

News from the Board – May 2008

May 8th 2008 Road Rage incident

We were outraged by this incident, and also by some of the commentary in the media in the days that followed. Thank you to the many members who responded to our calls for action late last week, with hundreds of messages of support for the athletes - emails have come in from around the world! We also appreciate your support for our efforts to encourage government to show strong leadership to prevent road rage and address the need for more and safer bike riding infrastructure.

Bicycle NSW Constitutional Review

Many thanks to those members who have responded to the details of this process outlined on the website at <http://www.bicyclensw.org.au/AGM.asp>. At the 7th May Board meeting we discussed feedback received from members so far, and debated the “pros and cons” of the proposed changes. We greatly appreciate and encourage continued input from members on this important subject, and will keep you informed and update the website with relevant news as it comes to hand, with a view to finalizing our recommendations at our next meeting - so please log on before the 30th May and have your say!

The latest chapter in the Great Escape story

We have been contacted by some members following the information we provided in the April News from the Board on this subject. We are delighted to have heard that some local Bicycle User Groups are investigating options for running a multi day ride in NSW next year. Bicycle NSW would be pleased to promote these events via the on line rides calendar, member emails and in Push On. Any group wishing to undertake promotion of multi day and other bicycle touring options, should contact CEO Alex Unwin on aunwin@bicyclensw.org.au with details of their ride.

The June Board meeting will include a de-brief from Bicycle Victoria on the 2008 Great Escape and we thought it might be helpful for members to share more information about the Board's position in relation to our ongoing role in multi day events:

- BNSW has always prided itself on delivery top class riding experiences for close to 1000 cyclists every year. The decision to cease delivering multi-day rides has not been taken lightly given this proud history.
- Because of the nature and cost of these events, they have tended to take a significant portion of BNSW resources throughout the year, and almost totally for the months leading up to the event.
- The financial implications of failing to get the ride marketing and delivery right in a very competitive rider market, are now immense, and several times in the past we were concerned that the organization would collapse financially, given the substantial costs, and our limited resources, and fickle rider market in bookings.
- Our strategy is to get more riders riding more often so we are finding it increasingly difficult to take huge financial risks and mobilize a large portion of our team which delivers an outstanding ride and experience, but only to 1000 riders - and at the risk of a loss, not to speak of the other risks inherent to a complex public event

- We are now looking to help influence and improve conditions to benefit the estimated millions of people who have a bike in NSW, including the 350,000 who buy a new bike every year (1.4m divided by one quarter of Australia's population - estimate only).
- This includes new rides to new aspiring riders such as Gear up Girl and the Spring Cycle which attracts over 7,000 riders per year.
- Much of our focus will not be on rides but the areas referred to in our strategy, published in last year's annual report.
- There will continue to be some great rides offered every year across Australia, and again from time to time in NSW through our coalition cycling group partners, continuing to provide quality experiences
- We hope you will support the changes we are making to ensure our efforts make a positive contribution to hundreds and thousands of cyclists all over NSW, including keeping cycling on the Government agenda -at all levels - in targeted and sustainable ways.

The Bicycle Coalition

Many members will have heard about the launch of the Bicycle Coalition in September last year www.bicyclecoalition.com.au Plans are now being made to bring together the respective Presidents of the organisations that make up the Coalition. A key discussion item here is how we might work together to address the opportunities presented by the current rhetoric from the government in Canberra re "new federalism".

Finally...

As always we welcome the opportunity for input and discussion with our members. We will endeavour to address your concerns, comments and feedback through president@bicyclensw.org.au

Please remember, the board exists to ensure that Bicycle NSW is well managed – we are not directly involved in day-to-day operations. You can find more information about the role we play at <http://www.bicyclensw.org.au/BicycleNSWBoard.asp>