist push in cycle of adventure

■ By Andrew Gregory

A NEW breed of tourist is being lured to the State's rugged southern forests with the opening of a 182km bicycle trail.

The Munda Biddi cycle trail runs close to the Bibbulbin Track and there are plans for it eventually to go from Mundaring to Albany.

Up to 4000 people have ridden part of the cycle trail between Mundaring and Dwellingup since it was opened in December.

The Department of Conservation and Land Management expects to complete the first section to Collier by the start of next year.

Department trails manager Theresa Jones said the trail opened WA to a new type of tourist.

"WA hasn't been seen as a cycling destination, essentially because the distance between towns has been too big for most people," Ms Jones said. "We see the Munda Biddi contributing to a new adventure-based market."

Sheltered campsites every 35-40km have rainwater tanks, tent space and environmentally friendly toilets. Old railway routes, logging and fire breaks have been linked to form Munda Biddi — a younglar for path through the forest.

The trail runs through country towns so that riders can buy supplies. If funding is secured, the \$2 million trail will reach Albany by late 2005.

There are trail sections for competitive and leisurely riders.

