

A Submission to the Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water

[Keith Lyons](#)

National Institute of Sport Studies, University of Canberra

27 April 2012

Ms S Salvaneschi

Secretary

Standing Committee on Climate Change, Environment and Water

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Dear Ms Salvaneschi

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission to this Standing Committee. I write in brief in response to item 1(f) of the Committee's Terms of Reference, namely, *Any other relevant matter*.

I have a particular interest in cycle tourism and note that the Standing Committee is meeting to consider tourism matters at a time when [the European Parliament has commissioned a second study into the benefits of cycling tourism](#). The 2009 study, *The European Cycle Route Network, EuroVelo: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism*, identified the scale of the economic benefits of sustainable tourism.

Earlier this year the University hosted a combined Cycle Tourism and Rail Trail Symposium. It attracted delegates from all states and territories in Australia as well as visitors from Canada, China, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The diversity of papers can be found [here](#). I draw attention in particular to the presentation given by Sally Rodgers, [From the Murray to the Mountains](#).

Delegates at the Conference were very impressed with presentations from the ACT that shared details about the cycling infrastructure available in the ACT and the diversity of facilities in place.

I have a very clear sense of Canberra and the Region as one of **the** cycling hotspots in the world.

My colleague Dennis Puniard has made a number of submissions to the ACT in regard to cycle tourism. See, for example, [this summary](#).

In 2009 data for the ACT indicate that those overnight visitors who listed cycling as an activity undertaken during their visit:

- 31,000 visitors
- Average length of stay 2.7 nights
- Total visitor nights 83,000
- Expenditure per day \$236 and per visit \$631
- Total spend \$19,561,000

We believe there are profound opportunities to grow the Capital Region's ecotourism sector and to do so in a sustainable way linked to cycling opportunities.

Dennis Puniard is about to complete his PhD on cycle tourism and it provides rich insights into how tourists use social media to make informed decisions about destination choice. Inter alia, Dennis points out that:

A considerable amount of detail about information needs of cycle tourists has been gathered in this research. It is clear that these tourists are seeking **general information** about accommodation and natural attractions at a location, albeit with some cycling specific aspects in view, such as **cycle friendly accommodation** and **cycle friendly routes** to attractions. **Transportation** options to reach a destination were identified as important, but again with options that allow them to take their own bicycles with them.

In regards to cycling specific information, details about **cycling related facilities** is important to this group, as is information about **cycling events**, specifically from a participant's viewpoint. Information about **organised cycling tours** was also seen as important to many in this group. **Bicycle hire** (especially overseas) and **access to drinking water** was identified as important information and the **weather forecasts** are more important to cyclists than to many other tourists who have options to avoid bad weather.

The standout feature of this research in regards to cycle tourism is that **road safety** for cyclists came through as the most significant aspect of cycling away from the home region. Information related to safe routes for cycling was paramount in the needs of this group, and this has significant implications for cycling specific maps both hardcopy and online.

We believe Dennis Puniard's thesis is an excellent discussion of tourism development and raises fundamental issues about a ubiquitous web based platform for an integrated tourism experience in the Capital region. The success of the [Murray to the Mountains](#) model underscores this.

We would be delighted to provide more information if required but we do want to point to the enormous opportunity Canberra has to build a vibrant and sustainable ecotourism sector that could be given an immense boost in the Capital's Centenary celebrations.