



Dear Whitehorse Cyclists

Thank you for your time at the Whitehorse Festival recently. Since we have met I have looked through your proposal for the Box Hill to Ringwood Rail Trail. This is an interesting and worthwhile piece of relatively inexpensive infrastructure. It deserves more support than so far appears to have been provided by the 'powers that be'. Even if the environmental perspective is put aside, the proposal improves cyclist safety and fits in well with the future development planned for Ringwood and Box Hill by providing a direct transport link.

The report on your website lists a number of issues raised by officialdom I don't agree with. I can understand Vic Track wanting a large clearance on tracks with 160 kph VLocity trains, and tracks where freight trains may have loose ropes or tarpaulins. I can understand the need for vehicle access. I can understand people who work on the track need somewhere safe to stand when trains pass.

However, the new Vic Track criteria don't appear to speak of common sense. Furthermore, in the light of these criteria being so restrictive the Transport Minister's comments that, "The Box Hill to Ringwood corridor will be used as a case study to develop policies to assess when cycle path could be developed along existing and future rail and other transport infrastructure.", does not bode well for the cycling community in Victoria, let alone Whitehorse.

Our local line is one where trains reach 90kph maximum (and I think this is out beyond Ringwood) and is serviced exclusively by passenger trains. A bike track can be much closer to the line, yet have the same level of risk on our local line when compared to the Regional Fast Rail network. Similarly, is vehicle access on both sides required? Probably not.

Safe refuge for track workers on both sides is a must. Apply these criteria and you should end up with something less restrictive. If you look at the picture of what exists on page 11 of your report both photos on the top of the page show tracks with vehicle access one side, a bike track the other, and plenty of places for track workers to retreat to when a train passes. That these arrangements are no longer valid in the revised rules is a shame.

I would not be surprised if somebody has done a risk assessment to develop these criteria. That is the modern way. It is a pity that the same people didn't perform a similar risk assessment comparing the alternative of a cyclist being passed by a truck 50cm away on Whitehorse Road which is the current situation.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sheridan Lewis', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Sheridan Lewis  
Green Party Candidate for Mitcham