

President's Report 2008

Bicycle Tasmania I am very pleased to report is growing steadily, membership and sources of income continue to increase providing a sound political and financial foundation to expand our advocacy work. There are also more members volunteering time to help, which is fantastic. Whether it is many hours a month or 30 minutes, any contribution increases our capability for getting more people cycling. Many of our activities do not require a substantial amount of time and can be very enjoyable.

Cyclists are an indicator species of a healthy society, Bicycle Tasmania's work undoubtedly contributes to the development of such a society. This would not be possible without the hundreds and hundreds of hours contributed by all those involved. An absolute heartfelt thank you must go to everyone who has helped make this possible. This is especially so for the BT Executive, their dedication and hard work are essential to Bicycle Tasmania's successful operation and capability.

Interaction with the cycling community has increased this year particularly with the valet bicycle parking service at the Taste of Tasmania and Treadlightly Festival. It really surprised me how a relatively simple concept such as providing a bicycle parking service at major events would be so popular and have such a positive effect. From the simple provision of bike security, to a fundamental message to the community - leave the car at home; it is better for everyone and the world around us, to cycle if you can.

There has also been a substantial increase in participation in the regular Bicycle Tasmania recreational rides, whether a BBQ ride or a hilly 60km, it is very empowering to directly encourage more bums on saddles.

It is evident that the recent increase in the price of oil has had a positive effect on cycle use both locally, where there are undoubtedly more cyclists on the road, to news articles worldwide reporting the same thing. Not only of course can replacing car journeys with cycling save individuals a substantial amount of money but it also saves our society a significant amount too. A report from the UK Cycling Touring Club put the cost savings to Government per kilometre cycled instead of driving at 60c. Given such savings the Government could pay us a small amount to ride and still save money.

Regular rides and events such as Bike Week, the BIG RIDE and National Ride to Work Day have seen a significant increase in numbers. National Ride to Work Day this year is 15th October, put it in your diary now! It is likely that there will be bike breakfasts in Launceston and Burnie this year for the first time, as well as in Hobart - keep an eye on the Tasmanian Cycling Calendar (biketas.org.au).

A big thank you to Kingborough Bicycle User Group, who won this year's Clips Award for their lobbying for cycle lanes on the uphill sides of the Channel Highway over Bonnet Hill. Although it may be some time before these are built, making it easy for motorists and cyclists to share that section of highway, their outstanding work towards this has to be recognised. Good work guys, well done.

Before I look beyond the AGM I must of course mention what is probably the most significant event of the previous year - the announcement in the State Budget of \$4 million over the next 3 years to fund the construction of city cycle ways and rural trails. The funding itself and especially the significant change in funding policy direction that it demonstrates are extremely welcome. Premier David Bartlett and his Government are to be congratulated.

With all this and a lot more behind us it is with anticipation and excitement I look forward to the year ahead. As well as realistically being able to expect continuing growth in membership, volunteer involvement and participation in events there are always new initiatives on the horizon. First of all we are working on an online membership database, as Bicycle Tasmania has grown our current methods of managing this information are proving inefficient, the new system will enable us to manage an increasing membership more easily and be more effective in distributing information.

More significantly Bicycle Tasmania and the Tasmanian Bicycle Council are organising the first ever conference for all Tasmanian recreational and transport cycling advocacy groups and interested individuals. A collaborative structure and coordinated events and advocacy work will be much more effective at promoting transport and recreational cycling to the community and Government. The conference aims to start the process of cooperation by developing strategies, exchanging information and planning future growth.

It is on this optimistic note that I must finish this report, thanks for reading this far, thanks for being involved and power to your pedals.

Tim Stredwick
President
Bicycle Tasmania