



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair), Mr Jonathan Davis MLA (Deputy
Chair), Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT

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Mr Michael Pettersson MLA
Chair
Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion
ACT Legislative Assembly
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Chair

Inquiry into skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Committee's inquiry into skateboarding and skate parks in the ACT. AusCycling is the national sporting organisation with responsibility for all cycling disciplines in Australia. We represent nearly 60,000 members and 450 community cycling clubs around the nation and support the interests of more than three million Australians who ride a bike for sport or active recreation. Our vision is to make Australia a nation of bike riders, to advocate for our riders' safety, build strong club communities and make all forms of cycling accessible to everyone.

It is timely that the Committee holds this inquiry. BMX Freestyle is growing rapidly in popularity in Australia, as is skateboarding. Both sports were included in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic program and are now permanent Olympic sports. Their popularity in Australia was well-established before the Olympics, but Australia's remarkable success – winning the gold medal in both the Men's BMX Freestyle and the Men's Skateboarding Park – has generated a new wave of interest. The respective Olympic Champions, Logan Martin and Keegan Palmer, have become household names and are attracting a new generation to jump on a board or a bike.

BMX Freestyle creates valuable opportunities for active recreation among our community, which are particularly important given the goals of the National Obesity Strategy released last year. The Strategy outlines that one in four children aged 5 to 17 are overweight or obese and environments that promote obesity are a major cause. Creating environments that promote activity and active recreation are critical in addressing our obesity issues.

BMX Freestyle and skateboarding are particularly valuable in this context as they are attractive activities for many young people who are otherwise disengaged or at-risk. There is growing research in this area and AusCycling supports the work of Dr Dave Camilleri – lecturer and researcher at the Youth Research Collective at the University of Melbourne – to explore the role of BMX in engaging young Australians.

At a community level, BMX Freestyle often shares facilities with skateboarders and other users of skate parks. Specialist BMX Freestyle facilities are not needed for most riders and we strongly support governments investing in multi-user facilities that can provide a great and safe experience for users regardless of what they choose to ride. Skateparks can be designed in a way that appeals to a broad range of users and there are examples around Australia of existing skateparks being extended or adapted with these goals in mind.

To ensure the benefits of BMX Freestyle are captured by the ACT community, AusCycling supports continued investment in community facilities throughout Canberra, including appropriate adjustments to existing facilities and new facilities that accommodate a wide range of users including BMX riders, skateboarders, skaters and scooter riders.

Beyond community participation, AusCycling has recommended the construction of a new dirt jump facility at Stromlo Forest Park to provide both a competition and event venue, as well as to support athlete development and high-performance pathways for BMX and mountain bike riders. An existing facility at the Stromlo Forest Park has been removed to make way for new carparking and a replacement facility would ensure that the ACT continues to give opportunities to compete and develop their skills.

The AusCycling Facility Guide – available on our website at www.auscycling.org.au – provides some introductory material on the needs of BMX Freestyle. We would be happy to engage further with the Committee on any specific questions it has on the needs of riders at both the community and high-performance level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this short submission. You can contact me at

[REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]

Regards,

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NICK HANNAN
Executive General Manager – Government Strategy