



Press Release

Saving lives on the road

The Ben Mikic Foundation has the mission of making the road a safer place for young cyclists. Through its pro-active initiatives in training and awareness, BMF is making a difference and is here for the long haul.

Ben Mikic, a talented 15 year old racing cyclist from Mittagong in the Southern Highlands, was tragically killed in a training accident on 27 April 2007. This tragedy rocked the Southern Highlands Cycling Club and community. Over 1000 people attended Ben's funeral.

BMF was founded by Ben's family, close friends and members of the Southern Highlands Club as a call to action in protecting the safety of our young riders.

According to BMF Chairman, Phil Herd, "There are two problems we are addressing. Firstly, 14 and 15 year old riders have never driven a car. Their understanding of the road is very limited. They need training before going on the road. The second issue is driver awareness of cyclists. Australian roads are a dangerous place for all cyclists. Programs addressing tolerance and awareness for drivers are not about a quick hit. This is an ongoing issue that needs constant effort. BMF is here for the long haul."

The BMF board is a focussed team of 8 people determined to drive initiatives that will have impact. Road riding skills and awareness training for young club riders has been rolled out in the Southern Highlands club and local schools. The learning from these pilot programs is being used to build packaged programs to be used nationally by other clubs.

Building an environment of tolerance and awareness of cyclists with other road users is the big goal of every cycling body and BMF is working on several initiatives to add to this voice.

Phil Herd went on to say, "Cycling as a sport, recreation and mode of transport is growing. The work of the BMF has been received well with unsolicited financial support coming from all quarters. The momentum of what are doing is building. If we can save just one life through these efforts, we will have succeeded."

The tragedy of Ben's death has been felt widely. The Drapac Porsche team have made a statement by wearing the BMF safety slapbands while racing, inadvertently starting a new fashion amongst the Aussie elite racing set.

Thousands of kids are also wearing the bands (which can be ordered online at the BMF web site) in a statement to car drivers of "we have a right to road safety."

About Ben Mikic:

Ben Mikic was killed in a collision with a car at dusk on 27 April 2007. Alex Tomlinson was also involved in the same accident but fortunately survived the crash with minor injuries.

Ben was a student at Chevalier College in Bowral and a member of the Southern Highlands Cycle Club. A talented cyclist in both road and mountain biking, Ben had been invited to join the Illawarra Academy of Sport as a member of their elite cyclists program. This invitation arrived on the day before he died.

Ben held huge promise as a racing cyclist. In two years, he made a number of notable achievements:

- 2006 Junior Hillclimb Champion for the SHCC
- SHCC Summer Cup A grade track champion
- 2nd place team member - 2007 Wingello 8 hour MTB race
- 1st place team member - 2007 Yarramundi 8 hour MTB race
- 2nd - Southern Division Interclub road race.

Ben's parents Andrea and Darren are both active cyclists. Ben was the oldest of their three sons. Daniel is 12 and James is 6.

About the Ben Mikic Foundation:

benmikicfoundation.org.au was established with the mission of making the roads a safer place for young cyclists. The foundations board is closely linked to the Southern Highlands Cycle Club as well as some of Cycle Racing's big names as Patrons. Brad McGee, James Williamson and Ben Kersten.

The Foundation operates a five point strategy which is clearly articulated on the BMF web site.