

Bikes, Bread and AB Mauri

Bread and other bakery products are a vital food item for many cyclists (along with coffee, of course). So it seems fitting that at least one of the BNSW 'Ride to Work' case studies focuses on a yeast & bakery ingredient company.

AB Mauri are one of the largest producers and distributors of yeast and bakery ingredients in the world. The company has global headquarters in the UK and the regional headquarters for its China East Asia Pacific region is in Camellia (near Parramatta) in Sydney.

Sean Goonan, the region's commercial manager (specialty yeast), said that a bike promotion program was set up over 12 months ago. Staff can buy a bike and accessories up to \$1000, keep the receipt – then each time they ride to work they get \$10 back.

Eight Sydney staff initially took up the offer (six in Camellia and two in the North Ryde Global Technical Group). Four took up the offer in Toowoomba, the 'Garden City' on top of the Great Dividing Range in south east Queensland. Staff at this location prefer mountain bikes and some used the financial incentive to upgrade their existing mountain bikes.

Cyclists at each location have access to showers, lockers and a bike rack. The Sydney showers were upgraded two years ago.

How did the bike promo program start?

The bike promotion program was initiated by the (then) general manager Chris King, "a mad bicycle man" who rode to Camellia from Manly via the ferry. He encouraged staff to get fit; banned smoking and introduced get fit programs. Providing a financial incentive for staff to ride to work was one way to improve their fitness levels.

Dane Scerri, wine yeast sales manager, rides from Sydney's inner west via the Parramatta river ferry. He said that the combination of good bike infrastructure in his local area and Sydney Ferries' bike friendly policy (no extra charge for bikes) makes it an enjoyable trip to work.

So why drive?

There is no real public transport to Camellia, so most staff drive to work. Sean "would love to ride to work" (admitting that he needs to get fitter and that the \$1000 would be a significant bonus). However he would have to ride along a particularly nasty section of Pennant Hills Road at peak hour, something he is simply not prepared to do.

The former general manager / cycle commuter Chris King has moved on and not so many staff are riding regularly to work at Camellia now. A combination of family commitments, heavy traffic and a lack of cycling infrastructure in Sydney's Western Suburbs has discouraged additional people from taking the bike program up. However Sean said that details will be published on the new Australia-New Zealand staff intranet "once it is up and running" to make it easier for staff to find out about the program. This will hopefully encourage more people to ride to work at AB Mauri.