

***‘On yer bike!’  
A guide to setting  
up and running a  
successful cycling  
group for seniors***

U3A Yarra City  
“On yer bike!” Cycling Group  
August 2018

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## What sort of bike group do you want to set up?

- What do you want your group to be about?
- What's its purpose?
- What's it for?
- Who is it for?
- How do you want it to work?
- Where will you ride?
- How will you ride? Competitive, social, easy, hard...?
- How often will you ride?

### Example:

*The YarraCityU3A 'On yer bike!' Group was set up to be inclusive, sociable and non-competitive.*

*It has 3 guiding principles:*

- Lycra is optional
- No one gets left behind
- Pedalling for pleasure

*Rides are on Melbourne's very extensive off-road bike path network. The group very rarely rides on roads.*

*It has always seen itself as a group of seniors voluntarily engaging in a discretionary leisure/recreational activity. This approach has worked well for this group.*

There's no need to be rigid about how your group runs. It may start off as one type of group and then as time passes and with experience the group may 'morph' to suit the preferences of members and other reasons.

## Setting up a bike group within an existing organisation or program

There are many organisations and programs in Victoria that run a range of activities for seniors.

Some of these are:

- U3A The University of the Third Age <https://www.u3avictoria.com.au/>
- Life Activities Clubs of Victoria <http://life.org.au/>
- COTA Council on the Ageing Victoria  
[https://cotavic.org.au/about/?gclid=CjwKCAjwkrbBRB9EiwAhIN8\\_EcCXO5qn8g6K7xA\\_MeV4s2fThHT72clV7unXaL2\\_Lzg11d6Ma1\\_U8RoCT-sQAvD\\_BwE](https://cotavic.org.au/about/?gclid=CjwKCAjwkrbBRB9EiwAhIN8_EcCXO5qn8g6K7xA_MeV4s2fThHT72clV7unXaL2_Lzg11d6Ma1_U8RoCT-sQAvD_BwE)
- Probus Victoria <https://www.probusvic.com.au/>
- Neighbourhood Houses/Centres <https://www.nhvic.org.au/>
- Local Councils
- Meetup <https://www.meetup.com/en-AU/>
- Bicycle User Groups <https://www.bicycles.net.au/directory/?listing-type=bicycle-user-groups&country=&state=Victoria&suburb=&orderby=title&order=ASC>

Setting up a bike group in an existing organisation has a lot of advantages:

- you already have direct access to a group of possible riders,
- administration, communications etc may be a lot easier
- things like insurance may already be available
- you can get general advice and support on sett

- there may already be a bike group and you can piggyback on them eg many U3A's have bike groups so if a particular U3A didn't have a bike group then a lot of support and advice is available from the U3A network

## **Setting up a bike group by yourself**

This is quite common and there are many informal bike groups around. Sometimes this may be the best type of group to set up. It depends on you and your circumstances. How formal and organised you want to make it is upto you.

If you want to set up an informal group you'll find a lot of information in this guide will be useful in setting up a successful group.

## **Insurance and legal matters**

As the organiser /leader of a bike group you need to work out if there are any legal or related matters that need to be considered. This could include things like:

- Insurance for riders
- Insurance for the organiser/leader
- Legal liabilities, responsibilities and duties of all and any parties involved in/with the group

Advice on these very important matters can't be given here. This should be obtained from proper sources like a lawyer or the organization you're setting up the bike group within.

## **Recruiting members for a seniors bike riding group**

### **Advertising and providing information about your bike group :**

KISS principle

Positive and welcoming

Promote the many benefits and few costs

### **Communicating with prospective members**

What are their concerns and questions? (See also the later section *How to work successfully with seniors who are attracted by the idea of riding a bike but have reservations and concerns about getting "On yer bike!"*)

What do they want, what are they looking for ?

What is your group about and how does it work?

Where do you ride, how do you ride, why do you ride ?

Making an offer to prospective members to come'n'try without making a commitment to joining the group or feeling obligated is a good idea.

Contact with prospective members:

- face to face
- telephone
- email
- post
- local newspapers etc
- public noticeboards
- internet
- community events and 'expos'
- shopping malls
- GP waiting areas
- etc

See **Appendix 1** for an example of an information sheet for prospective bike group members

See **Appendix 2** for an example of a flyer/poster for prospective bike group members

## **Working with seniors who have reservations and concerns about getting “On yer bike!”**

When setting up a bike group you can expect to get enquiries from seniors who like the idea of riding a bike but have reservations and concerns about getting “On yer bike!” Maybe they haven’t ridden for a long time or have never ridden at all.

Here are some case studies<sup>1</sup> based on our experiences in the OYB (‘On Yer Bike!’) group over the last 5 years.

We look at some reservations and concerns expressed by prospective members and how we responded.

### **Anna: “Can I keep up with the group?”**

- Anna is worried that she will not be able to keep up with the cycling group.
- In particular she has noticed that she is frequently passed when on the bike track, but never passes anyone else.
- From Anna’s viewpoint she is the slowest rider in Melbourne.

#### **Responses**

- Our experience is that almost all people who are worried about keeping up with the group find they are able to. In the end they’re usually worrying about nothing.
- Be supportive and encouraging about the person coming on a ride as a guest. Explain that on most rides there’s usually an ‘opt out early’ choice, something like hopping on a train.
- On Anna’s first ride with the group touch base regularly and see how she’s going, be positive.
- Check to make sure that Anna’s bike is set up properly, in good nick and she knows how to use her gears
- Offer to have someone go meet up with her (1 on 1) and go for a short easy ride to see if there’s any basis for her con

### **Ben: “Will I fit in with the group?”**

- Ben was worried about meeting a whole lot of strangers.
- So, even though he joined the bike group, he did not go on any rides.

#### **Responses**

- Offer to meet 1 on 1 with Ben and maybe go for a short ride. Maybe Ben would like to bring a friend or partner on this ride.
- Invite Ben to bring a friend or partner (as a guest) on his first ride.
- It’s a small world, there’s a very good chance Ben may already know someone in the group
- If Ben has joined the group but not turned up for a ride phone, text or email him and make a courteous enquiry.
- Accept that sometimes people join a group but never turn up or may come on one ride and you never see them again, no matter what you do to help them join the group

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<sup>1</sup> Names and genders are made up

**Caroline: “My bike has gears but I don’t know how to use them!”**

- As a child Caroline learnt how to ride on a bike with a single gear and pedal brakes.
- So what does she do with all these levers?

**Responses**

- Before her first ride offer to go on a short ride with her and show her how to use her gears
- On her first ride have someone ride with her and show her how to use her gears. If the bike has gears at the front and back put the front derailleur on the middle or smaller chainring and just worry about the rear derailleur. Don’t fuss with too many gear changes.
- Run a short separate skills session for Caroline and anyone else who may be interested. Improving gear changing is something a lot of senior riders are interested in.

**Doris: “I haven’t ridden my bike for ages.”**

- Doris stopped riding many years ago but wanted to get back into it.
- She was keen to do all she could to improve her fitness.

**Responses**

- Suggest some easy aerobic activities like walking or swimming
- Start off doing short (15-20 minutes) easy rides 3 or 4 times a week and avoid hills. Suggest time not distance. Maybe buddy up with a friend or partner and make it a social outing, not ‘exercise’. Stop for a breather whenever necessary.
- Suggest her first ride with the group is when an easy ride is planned.
- Suggest a search on Google or similar will help you to someone she can pay to help her get started. Use search terms like ‘learn to ride a bike’ or ‘beginner cyclist’  
Two examples<sup>2</sup> in Melbourne are:  
<http://ladiesbackonyourbike.com.au/>  
<http://bikesatwork.com.au/>

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<sup>2</sup> These links are provided for information only and no endorsement or approval is made or implied of any services these businesses offer.

## Planning, conducting and leading successful rides

A successful ride is:

- Safe
- Friendly
- Enjoyable
- Caters for a wide range of capacities and interests

As mentioned earlier, when setting up a group it's good to ask these questions.

- What do you want your group to be about?
- What's its purpose?
- What's it for?
- Who is it for?
- How do you want it to work?
- Where will you ride?
- How will you ride? Competitive, social, easy, hard...?
- How often will you ride

Thinking about these questions will help you plan and run suitable and successful rides for your group.

In the OYB group we plan rides that everyone in the group can do – *'no one gets left behind'*

Stronger and fitter riders may want longer and more demanding rides. It's upto the group leader and the group to decide if and how these riders will be accommodated.

It's important the members of your group understand what your group is about, the sort of rides you'll be doing and when and where they'll be riding.

### Safety

Safety is the number one priority. Like many clichés this is true.

Please refer to the Safety page on this website [\[insert link here\]](#)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Aid

It's recommended to have *at least* one qualified 1<sup>st</sup> aider on a ride and to carry a suitable 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit. Minimum recommended current training level is **HLTAID003: PROVIDE FIRST AID (PFA)** plus a current CPR certificate (**HLTAID001**) .

### Rider responsibilities

Be safe

Make sure your bike and helmet are in good nick

Dress appropriately

Look after yourself

Look after each other

Enjoy yourself

### Bikes, helmets and clothing

- These need to be in good order before the start of the ride.  
Please refer to **Getting Back 'On yer bike!'** for details [\[insert link here\]](#)
- Our experience is that too low tyre pressures and seats at the wrong height are the most common problems in our bike group and should be attended to ASAP.

- For new members the leader should check brakes, seat and handlebar adjustment, gears, tyres and tyre pressure before the ride starts.

## Riders

- Riding skills may be rusty and the leader/more experienced members of the group should keep an eye out for problems. Difficulty with gear changing is common as is inefficient braking
- Leader should be aware of any medical condition that could cause problems – discretion and sensitivity required here! Sometimes this information can be requested on an application form to join the group.
- Particular attention needed for anyone who carries a puffer or epipen.

## Equipment to be carried by the leader

- Map(s) . We find pages removed from a Melways are the best maps for Melbourne bike rides. We find phone screens are hard to navigate with and tablets are bulky and inconvenient.
- Mobile Phone
- List of emergency contacts for everyone in the group . In the OYB group we carry a contact list for everyone enrolled in the group and carry it inside the 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit
- 1st aid kit
- Tool kit: spare tube, puncture kit, tyre levers, small wrench, pliers, cable ties, pump, allen key set, flat and phillips screwdriver, chain tool. A good quality bike multitool is a real plus, see your local bikeshop.
- A good quality rear vision mirror is very useful

## Equipment to be carried by each rider

- Water, sunscreen, personal medication (eg puffers, epipens)
- Spare tube(s) to fit own wheels
- Some type of **ICE** (In **C**ase of **E**mergency) card or information. Where it can be found needs to be known
- Some riders like to have flashing rear and front lights on during the day.
- Mobile phone, always a good idea.
- Some riders like to carry their own 1<sup>st</sup> aid and tool kits
- A good quality rear vision mirror is very useful

## Planning a ride

- Is the ride **suitable** for **everyone** in your group?
- How many **kilometers**?
- How **difficult** eg hills, wind, riding surface?
- How **long** will you be out for including breaks and coffee etc? Our experience is that we average about 15km/hour. So a 30km ride will take about 2 hours of riding plus *at least* another hour for breaks and coffee, so at least 3 hours all up. Then there are possible stops for punctures etc. Most of our rides start around 10am and are usually finished by 2 or 3pm. This ensures we miss the peak hours for traffic and especially for train travel
- **Start and finish times**? When thinking about this it's a good idea to understand some riders may need to make a bit of an effort to get to the start and then get home from the finish. So their outing is going to be that much longer. If using the train network it's best to take the train after 9:30am and before 3pm
- **Start and finish locations**
- **Weather**. In the OYB group we always try to take advantage of the forecast wind on the day eg if a northerly's predicted we head south and so hope for a tailwind most of the way.



- Are there **options to cut the ride short** due to bad weather or if someone in the group has had enough for the day or needs to finish early or has a breakdown? Are there bailout points where you could catch a train back to the start?
- Are there **options to increase the ride** eg at the end of the ride you've planned to take the train back to where you started. This gives the option to stronger and fitter riders to ride back to the start.
- How **interesting** eg a little bit of googling can sometimes find 'points of interest' on a ride. By exploring bike paths our group has often found itself in parts of Melbourne that some members have never been to before, and these are people who have lived in Melbourne their whole lives.
- How **enjoyable** eg rides along creeks and rivers are particularly lovely in spring and early summer (watch out for snakes)
- **Ride scheduling** It's usually not possible to schedule a ride whose date or day of the week suits all group members. For better or worse the OYB group pretty well rides every Friday. This sometimes precludes some members from riding due to other commitments. At the same time by having a fixed day of the week for rides or other predictable schedule (eg 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month) provides a routine and structure that members can plan around and provides a useful 'rhythm'. It's not essential and very unlikely that every member will ever attend every ride. There's no perfect solution and whatever schedule and frequency a group adopts for its rides there'll always be positives and negatives.
- **Varying rides** If the group is quite diverse with regard to for example, availability, strength and fitness then it can always organize additional rides of varying difficulty and at different times of the week or month or occasionally organize a ride that harder (or easier) than the usual group ride. Another option is for group members to organize their own particular rides with other like minded members *in addition to* the 'official' group rides. This has occurred in our group and has been a positive development.

The OYB website [\[insert link here\]](#) has detailed descriptions of many tested rides with enough information for you to decide if any particular ride is suitable for your group. You can follow any ride as described but of course you can vary the route according to the needs and preferences of your group.

To plan your own ride we find that Google maps is a good start. On the top left hand menu if you click on bicycling this will show all the off road bike paths in Melbourne. This is a great way to plan a ride. You can also see where all the train stations, cafes and restaurants are. For groups outside Melbourne Google maps is not that helpful. Even long established rail trails may not be on the map.

Members of the group are a good source for ride ideas. In OYB we have members with detailed local knowledge and they've come up with very good routes no one else knew of.

As well there are many books and websites that can help with planning a ride and working out a route.

Sometimes it's a good idea for the leader to do a 'reccy' of a new route before the group ride. Rest stops, toilets, cafes, navigational 'challenges', difficulty and hazards can all be scoped. Leading your group up the garden path or on an unexpectedly difficult ride is rarely appreciated as an '*adventurous leap into the unknown*' and may lead to tensions and frustrations.

**Riding on trains** with your bike expands the depth and breadth of rides a bike group can do. The Melbourne metropolitan train network is a fantastic (and very cheap!) way for bike groups to travel around Melbourne. Rides can be planned all over greater Melbourne and this takes your whole bike riding experience to a new level.

Click here for more information about riding on trains with your bike [\[insert link to using public transport page here\]](#)

## Communicating about a planned ride

- Our group communicates by email. If someone doesn't use email a group member undertakes to let that person know about the ride by phone.
- We always keep our email address list upto date.
- An email about a ride is sent out 2 days before the ride eg if the ride is on Friday the email goes out sometime on Wednesday. This means the ride leader has a good idea of what the weather will be like and is able to decide on a route that takes account of the weather, especially if it's going to be windy. Sometimes a route may be chosen because it has places to shelter from possible rain or has a lot of shade on a hot day.
- If the weather is forecast to be borderline (due to rain or extreme heat) for the day of the ride the leader will let the group know this by email and then email the group before 8am on the day of the ride and confirm or cancel the ride.
- See **Appendix 3** for 2 examples of ride notification emails

## Repairs and breakdowns on the ride

- These always seem to take up more time than expected. Even something like a flat tyre can take upto half an hour to fix so a bit of wriggle room in the ride timing is a good idea.
- Stopping for a repair gives the group an often welcome break and the chance for bit of a chinwag.
- If a repair is not possible then generally the group continues on the ride and the member with the breakdown fends for themselves. This may mean a walk to the nearest station or a call to someone to come and be picked up.

## Injuries

- The immediate priority is the wellbeing of the injured person.
- If someone is injured the situation should be managed by the qualified first aider in the group.
- **The worst thing** is for the group to crowd around the injured person with various members offering advice about what should be done.
- Group members should get out of the way, follow the directions of the first aider and let the first aider do their job.

## The ride

If there are **new members** on the ride it's recommended they be warmly greeted by the leader and introduced to the other riders.

Some leaders like to **welcome every rider**, old or new, at the start of every ride. Riders are more likely to come on rides if they feel part of the group and welcome.

If there are any **bike problems** they should be addressed **before** the ride starts.

Nominate/ask someone to be a **lead rider** (or point) and a **sweep** (or tail-end-charlie). The lead rider is not necessarily the leader. This enables group members to contribute to the ride and develop skills. It also promotes a collaborative and participative way for the group to operate.

A **short briefing** about the ride ahead by the leader is a good idea.  
Can everyone hear you, is everyone paying attention?

Any hazards or problems should be described (eg gravel, tram/rail lines, wet conditions) along with the upcoming ride highlights eg good views, outdoor art, birdlife, gardens etc  
Make sure anyone with a phone has the leader's number in their phone.

- Just before you head off **do a headcount and repeat as necessary during a ride**. With more than say 5 or 6 riders in the group it's easy for someone to fall back out of sight and for no one to notice. With more than say 10 riders in the group this can be a real problem.
- No one should pass the lead rider and no one should ride behind the sweep.
- The lead rider is not the fastest nor the strongest rider. Their job is to navigate, warn of hazards and see that no one gets too far behind.
- If the group gets too strung out then the riders at the back feel left out and pressured and may get grumpy.
- If the lead rider stops to allow the group to come together they should not ride off as soon as the sweep arrives. They should wait until the riders at the back have had a bit of a rest, the same as the people at the front have had while waiting for the back markers.
- The leader can act as a '**float**er' moving up and down the group during the ride, seeing how everyone is doing, asking how they're going, encouraging, listening and consulting about stops and rest breaks
- Rests and breaks should be as often as necessary &/or as requested
- If the path comes to a fork or similar the lead rider should station the person behind them at the fork and ask them to direct riders on the right path until the sweep arrives.
- If one or more riders are consistently struggling to keep up this needs to be addressed sooner rather than later eg advise the lead rider to slow down; have a rest and a chat with whoever is struggling; check their bike; put the struggling rider(s) **at the front** of the group. The ride may be a bit too much for someone and an early finish/opt out may be the best option – this should be arranged in a positive way and with no embarrassment
- If someone gets separated from the group and can't be seen stop the group. Try to work out where they were last seen and then send one or two riders back up the path to find them. Ringing their mobile. Sometimes if someone gets lost, and they have their phone, they'll call the leader .

As the ride nears its end riders will often peel off from the group to take the shortest route home. It's good if the leader farewells them, thanks them for coming on the ride and hopes they'll be on another ride soon.

Please refer to the Safety web page [\[insert link here\]](#) for more detailed information on safe riding on bike paths and in groups.

### Longer rides in different areas

These guidelines are focussed on 2-3 hour rides on Melbourne's bike path network. Other bike groups run much longer rides on roads in and outside Melbourne. On these rides the group is more likely to be spread out and over much longer distances. Different approaches to leading and group 'management' are required. It may be necessary to carry more than one first aid kit and individual riders may need to be more self sufficient with regard to equipment, navigation and other factors.

Contributions from bike groups about how they run these longer rides in different areas would be welcome and would happily be included in these guidelines.

### After each ride

Reports on rides are a good way of keeping the group connected and inclusive. Often members won't attend rides for weeks on end due to holidays, other commitments, ill health etc but still want to be in the loop.

A ride report with a few pictures attached and perhaps some attempt at humour is a worthwhile way to maintain and develop group unity. It also recognizes members' participation in rides.

Two examples of ride reports are attached as **Appendix 4**

### Having more than one ride leader

If there is just one person in the group organizing and leading rides this task can become onerous. Individual rides can become 'stale' if they're repeated too often and a single leader may not always be the best person to lead all rides. If the leader becomes unavailable then the ride may not proceed

In the OYB Group we have 4 leaders and a roster where each leader decides on the route and organises a ride about every 4 weeks. This brings different perspectives and approaches to rides and is a real plus. It also means any leader can be absent but the rides continue.

### What is the best way to run a seniors bike group?

Of course there's no single answer to this.

In the OYB Group the term '*fraternal anarchic collectivist model*'<sup>3</sup> has sometimes been used risibly to describe how we operate.

Generally senior riders are mature and experienced people who are voluntarily participating in a discretionary recreational activity. They're good natured, courteous and considerate and understand what it means to be a member of a riding group.

They value mutual respect and expect to be consulted about how the group runs and what it does.

The group leader needs to be aware of the above at all times and operate accordingly. If this happens it's a real pleasure to 'lead' such a group. Very little 'management' is necessary as the group effectively runs itself.

A leader who is cheerful, welcoming, encouraging, positive and competent is necessary for a seniors bike group to be successful.

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<sup>3</sup> No one really understand what this means

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Example of an information sheet for prospective bike group members

#### "On yer bike!" The Yarra City U3A bike riding group Information for 2017

We ride on most Fridays throughout the year. Start time is usually around 10am and we usually finish around 1:30. The rides we do are generally 20-25km and at an easy pace, around 16km/h.

Information about each ride is usually emailed on the Wednesday before, so we know what the weather is doing.

The rides are designed to be easy and able to be done by as many people as possible eg we take advantage of the wind on the day so we usually have a tailwind and there are only a few small hills, if any, on most of the rides.

Some are pretty well dead flat the whole way.

Some rides are designed so that at the end there is an option to ride further if anyone feels like it.

We carry a 1<sup>st</sup> aid kit and basic bike repair kit on all rides and have at least one qualified 1<sup>st</sup> aider on each ride.

We're an inclusive, sociable and non-competitive group.

Our 3 guiding principles are:

- *Lycra is optional,*
- *No one gets left behind*
- *Pedalling for pleasure*

We ride on Melbourne's very extensive off-road bike path network.

*We rarely ride on roads.* Rides usually start in the Nth Fitzroy area or Flinders St Station.

Sometimes we'll ride to a destination and take the train back to the city/Nth Fitzroy or vice-versa. At other times we'll do a loop starting and ending at the same point.

We always stop for coffee & c. midway and this is an important part of what we do. Rumours that some people only come on rides for the coffee, cake and conversation may well be true.

*You can come on as many or as few rides as you like.*

You must wear a bike helmet in good condition that meets current legal requirements.

You definitely don't need a high tech expensive bike. Basically any old banger will do as long as it's in good working order and adjusted to fit you (we can help with this). We have one long standing member who has ridden every ride on a 50+ year old Malvern Star rescued from a tip and with no gears.

If the above appeals to you we look forward to welcoming you to the Yarra U3A "On yer bike!" Group.

If you have any questions etc please don't hesitate to contact me.

Ross Armstrong

“On yer bike!” Tutor  
94299848 0417536389 [rossoshe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rossoshe@bigpond.net.au)

PS Apart from the Friday rides, other rides are sometimes organised and these are may be a bit longer and more demanding, enjoyable and satisfying.

PPS We also do a few easy multiday tours during the year. In 2016 we did a 2 day trip from Geelong - Queenscliff – Geelong via the Bellarine Rail Trail and a 3 day trip from Leongatha to Port Welshpool via the South Gippsland Rail Trail.

## Appendix 2 Example of a flyer/poster for prospective bike group members



# *On yer bike in 2014 !*

Yarra U3A is setting up a social bike riding group to explore local bike paths

It's about **pedaling for pleasure**

All levels of experience and fitness are welcome

Ross will talk about the bike riding group and answer any questions you may have at the welcome morning tea for the start of the Yarra U3A year on Friday, 14th February at 10.30 at the North Carlton Railway House.

The Railway house is on the Capital City Trail so please come by bike if you can. If there's interest there will be a short bike ride after the morning tea.

### **The On Yer Bike Group will start the year with 3 rides:**

Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February 10-12

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 10-12

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March 10-12

All 3 rides will start and finish at the North Carlton Railway House , 20 Solley Avenue, Princess Hill (North Carlton)

All the rides will be on bike paths - no riding on roads.

**If you're new to cycling or haven't ridden for a long time**, Ross Armstrong, our experienced ride leader and certified Bike Ed Instructor will be happy to help with learning to ride, getting a suitable bike, clothing, safety and anything else

If you're interested or have any questions please contact Ross on 94299848 or 0417536389 or [rossoshe@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rossoshe@bigpond.net.au)

## Appendix 3 Examples of ride notification emails

### Example 1

Dear All,

The ride is from Moonee Ponds Station to Flinders Street Station via the mighty Maribyrnong River.

This is our chance to try out the new bike bridge at Shepherds Bridge.

It is possible to finish the ride early at Footscray Station.

While we will have a head wind for a short period, there will mostly be a nice tail wind to blow us on our way.

We meet at Moonee Ponds Station at 10.10 am just outside the station on the west side.

The last possible train from Flinders Street Station leaves at 9.52am from platform 5. Take the train towards Craigieburn.

This same train leave Southern Cross Station at 9.55 am Platform 10. (This is where I will be catching it, after travelling on the 9.33 am City Loop train from Burnley.)

I do hope you can join me on this ride.

Kind regards,

Penny.

### Example 2

Dear All

This Friday we'll be taking advantage of the Friday Grand Final Holiday and crossing the Yarra on the Westgate Punt.

Please meet at Jeff's Shed (Melbourne Convention Centre) by 10am.

We'll then follow the Yarra down to the Westgate Punt at Fisherman's Bend and then take the punt across to Spotswood.

The punt fare is \$5 for you and your bike one way.

After disembarking we could take a short detour to the unique mangroves and bustling springtime birdlife under the Westgate.

Then follow the paths to Williamstown for morning tea & c.

After Williamstown there are a few choices:

Ride back to Jeff's Shed the way we came

Take paths through Footscray back to the City

Ride on past Williamstown along the beach paths and through the springtime wetlands to Altona and train it back to the city.

Take the train to the city from Williamstown

Friday's ride will be almost entirely near water and along dead flat paths

Weather is looking not too bad: max 18, possible rainfall: 0 to 3 mm, partly cloudy, medium (60%) chance of showers in the afternoon. Light winds becoming north to northwesterly 15 to 20 km/h early in the morning then tending west to northwesterly 20 to 30 km/h in the morning.

Hope to see you on Friday

Regards

Rosscoe



## Appendix 4 Examples of ride reports

### Example 1

Dear All,

Veronica, Louisa, Christine, Joy, Lyn K., Nancy, Jonno, David L., Peter, Ross and I met Moonee Ponds Station for the Maribyrnong ride. As usual the day started with congratulations to Ross on the good weather.

We first headed north and west to conquer the one and only real hill on our journey. Lucky it was short! Soon after this we reached a fantastic viewpoint. See the first of Jonno's great pictures below.

After admiring the view, we headed down to the Maribyrnong River. This section of the river is beautiful, wide and stately with wetlands and billabongs. Somewhere in this part of the ride, Lyn and Christine realised that we were approaching a great delicatessen that sells sardines. And once we stopped for coffee off they went to load their bikes up with goodies. You wouldn't want either of their bikes to fall on the ground - imagine the smelly mess of smashed jars of sardines in oil! Meantime we all ordered drinks and enjoyed the views over the Edgewater Lake and Marina. See the other two of Jonno's photos.

We continued down the river stopping briefly to admire the Heavenly Queen. (The Heavenly Queen, also known as "Mazu" Lin Mo Liang (AD960-987), was born on Meizhou Island in Fujian Province, China, during the Sung Dynasty. Devotees throughout the world celebrate her birthday on March 23. After her death, a temple was erected on Meizhou Island at the spot where the queen is said to have ascended to heaven and become immortal. The west Melbourne temple is the largest temple dedicated to Mazu in Australia.)

Eventually we reached the new bike and pedestrian bridge at Footscray Road. This is higher than the road bridge and has waves in its slope (like the ramp at East Malvern Station). The views from the top were good, and riding down from the top gave a bit of the feeling of a roller coaster - what fun.

We continued along Footscray Road to Costco where we started to lose riders. First Veronica, Peter and Louisa headed north up the Capital City Trail to home. The rest of us turned south. Then it was Nancy who turned up Collins Street to Southern Cross Station. Jonno, Joy and Lyn disappeared at Flinders Street. Finally, Christine, Ross and I turned off at Swan Street leaving David to continue on his own around the main Yarra Trail back to Clifton Hill.

Kind regards,

Penny.

### Example 2

Dear All

We had 14 riders last Friday: Bob, Nancy, Joy, Johnno, Kris K, Carlos, Pam J, Pam K, Paul, Anthony and Kevin; I'm sorry but I can't remember everyone who came.

We headed off from Jeff's Shed ca. 10:15 in lovely sunshine with a few white clouds and a balmy breeze and had an easy ride to the Westgate Punt. It was nice to cross the river this way and by the time we disembarked the sea shanties and hornpipes were going full bore. It was good that for some riders this was their first punt trip. For info about the punt and timetable see: <http://westgatepunt.com/>

We detoured to have a look at the mangroves and absent avifauna under Westgate and on the way back paused at the Westgate Bridge Memorial.

Coffee & c. were had at the ever welcoming Cirino Caf on Nelson Place.

From Cirino people did their own thing - some returned to the city via the punt, some took the train, some returned via Footscray and 2 souls rode onto to Altona.

The GF parade didn't seem to be a problem for anyone.

A pleasant outing on a lovely Melbourne spring day

Many thanks to Joy for the photos.

Hope to see you on a ride soon

Regards Rosscoe

## Acknowledgements

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