



# Cyc-ed Out

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The Newsletter of  
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## Special points of interest:

- Cycling pushed down Council list in budget
- City to University cycle route mapped
- Find out what rides are on this weekend and what's coming up.
- Is your photo in this issue? See the Gloucester ride report.

## Inside this issue:

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## We want your ride information!

We want you to get busy taking photos of you and your friends out enjoying your favourite rides. Please send them to the editor and get your face in this newsletter

## From the President's Handlebars

David Bennett

### On Rail trails.....

Fernleigh Track is now well and truly open and being well used right through to Belmont. With the focus now shifting to connections along the route and beyond. We believe Fernleigh is one of only three rail trails established in NSW.

At our last meeting David Atkinson and Lloyd Davies updated us on their work on the Richmond Vale Rail Trail. This trail has been on wish lists for cyclists including NCM members for some years. The trail is around 28km long and runs from Hexham to Kurri. It is closed in places due to tunnels that have been blocked to keep trail bikes out. The trail has potential to become a brilliant tourist route linking Newcastle with the Hunter. It's potential is even greater with Wallsend



Richmond Vail rail tunnel

Glendale and Fernleigh tracks providing a platform to create a wider circuit that could readily join to Richmond Vale. NCM confirmed that it still supported Richmond Vale. Richmond Vale remains the most attractive tourism-based cycling development in the area. It could attract State tourism and Federal Regional Infrastructure funds. David and Lloyd and a group of champions of the project will be working to build support for the trail amongst local councillors and business.

We also recently met with Jeanette and Trevor Tomkins who are working towards establishing a rail trail in Queensland from Bethania to Beaudesert in south-east Queensland. Trevor and Jeanette hope to convince others to visit Fernleigh to see what can be achieved.



David Bennett  
NCM President

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## City to Campus Cycle Route

Nick Batt

While Newcastle has some great cycling facilities, they are often difficult to find due to inadequate signage.

Maps provided by the RTA focus on main roads, when there is often much safer and more pleasant low-traffic streets running parallel. While some cyclists will search out the best routes, many other cyclists (especially novices) are likely to be turned off the idea after a stressful ride on a busy road. In order to improve the appeal of cycling in Newcastle, knowledge of the best routes need to be shared as effectively as possible.

The Newcastle University Bike Users Group (NUBUG), in consultation with NCM developed a preferred route from the city to the university based on the Newcastle Bike Plan 2009. NUBUG then forwarded the proposal to council which has since done a full route audit to assess where wayfinding signage should be installed.

In conjunction with wayfinding work, council plans to upgrade the entire route to Ausroads standards. This will include road marking, minor civil works and warning signs for motorists.

Council plan to have route 6 in place within the next few months.



# Cycling pushed down list in Council budget

NCMs response to Council Budget proposals written by Ben Ewald



**“A cycleways program is budgeted at \$15 million dollars over the ten years of the forward plan. This is included only in scenario four, the highest cost scenario that is least likely to be funded.”**



**“Cycling can help Newcastle become healthier, cleaner, quieter. . .”**

With extensive community consultation conducted during the 2030 planning process, with a high level of participation in public meetings and the written submission process, a strong message was delivered to Council that there is a high level of community interest in, and demand for cycling to be catered for as a transport option. The key aspect making cycling an attractive transport choice is improved safety, for the very large number of people who would like to ride but do not feel safe mixed with traffic on a busy road.

There are many things Council could do to make cycling safer, the main ones being to identify and streamline cycle routes on quiet back roads, and to provide separated space on crowded and busy main roads.

The benefits to Newcastle of becoming a cycling friendly city are enormous and multifaceted. Cycling can help Newcastle become healthier, cleaner, quieter, less congested, more equitable, and more inclusive. These benefits have been recognised on other cities around Australia, and there has been a step change in the level of funding directed to cycling infrastructure. These cities have made a commitment to increase cycling as a percentage of urban trips, such as Sydney's target of 5% by 2011 and 10% by 2016. Newcastle has natural advantages for cycling and could realistically adopt similar five and ten year targets. The 2030 planning process is an opportunity for Newcastle to redirect Council spending to be in line with the community wishes as expressed during the consultation process, but the proposed budget allocation does not reflect this.



A cycleways program is budgeted at \$15 million dollars over the ten years of the forward plan. This is included only in scenario four, the highest cost scenario that is least likely to be funded. This is 0.49% of the total council budget of \$3,200m.

As a proportion of Council budget spent on cycling, this compares very poorly to Sydney City Council which is currently spending \$17.5 million per year out of a total annual budget of \$450 million, ie 3.9%.

The cycleways program gets less money even than the Art Gallery. The current art gallery delivers an excellent service and has a large collection of works. By comparison the city of Sydney supported the NSW art gallery in 2009 with a grant of \$11,085. That's not \$11 million but \$11 thousand! The capital city art gallery is supported by state revenue (49% of recurrent funding), so why is the regional gallery paid for by rate payers?

Swimming pools are important recreational facilities, and we have several good inland pools as well as the ocean baths. Cycle facilities offer not only a similar recreational function, but also a transport function. Maintenance of the current pools is covered elsewhere in the budget, so the 25.7 million in the forward budget is a new facility. We think that a cycleways program is a higher community priority.

We believe that it would reflect community values to delay some of the maintenance expenditure on roads in order to build a safe and attractive cycleway network.

# A reflection on mirrors

Cyclists can be a funny bunch. They will use a horn to warn of their approach in a car but will consider a bell a non-essential piece of equipment. Similarly we will routinely use a rear view mirror in the car but not even consider a mirror for our bike. Mirrors, used wisely, can actually transform the way you ride and improve your safety.

When driving we never think twice about the importance of a mirror. It is normal to look behind to see what is looming in the rear. On a bike, the rider is even more in need of checking behind. As on-road cyclists, we are the most vulnerable if something goes wrong. We are the ones that most need to know where the danger is coming from. Yet most of us rely on ears and turning our heads to know this. How often do we see riders moving off their line as they check over the shoulder?



In busy areas, where car doors may be opening in front of us, it is very handy to know how far behind the next car is. It is then often possible to move into the main roadway in complete safety, well clear of opening doors.

Mirrors are useful also on off-road cycleways. Many of us like to travel two abreast where there is room but sometimes it is good to know that there are faster riders behind who will want to pass. To reduce collision risks it is easier, using a mirror, to know when to drop back to single file temporarily to make any passing move safer. As cycleways become more congested this sort of thing will become more and more common.

Mirrors can be bought to go on bar ends of hybrid and mountain bikes. I suggest avoiding the cheaper (\$15 approx) designs which are difficult to get into any useable position. You end up looking at the hairs on your arms instead of traffic. There are helmet mounted designs. And there are now designs to suit road bars including those with Shimano STI levers. A good mirror will probably set you back \$30-\$50.

So, think about seeing what's going on behind... it helps you enjoy what's ahead in comfort and safety.

## Changed traffic conditions for cyclist on F3

*The Hunter Expressway development has caused the closing of some sections of the F3 to motorists. The RTA has stated:*

"Cyclists are advised there will be changed riding conditions for cyclists on the F3 Freeway from the Newcastle Interchange to the West Wallsend interchange, starting this month. The changes will be in place from 16 March 2011 for a period of approximately 20 months.

Both directions of the F3 Freeway between West Wallsend exit (George Booth Drive) and the Newcastle interchange (Newcastle Link Road) will be closed to cyclists during this time.

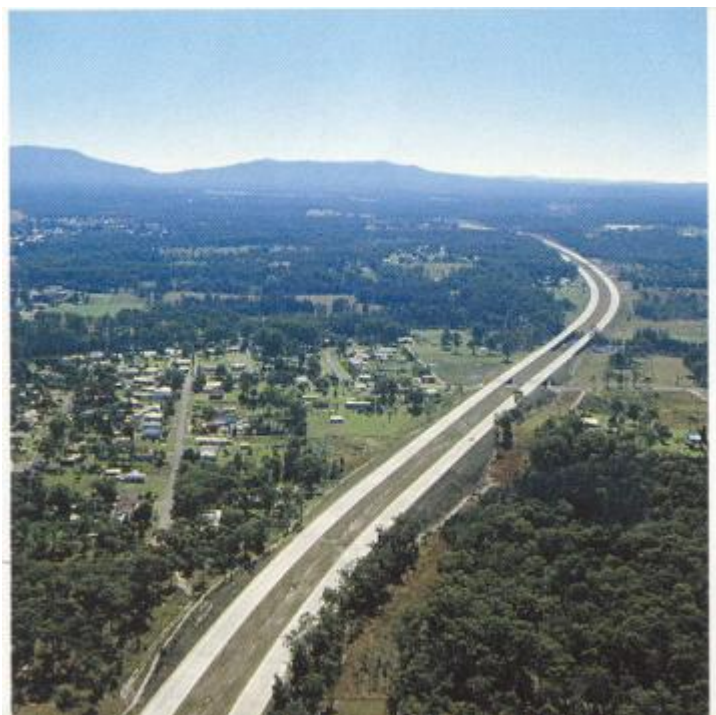
Cyclists will need to use an alternative route.

### Alternative routes

- Cyclists travelling northbound on the F3 are advised to use the West Wallsend exit (George Booth Drive) then travel along Cameron Park Drive to rejoin the F3 freeway using the northbound on ramp of the Newcastle interchange.
- Cyclists travelling southbound on the F3 are advised to use the Newcastle exit (Newcastle Link Road) then travel along Cameron Park Drive to rejoin the F3 freeway at the West Wallsend (George Booth Drive) interchange.

For more information go to the RTA website at:

<http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au>





# Easter at Gloucester

A great deal of planning has paid off for Adrian Brown this last Easter with a highly successful and rewarding cycling adventure in Gloucester enjoyed by a motley bunch of NCM riders.

The team camped at Gloucester caravan park which may have been a nightmare considering we shared it with 900 other visitors. However, thanks to Adrian's forethought and clever negotiation we were given an isolated spot not far from amenities and tracks leading out of the camp.

The rides planned proved very enjoyable with most being on quiet back roads. We even had to negotiate some water crossings. It was interesting to see which method of crossing proved the driest with Steve Nutt winning in that department.

The local council even favoured us (a rarity I know) with an anticipated set of rough corrugated roads the cyclists were met with recently graded, smooth, firm roads on the dirt sections.

It was great to be able to hang together at the campsite and check out who had the most comfortable camp chair. (very jealous Jenny). Thanks to Chris and Jenny Dibben for supplying the big tarp which made for a great meeting place. Many a brew was made on the stove and many a yarn about cycling and other adventures was had.

Thanks again to Adrian for organising a great trip.



The group assembling for the first ride on Friday in brilliant spring sunshine



Another day another ride in the marvelous Gloucester sunshine



Backcountry roads were smooth to ride on



A rest stop after a steep climb



## From the President's Handlebars cont.

### Bike City Forum a success

Congratulations to the organisers of the recent Bike City Forum in Newcastle. There were 90 people present at the forum recently from Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. The magnificent attendance impressed both guest speakers, Fiona Campbell, Cycling Strategy Manager from City of Sydney and Omar Khalifa, CEO of Bicycle NSW. Fiona's presentation in particular seemed to strike a chord. She gave a frank presentation about the work needed to install separated cycle routes in Sydney. It is a massive effort backed by \$76m commitment, a staff of 20 and a mayor who seems very committed to completing the task despite areas of resistance.

Omar Khalifa explained Bicycle NSW's role in supporting cyclists in NSW including its recent involvement in regional consultations with RTA. These consultations which began in Coffs Harbour will be spreading throughout NSW and Newcastle's first forum is expected in coming weeks.

It was also heartening that the meeting was opened by newly elected member for Newcastle Tim Owen. He spoke about his cycling in Denmark which he visits often. Mr Owen seemed very positive about the potential for cycling in Newcastle and beyond.

The organisers brought perspectives from urban planning, environment and sustainability, energy management and pure cycling fun to the forum. It was a mix well beyond our normal perspective as cycling enthusiasts. The Forum aimed to raise awareness about possibilities and benefits for major cycling change in Newcastle and the Lake. I believe Bernard Hocking and his team well and truly achieved this aim.

### A busy period for cycling - but the dollars don't match the words

Both Newcastle and Lake Macquarie now have cycle plan reviews under way. Newcastle is furthest developed but still waiting on finalisation of a 2009 draft plan. Lake Macquarie has begun its review.

Peter Lee of NCM is one of 8 community representatives and 3 Councillors appointed to an external Cycle Planning Committee. That Committee has had its first meeting with GHD Consultants who have been contracted to produce a Lake Macquarie Plan. We trust that this meeting will be the first of many.

NCM will be seeking a meaningful budget, an ongoing consultative process for cycling, an increase in status for cycling within Councils organisation structure, regular public reviews and reporting. We are looking to ensure that the next plan becomes a living document rather than a dust collector.



**"The Forum aimed to raise awareness about possibilities and benefits for major cycling change in Newcastle and the Lake"**



## FAR NORTH BIKE TOUR

After the devastation of the NQ cyclones new cycle routes have been created in this region.

One such cycling event may interest you. Check it out at this link:

<http://wwwfnqbiketour.org.au>

The editor would like to receive any articles that you may wish to appear in the next newsletter. Send your items to:

[chrisandjenny@aapt.net.au](mailto:chrisandjenny@aapt.net.au)



# Cycling Calendar

## GRADING FOR CYCLE RIDES

C	Child friendly	CtoC	Call to confirm
E	Easy ride	F	Fast Pace
H	Significant Hills	M	Mountain bike required
O	Moderate pace	P	Includes c/Paths (off rd)
S	Slow pace	T	Some Traffic
U	Includes Unsealed or dirt roads		
W	Includes cycleWays (on road)		
X	For eXperienced riders		

## Saturdays

**NEWCASTLE** (All rides are followed by breakfast at Juicy Beans in Wheeler Place, Civic.)

**“Saturday Saunter”** – Grade: ESPT

Contact: NCM 4944 7869

Starts 8.00am from Stewart Ave and Hannell St, Newcastle West.

Easy ride, suitable for beginners /new members. Opportunity to start/get back to cycling and meet some new people.

**“Steel River Ride”** – Grade: EO – Distance: 1 hour Average Speed <25kph

Contact: Don 4944 7869.

Starts 8:00 am from Stewart Ave Railway Crossing, Newcastle West. Easy ride, suitable for those wanting a faster pace than the "Saturday Social Saunter" but slower and shorter than the "Cobweb Ride".

**“Fernleigh & Foreshore Ride”** – Grade: EOTPW – Distance: 40km – Speed 20-22kph

Contact: Leigh 49297859

Starts 7.00am from the No 2 Sportsground entrance opposite the RTA in Parry St Newcastle West. If you miss the start you can catch up with the ride or meet them on the return along Fernleigh Track.

**“Cobweb Ride”** – Grade: FTWX – Distance 40km – Speed 25-30kph

Contact: Chris - 0432663786

Starts: 7:30am from the corner of Hunter Street and Wood Street, Newcastle West (in front of the Hunter Street entrance to former museum). Moderate/fast paced ride suitable for road bike riders who want a bit of a challenge but still like to have a chat on the trip with fellow riders.

## MAITLAND

**Saturday Morning Social Ride**

Contact: Tony Pennell 4932 3030 (call to confirm) or [pennell@aapt.net.au](mailto:pennell@aapt.net.au)

## Sundays

**“Double Take Ride”** – Grade FTWX – Distance – 45- 55km

Contact : David 0401 159 277 (call to confirm)

Starts: 7:00am (6:30am on the week of the long ride) outside Double Take Café, The Boulevard. Toronto (near roundabout). Various routes. Brisk pace aiming for 25kph average speed. Returns to Double Take Café for a coffee at 9.00-9.30am. Aim for one longer ride per month e.g. Loop the Lake.

**“Fernleigh Track ‘n Back”** – Grade EOPCtoC – Distance: 35km

Contact: Chris - 0432663786

Starts:2:00pm at the Adamstown end of the Fernleigh Track. Ride the full length of the Fernleigh track to Belmont and return. Riders then head for a coffee at a shop of their choice in Beaumont or Darby Streets. Pace will depend on how busy the track is. Call to confirm.

**“Morpeth Nostalgia” Sunday 5th June-** Grade OXT

Contact: Chris - 0432663786

Ride to Morpeth via Industrial Hwy then New England Hwy. Turn off at Tarro and head along back roads to Morpeth. Stop in town for coffee and a look around. Return along different back roads to Beresfield or Raymond Terrace before hitting the traffic into Newcastle. A chance to practice group riding techniques.

