



## HARLEQUIN WHEELMEN ABN: 57 328 247 537

Established 1<sup>st</sup> January 1982

"We eat, sleep, breathe, live, love and race bicycles"

18 Collaroy Street, Collaroy Beach NSW 2097

Mobile: 0415 405 801 Email: [wheelmen@hotmail.com](mailto:wheelmen@hotmail.com)

### **A letter to all Cycling clubs**

Harlequin is primarily a Masters cycling club, with a long-term connection to the sport, going back to the League of NSW Wheelmen, 1893.

We are deeply concerned with the current direction of Auscycling and the complete failure to understand and implement a strategy to leverage our participation based cycling community that should be the heart of our sports future growth (and survival).

Over the last 12 months we have contacted over 50 cycling clubs across Australia to gauge the feeling amongst clubs regarding the level of satisfaction of AusCycling. Of these clubs, only two stated that they continue to support the current AusCycling leadership and direction.

It is our view that all clubs need to step forward to save the future of our sport, and that of our future champions. To this end, Harlequin have forwarded a request to the board of AusCycling, (attached below) requesting your consideration and participation in an open discussion towards change for the better.

AusCycling seeks to divide and conquer, ie minimize clubs' input. We, the clubs are a strong community of likeminded people, who must rally together and support one another all because of a common thread, the love of the sport of cycling.

### **Some areas of concern:**

#### **Engagement Deficiencies:**

AusCycling's engagement with clubs, participants, and stakeholders is inadequate, causing a disconnect within the cycling community. This is partly attributed to the replacement of experienced staff with less qualified individuals, leading to the alienation of motivated supporters.

#### **Event Management and Rider Development Concerns:**

AusCycling is failing to effectively support cycling in Australia below the elite level. Specific concerns include event organization and junior rider development. The replacement of existing pathway programs with "National" programs has not yielded demonstrably improved outcomes.

#### **Financial and Operational Issues:**

Poorly managed programs, wasted resources, and lost opportunities for talented riders are a consequence of the above issues. A lack of transparency and accountability, coupled with a perceived lack of interest in review and openness to change, exacerbate these problems.

Our proposal seeks to remedy design flaws within the Auscycling model. We advocate for a return to a more community-driven, localized approach to cycling development and event management, as opposed to the current AusCycling model.

**Summarised below:**

**Call for State-Based Management:**

A push for reverting to state-based management of cycling disciplines, aligning with the structure of the Australian Sports Commission. Auscycling only holds State Sporting Organisation (SSO) membership by default, as there are presently no state based cycling bodies, a situation we must remedy.

**Need for Change:**

A call for AusCycling to become more agile, proactive, and responsive to the needs of its members, with a focus on participation, value, and organizational effectiveness.

At the end of 2019 we (all states) were asked to “take a leap of faith”, now is the time to measure that leap.

Should your club support a change please reply to [dbpedaler@gmail.com](mailto:dbpedaler@gmail.com) with your comments and ideas.



Don Blackman  
Harlequin  
Former NSW State Cycling Coach

**Supporting comments**

An interesting comment looking from outside:

**Auscycling performing? Publisher James Yaffa offers his thoughts here.**

Auscycling should be all over participation and members’ interests like a beagle at a busy international airport! The last time I looked, which was very recently, they are a million miles away from fostering and nurturing participation.

Every rider and event should be seen as critically important to AusCycling, and each member wants to regularly see value or they’ll simply walk (or in this case, ride).

Until AusCycling really gets agile, I see more treading water and sub-par progress. Over to you AusCycling, three years in and members want a proactive organisation, agility and real action.



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To: Members of the Board of AusCycling

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

### PROPOSED SPECIAL RESOLUTION FOR CONSIDERATION

We the undersigned, on behalf of the executive members of the Harlequin Wheelmen (cycling club) request the Board of AusCycling, in the strongest terms possible, to make changes to the AusCycling constitution by way of a Special Resolution.

For the betterment of cycling in all states of Australia, it is recommended that the National Advisory Board be dissolved, and the control of cycle racing be re-instated at a State level, as originally recommended by Sport Australia, at the time of the merger.

*"Sport Australia remains committed to supporting sports **to achieve contemporary governance** arrangements through a collaborative approach with members, partner organisations and all levels of government." - Refer **Attachment B – 1** below.*

**Ross Bowles**  
**President**

**David Roggiere**  
**Secretary**

**Don Blackman**  
**Road & Track Coach**

### Supporting arguments for the need to make changes to the constitution

Evidence supporting the need for State based control to be re-instated is in line with government, National Sport and Active Recreation Policy Framework, the ASC recommendation and supported by the congratulatory letter of 20 Sept. 2020. (item B, attached below).

This proposed change comes with the recognition, in line with the ASC, that the smaller states may receive extra help from the National Body and that the National body also retain certain managerial assistance to the States activities. This Asymmetric federalism is found in a federation or other types of union in which different constituent states possess different powers: one or more of the substates has considerably more autonomy than the other substates, although they have the same constitutional status.

## **A failed business case**

From the start of AusCycling's new management, made business decisions which were based on extrinsic motivation.

The business decisions were faulty from the beginning, decisions made by individuals with limited or no knowledge of the sport of cycling. Instead of throwing out all interested parties (the state and club volunteers).

**Prior to AusCycling**, Australian Cycling had always performed well above international benchmarks. Upon taking office, Auscycling abolished all State rights and activity with great harm to the major contributing States. Dismissing all State management bodies is an error that will continue to compound for future generations. This action assumed that there was nothing worthwhile keeping, while building a "New House", which is a blatantly implausible claim.

Auscycling established a Unitary government over all Australian cycling activities, doing away with the States. By default, a unitary State is a sovereign state governed as a single entity, by a central government, that can create or abolish sub-national units. However these subunits must be the States not a sub-par National Advisory Board.

All government sectors still, and as late as March 2024, recognise State Sporting Organisations (SSO) as the emanate supplier of sport in their state.

### ***National, state and local levels***

*Sport in Australia is organised at national, state and local levels. Each major sport is managed by a national sports organisation, with state counterparts that manage community sporting clubs. The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is the Australian Government Agency responsible for supporting and investing in sport at all levels. Umbrella or peak organisations represent the interests of sports organisations or particular sport issues.*

Auscycling is a member of each state's SSO only by the default situation of there being no State Cycling bodies.

Many clubs and individuals do not support AusCycling, the psychology behind this lack of support is called "Inequity aversion" and is a concept in behavioural economics that refers to the tendency of individuals to avoid situations where they perceive that there is an unfair distribution of resources or benefits. This concept is based on the idea that people have a strong preference for fairness and are motivated to maintain a sense of equity and justice in their interactions with others. Inequity aversion can influence people's behaviour in a variety of ways, such as through their willingness to cooperate with others or their willingness to participate in social exchanges. It is an important factor in understanding human behaviour and decision-making. AusCycling has ignored this aspect of Human endeavour.

Being part and involved with a sporting organisation means social connection and being part of a community as well as a perceived "ownership" of that a sport. Intrinsic motivation in sports performance best illustrates activities of athletes who are task-oriented, and the successful realization of a certain activity leads to a feeling of satisfaction. The development of intrinsic motivation favours the satisfied psychological needs of the athlete: the experience of autonomy and personal initiative, the experience of competence and the desire for advancement, as well

as the sense of connection with the organisation, which offers them the impetus to succeed and achieve their goal.

### **Lack of Understanding of Amateur Cycling**

AusCycling has failed to identify and act on the participation drivers; a cause of one of the major outcomes (positive and negative) identified by the sector at an organisation or consumer level, is critical to delivering positive outcomes and preventing negative outcomes.

A sport which optimises this driver should: - appoint a diverse leadership team with experience relevant to drive participation outcomes for the sport. AusCycling ignores those with the most knowledge of the sport.

AusCycling fails to assess themselves against the driver, including their performance against the priority consideration set.

Planning - have an operational plan mapped to the current strategic plan, with scheduled monitoring and reviewing? Any reviews are only internal, not sport specific and fails to identify issues:

- have a participation plan, incorporated within, or aligned to, our strategic plan?
- undertake competitor analysis and a broader analysis of the external environment in which our sport operates?
- measure our progress against participation plans regularly and with the use of evidence?

Lack of sport specific knowledge in leadership. – too many people from outside the specific sport of cycling.

No understanding or recognition of the principles of sport involvement and volunteering.

No understanding of Australian Sports Commissions contemporary governance principles in leadership and inter-governmental relations.

Many of the above faults are typical of “Unitary” government Systems.

Understanding the potential barriers and facilitators to participation in their specific context, can make a significant difference in maintaining and growing the number of players, volunteers, and fans who engage and participate regularly. This has flow on effects for the long-term sustainability of individual sports, organisations, and the sector more broadly.

### **Sport leadership and integrity failures**

AusCycling National Advisory Council has one NSW member representing 35% of membership with three meetings per year, so NSW gets about 3 hours a year of input - how can this work effectively?

NSW was left without suitable qualified leadership for an 18 month period, one person is appointed to manage ACT and NSW - a person without cycle racing management experience. How can AusCycling’s largest state membership operate effectively?

## Understanding the sport failures

Lack of the statistical and historic contribution of both NSW and Victorian Riders representation will adversely affect future Olympic results.

Lack of events with only 500 in the last 12 months, as quoted by Auscycling, is approximately 1000 short after 4 years at the helm of AusCycling in charge of seven sports, covering seven states and three age divisions.

Loss of track racing and possible Olympic venue.

## Conclusion

The future success of our cyclists at international level depends on the State and clubs' ability to provide events, to support and share the wealth of knowledge, while inspiring and retaining our youth.

## Attachment B –

The following 2 extracts from documents issued at the time of the merger provide further explanation of the merger and the intention of Sport Australia to **achieve contemporary governance** of the new entity – not unitary governance, that AusCycling currently operate :

### 1 Press Release from Australian Sports Commission - 20 September 2020

*Sport Australia congratulates Cycling Australia, BMX Australia and Mountain Bike Australia on their significant decision to join forces as AusCycling.*

*Sport Australia believes the approved AusCycling model is a more modern and efficient governance structure that has the potential to deliver greater benefits to the Australian cycling community.*

*Sport Australia remains committed to supporting sports **to achieve contemporary governance** arrangements through a collaborative approach with members, partner organisations and all levels of government.*

Original document: [https://www.sportaus.gov.au/media\\_centre/news/sport-australia-welcomes-auscycling-announcement](https://www.sportaus.gov.au/media_centre/news/sport-australia-welcomes-auscycling-announcement)

### 2 Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) article – 1 April 2021

*AusCycling: Inside Australia's biggest sporting merger - Three years in the making, the AusCycling mega-merger – of 18 boards with 130 directors and 11 CEOs – involved a dramatic overhaul of structure, strategy and governance.*

Original document: <https://www.aicd.com.au/good-governance/organisational-strategy/mergers-acquisitions-takeover-strategies/auscycling-inside-australias-biggest-sporting-merger.html>