

4,000 Canberrans break records on National Ride to Work Day

Leon Arundell

On Wednesday October 17 thousands of Canberrans left their cars at home and joined with up to 90,000 people in Australia's largest active transport event and Australia's largest cycling event, the first National Ride to Work Day.

Over 1,600 Canberrans registered for the day, from almost 100 workplaces. Bicycle Victoria, which has held Ride to Work Days for many years in Victoria, estimates that for every person who registers there are two other people who ride to work without registering. On that basis, we estimate that 4,200 Canberrans rode to work on the day.

The biggest local Ride to Work Day breakfast was hosted by the Department of the Environment and Heritage in Parkes. According to Jane Spence, 240 people attended from Environment and Heritage and from neighbouring Departments. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Barton held a breakfast for 30 staff.

Mike Stack from Lend Lease arranged a CBD breakfast in Civic. 160 people attended, even though this breakfast was organised at short notice. Baker's Delight provided bread for the barbecued sausages, and 40 date scones which soon disappeared. Trevor from Lonsdale St Cyclery offered free bike checks, and the Heart Foundation and Ecco shoes provided show bags. Sanjeev Sood amazed the crowd by arriving on a double-decker bike. He also won the Rideshop prize of a \$400 Trek commuter bike. Perhaps he will use it as the third storey of a triple-decker bike for next year!

ANUGreen hosted a Ride to Uni breakfast for 145 people, and Australian Ethical Investments hosted a Community Breakfast in Bruce, for 34 people.

In Woden, Ride to Work volunteers from the Australian Departments of Health, Family and Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, IP Australia, Centrelink and Veteran's Affairs, coordinated a healthy breakfast outside the offices of Health & Ageing, which was attended by over 50 people in blustery conditions. Health provided the breakfast through a healthy eating funding grant. The breakfast was also the starting point for the Workplace Transport Challenge Race, which timed a motorist, ACTION bus passenger and a group of cyclists from Woden to Tuggeranong. The motorist took 21 minutes (including parking time), the bus passenger 22 minutes and the cycling group, riding into the southerly gale, a respectable 26 minutes.

National Ride to Work Day was supported by Pedal Power ACT in conjunction with Bicycle Victoria, Bicycle New South Wales, Bicycle SA, Bicycle Queensland, Bicycle Transportation Alliance (WA), Cycling WA, Bicycle NT, Cycling South (Tas), the Australian Government Departments of Health and Ageing, and Environment and Water Resources (Australian Greenhouse Office), TravelSmart Australia, TravelSmart Victoria, TravelSmart South Australia, ABC Local Radio, 'Go for your life', EPA Victoria, RACV Bike Assist, Trek Bicycles Australia, Bakers Delight, the Victorian Farmers Federation & Australian Grown, Lend Lease, the City of Sydney, the Hobart and Adelaide City Councils, Pacific Strategies, and Federation Square (Melbourne).