



BEN MIKIC FOUNDATION TEAM FOR CHARITY RIDE

The BMF Team has 16 riders in the Charity Ride mostly from the **Southern Highlands Cycling Club**, each of whom is aiming to raise a \$1000 for the foundation. The funds from this fundraising are used to expand the education and safety programs of the Foundation eg Mountain Bike Training

Program such as the one being held on 29 & 30 September 2008 at Biloela near Berrima in the Southern Highlands which is being heavily subsidized by the Foundation.

The riders are:

- Alex Unwin – CEO of Bicycle NSW
- Andrea and Darren Mikic – Ben’s parents
- Tom Schymitzek - Team Leader
- Claus Maarschalk
- Paul Bruce
- Mark Gallen
- Chris Watkin
- Rod McGee
- Dean Enfield
- Wendy Den (Brendan had to pull out due to an injury)
- Peter Cape
- Daniel Moit
- Richard Jefford
- Justin Beasley
- Paul Milner

The BMF has had special livery designed and produced by Cannibal in cooperation with Lynne Vaughan. And while on this subject Simon Poidevin and Paul Hillbrick should at least be able to recognise real class as the BMF Team crosses the finish line and if nothing else, the team ought to get the ‘prize for being the best kitted out and swankiest team in the history of the ride.’

The reason these riders are seeking to raise funds through the Goulburn - Citi Charity Ride is:

- To expand the ability of the BMF to make cycling a great deal safer for young riders.
- And to provide increased support for young cyclists demonstrating high levels of potential in the sport.

To this end the BMF:

- Will expand its cycle skills education program (already trialed) aimed at young cyclists and primary school students run in collaboration with the Outdoor Education Group (OEG) and led by Lynne Vaughan, with the focus on safe riding practices.
- Also in collaboration with OEG, the BMF is currently running mountain bike training programs with the specific purpose of getting youngsters off the roads and inculcating safe riding practices.
- Is a sponsor of the Illawarra Academy of Sport's elite young cyclist training program.
- Provides individual sponsorship of young cyclists embarking on important national and international events i.e. recently Charlton Durie and Shaun O'Connor, both of whom represented Australia in international championships in Italy.
- Will gain an improved ability to interact with cycling industry and government bodies to – escalate road safety awareness for all road users; accelerate the building of cycle lanes and rider friendly infrastructure on main roads to create safe environments for cyclists; lobby government to increase investment in making drivers aware that cyclists are legitimate road users and that all users must learn to share the roads equally and safely.

So the contribution and involvement in the charity ride by the sixteen riders in the BMF Team will bring benefit to young cyclists and the cycling fraternity in general. The BMF Board is most appreciative of the commitment of this team, not only in the easy bit – the ride, but also spending their time over the last few weeks in the hard bit, persuading people to sponsor their ride.

- **Taking a lead in cycling activity in NSW.**
- BMF proposed an important extension to the WSC Bike Plan and Pathway Development Strategy to position Wingecarribee Shire as the leader in cycling activity in NSW.
- We endorsed the Bike and Pathway Strategy, we said that priority must be given to establishing a safe cycle track from Mittagong to Bowral
- We also said that the WSC Strategy only recognised the needs of one user group and that there are at least seven other user groups that need to be catered for if the shire is to become a leader in biking activity.
- So the BMF is saying if you don't shoot for gold, you finish up as an also ran and we have proposed establishing an overarching goal which sets out to position Wingecarribee Shire as **'The most friendly towards cyclists of any shire in NSW'**.
- And with this aspirational goal set in stone, take a leadership role in creating an environment in which a range of different user bike groups participate in a wide range of cycling activities, all underpinned by an ethic that has 'safety' as its watchword; and importantly to promote the principle that vehicle drivers and cyclists have a responsibility to respect other users and share the roads equally and safely.
- We also suggested that Bundanoon, Robertson and the outlying villages – Welby, Braemar and Hill Top need to be included in any bike plan for the shire. The latest WSC Bike plan targets Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale only and is essentially focussed on one user group, namely family cyclists and children who use the bike tracks i.e. 1) below.
- It is suggested that there are seven other user groups that need to be catered for:
 - 1) Family cyclists and children who use the bike tracks
 - 2) Road racing cyclists who race and train on roads in the shire
 - 3) Young road racing cyclists who need a safe training circuit
 - 4) General cyclists (locals and tourists) who ride on the roads in the shire
 - 5) Mountain bike riders who train and race on mountain tracks

- 6) General bikers (locals and tourists) who ride on the mountain tracks
- 7) Track cyclists who train and race at the Veladrome
- 8) BMX riders (a trial Olympic event)

- In an ideal world all of these groups need to be addressed and if the shire is to become 'the friendly shire for cyclists', the needs of these different user groups will need to be assessed, before strategies are considered for implementation. Some of these groups have common needs - 2) and 4) for example as well as 5) and 6), although there are differences that need to be recognised.
- The recently developed WSC Bicycle Network straddling Mittagong, Bowral and Moss Vale is an excellent proposal and sets out to satisfy the needs of 'Family cyclists and children' intending to confine their biking to cycling tracks.
- The BMF proposal is obviously a considerable expansion on the plans outlined in the Bicycle Plan and Pathway Development Strategy, but if the suggested long term goal is accepted, strategies that set out to achieve this goal would or should produce a number of benefits. For example:
 - A safer cycling environment
 - A reduction in the number of accidents
 - Increased cycling activity amongst the 8 key user groups within the local population
 - A decrease in car use and as a consequence a decrease in carbon emissions
 - Increased bike usage would increase the health of participants
 - Increased tourist and visitor cycling activity across the 8 key user groups
 - An increase in local business
- And the image of Wingecarribee Shire would be enhanced when its reputation as 'the Shire most friendly to cyclists' became more widely known.
- As a first cast to get the discussion on the move, some of the potential strategies that should be implemented to address the needs of the key user groups and to set about working towards the achievement of the suggested goal for the shire ought to be:

- As a priority establish a safe cycle track from Mittagong to Bowral.
- Identify black spots in the shire that are a danger to road riding cyclists and take action to remedy
- Display signs stating: law says cyclists can ride 2 abreast. This law is not understood by a majority of vehicle drivers.
- Display signs stating law in regard to roundabouts – this law is also not understood and, apart from being a potential hazard for vehicle drivers, it is certainly a potential danger for cyclists.
- Display signs on roads commonly used by cyclists for training and racing – Watch out for cyclists.
- Upgrade the Veladrome (to get kids off the roads and expand its usage by riders of all ages)
- Establish a 1 km closed cycling circuit (criterium) for racing, training and to enable families with young children to ride in safety. (Current facility has been overtaken by the new Bunnings development at Braemar).
- Expand areas for creating mountain bike tracks and work to make the Southern Highlands a mountain bike mecca (to get kids off the roads and cater for the different categories of mountain bikers)
- Establish a site for a future BMX track in the Highlands. BMX tracks are an excellent method of training young children from age five upwards about safe riding practices. (Also it is a useful strategy to get kids off the roads and interest young riders in alternative cycling activities)
- Work with school principals to identify safe routes for kids to cycle to and from school (examining this issue alone will highlight the extent to which car usage, driver attitudes and driver behaviour dominate our culture and as a consequence it will highlight just how 'unfriendly' this culture, these attitudes and behaviours have become towards biking and cycling and even walking). Bicycle NSW has a ride to Ride to School program which it promotes, but this program needs to run in parallel with a program that also designates safe bike routes for children and teenagers on bikes.
- Put the Picton/Mittagong cycle track along old rail line on Bike Plan agenda; and consider adding the Moss Vale – Goulburn track at a later date. There is talk about pushing this track to Cooma (NSW is playing catch up with Victoria and SA and we are light years behind the Northern Hemisphere in terms of establishing 'safe' family friendly bike tracks).
- Include representatives from the road cycling community on the WSC Road Safety Committee.

- Following on from the above what would be the response of your party to the following:
 - Do you support the implementation the WSC Bike Plan and Pathway Development Strategy?
 - Do you support the proposal of constructing a safe bike track from Mittagong to Bowral as a priority?
 - Do you support the proposal of establishing Wingecarribee as the shire that is the friendliest towards cyclists of any shire in NSW?
 - Assuming the answer to the above is a 'yes', do you support a reasoned consideration of the above strategies and initiatives, infrastructure improvements and the approval of designated areas and sites that will both enhance the following biking activities and enhance safety:
 - 1) Road racing cyclists who race and train on roads in the shire.
 - 2) Young road racing cyclists who need a safe criterium circuit which can also be used by families.
 - 3) General cyclists (locals and tourists) who ride on the roads in the shire.
 - 4) Mountain bike riders who train and race on mountain tracks.
 - 5) General bikers (locals and tourists) who ride on the mountain tracks.
 - 6) Track cyclists who train and race at the Veladrome.
 - 7) BMX riders (a trial Olympic event).

It should be added that the BMF is not expecting a new Council to implement all of the above. We see this as a joint effort between the community and the Council, with the community playing its role in the implementation phases. For example activities like mountain biking and a BMX site only need Council approval and some supervision – the cycling fraternity can organise the most of the rest. A safe road racing/family use criterium; an upgrade of the Veladrome and the Picton Mittagong cycling rail track will cost so these facilities will need planning, budgeting and community cooperation. Other actions such as signage, safe cycling routes to schools and overcoming black spots and dangerous road conditions could all be factored into Council and RTA road upgrade schedules.

The BMF is interested in the response of your party to these proposals in writing – say by week ending 5th Sep to enable us to inform the local cycling community.

Phil Herd
BMF Chairman

