

## *Volunteers in the Spotlight*

### **Louise Heather**

Why do I volunteer?

After seeing friends and family volunteering for various organisations I decided to give it a try. Of course, with good friend Tony Henderson working for Bicycle NSW, I was given a bit of extra encouragement to give it a go.

My first event was for the 2008 Spring Cycle. I was put in charge of one of the rest stops and with the confidence and encouragement of the team at Bicycle NSW, I managed to pull it off without a hitch. Everyone had such a great day and it was inspiring to see the appreciation from the riders passing through the area. They were so thankful for the team of volunteers for helping make the day possible and I was left feeling as though I'd really helped people in the community. It also gave me an appreciation for the volunteers who had helped me in the past at events that I have attended.

I realised that volunteering is for everyone and there is a huge range of people getting involved such as young students, mothers, fathers, retirees and people of all backgrounds. It was also a lot of fun with the chance to meet new people and attend such events as the volunteer's dinner — where I won the 'little miss sunshine' award.



Since the Spring Cycle I've volunteered for Gear Up Girl, another Bicycle NSW event. It has further inspired me to keep going with my volunteering – not just for cycling events but also in my field of study — nursing, with the hope of travelling overseas when I finish my degree to volunteer for organisations aiding developing nations in healthcare.

Taking that first step to volunteer was a little daunting at first but I quickly learnt that with the support of the team at Bicycle NSW I was able to develop my leadership skills, use skills that I already possess and have a bit of fun at the same time. I can't wait for my next event and to see where my volunteering can take me — fingers crossed it's all over the world and beyond.