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Sent: Monday, 29 October 2018 8:43 PM  
To: ner  
Subject: LC C 2018 Marie Spencer

**North East Railway Corridor Inquiry  
Submission**

Ms Natasha Exel  
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29 October 2018

As a long term local cyclist who has taken up bicycle touring overseas in recent years, I am making a submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry Committee to pass on my experience of the benefits and popularity of bike trails, particularly those on disused railways such as the abandoned rail line soon to be rejuvenated into the North East Rail Trail.

Around the world lines which have found to be uneconomic and redundant have breathed new life into the surrounding communities as thousands of friendly, cashed-up bike riders flock to enjoy the challenge of moving under their own steam, enjoying local food and wine, beers and natural beverages and meeting the people. They stay in the complete range of accommodation from tents to high end units, farm stays and bed and breakfasts. They travel slowly and spend more time in a region than just a one day train trip. But the Trail will not just attract overseas visitors, local residents and other Tasmanians will use the trail daily for exercise and enjoyment of the wonderful mix of forest and farmland that the trail will wind through.

The recent Northern Tasmanian Cycle Tourism Strategy, endorsed by the government and the peak tourism body, recognises that the NERT is a key driver for tourism lead revival for the struggling North East region. Forecast demand, based on solid experience from successful trails in Victoria and overseas, projects 23,000 people walking and riding the NERT when it is fully established, complementing the highly successful Derby Mountain Bike trails. No one can deny the benefit that this form of tourism has brought to Derby. Rails Trails are relatively cheap to establish and maintain and are free to use. Rail lines are closing around the world or are expensive for tourists and are heavily subsidised by governments. Our own Wet Coast Wilderness Railway is heavily subsidised due to insufficient passengers.

I travel around Australia and Europe riding bicycle routes and rail trails. The North of Tasmania has a world class rail trail to Scottsdale that will add to the existing trail that runs for 26 km east from Scottsdale. As has happened with many new trails, there has been opposition from people unfamiliar with the concept and perhaps fearful of the influx of people that the Trail will bring. In all cases, their fears have turned out to be unfounded and we have seen bitter opponents turn out to be the most enthusiastic ambassadors for their local trail. The Otago Rail Trail trust has produced documentary recording these changes of heart.

While I understand the nostalgia that the idea of a train brings, we already have a state government subsidised tourism railway in the West Coast Wilderness Railway, an attraction that the Farrell family walked away from, leaving the Tasmanian public to pick up the tab for its continuing operation. A day trip on the Wilderness railway costs \$360 for a family. Surely we can only afford one subsidised tourism railway in the State and at family tickets rumoured to be \$400 a trip for a family to Scottsdale it seems impossible for any such project to be viable without government subsidy. So I encourage the Committee to look around the world at the evidence of the success of rail trails and embrace this new opportunity.

Marie Spencer