



Banyule BUG Newsletter

August
2021

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Our thanks to the Office of Anthony Carbinis MP, state member for Ivanhoe, for their support in providing the photocopying facilities for this newsletter.



This edition of our newsletter opens with some historic images and thanks to Arnold for them. We have all cycled by this point on many occasion, but have rarely seen it like this. It is **Banyule Billabong** – full of water. First time in my memory, but Arnold can recall one other occasion when it was flooded. So, this historic occasion is recorded.



The Importance of Being Seen – by Peter G

At the June meeting of the Banyule BUG committee it was decided to promote the benefits of cyclists being highly visible to others; vehicle drivers, other cyclists and pedestrians. The committee encourages all members of Banyule BUG to be conscious of being seen by others and over time to adapt their clothing, bike helmets and bike lighting to be highly visible. This will help to avoid collisions and keep our members safe. By being noticed as early as possible by others a catastrophe may well be avoided. See: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/cyclist-safety

Our club jerseys certainly assist visibility and a review of the specifications may find they can be further improved for future buys. Many of us wear other Hi Vis tops and jackets when riding and some also have footwear and socks that enhance visibility. The article about Hi Vis leg bands in the June newsletter well stated the case for wearing Hi Vis on the lower legs as it is the movement of the legs while pedalling that greatly assists the rider to be seen. By seeking bike pants with Hi Vis leg bands we may encourage the suppliers to move away from the standard all over black pants. (Why are pants generally only available in black??). Further visibility enhancement can be achieved by fitting and using front and rear bike lights, and using them regardless of daylight conditions.

Most of us are daytime riders but even in daylight visibility conditions do vary depending on the weather, cloud cover, shadow, sun glare and time of day. Flashing rear and front lights assist. At dawn, dusk and night time being visible is even more pertinent and a conscious awareness of being seen and being situationally aware is even more important. At night helmet lights and reflective clothing become crucial.

The Banyule BUG committee strongly encourages all members to consider the following:

- have bright lights preferably flashing.
- white or Hi Vis coloured helmet
- club or other Hi Vis jersey or jacket
- Hi Vis back pack covers and gloves
- Hi Vis shoes, shoe covers, socks or leg bands, and



The committee asks members to please consider the above when replacing or buying new items of cycling apparel and equipment. The Banyule BUG has no intention of making Hi Vis clothing and equipment mandatory for members, strong encouragement is the intention. Perhaps a good Christmas or birthday gift idea? Bike riding has its risks and Banyule BUG supports improving cyclist safety as a high priority. We wish to enjoy our time cycling together, not visiting bike friends in hospital or, much worse, attending their funeral due to an avoidable collision.

Yep, he's a hunk but difficult to see even in ideal conditions!

In The Loop

This edition has details about new 'on road' cycling routes through the City of Whitehorse. One of the routes will be of interest to our members as it runs from Mont Albert station, an area frequented by our riders. The routes can be viewed here.

[Whitehorse sprints ahead with bike routes](#)

Road Rage

One of the many perils of mixing road cycling and vehicles, is the inevitable 'road rage'. It often happens, it is generally unpleasant, but it might surprise you, it is not new. It has been with us as long as humans have been cycling on roads as this photograph from around 1900 indicates.

One can only imagine the verbal exchange taking place. And note, the cyclists in not wearing a helmet.



[Great Souther Railtrail extension announced](#)

This is a very popular rail trail and its extension will be welcomed by all trail users. When completed, it will be some 135k in length – from Nyora to Yarram. This will make it a very exciting trail to ride, with lots of possibilities. I guess the only downside is, the lack of public transport available to reach the trail. At the moment, a car trip to Leongatha is a nightmare of freeways and byways. Banyule BUG is riding this trail in October, so a fuller report after that.

Video from our last BUG ride just outside of Leongatha – 2019, I think.

[Video Link](#)



Call for change as illegal e-bikes reaching speeds of more than 100 kilometres per hour.

© Provided by ABC Business E-bike sales in Australia have exploded in recent years. (ABC News: Elicia Kennedy)

The electric bicycle market in Australia is booming with sales up a staggering 800 per cent in five years.

But the popularity of e-bikes has highlighted a riskier trend — illegal modifications that allow the bikes to reach speeds of more than 100 kilometres per hour.

Australia's peak industry group, Bicycle Industries Australia (BIA), is now lobbying federal and state governments to review the regulations.

It believes lifting the 25 kph maximum assisted speed — the lowest in the world — would ultimately increase safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

'E-bike revolution'

Back in 2016-17, about 9,000 people bought an e-bike in Australia.

Last financial year that figure had risen to 50,000 and it is expected to reach up to 85,000 in the year to July, 2021.

BIA general manager Peter Bourke said in the past, e-bikes were typically used by older riders or people with an injury, but that has rapidly changed.

"In countries such as the Netherlands, every second bike that is sold is now an e-bike," Mr Bourke said.

"In Germany it's about 40 per cent, in the UK it's pushing up somewhere similar."

"E-mountain bikes have taken off because it makes the riding up the hills so much more fun.

"We found people that are commuting so that they can arrive to work without sweating in their suit."

In Australia regulations state the maximum continuous power of an e-bike motor is 250 watts and the maximum assisted speed is 25 kph.

But there is a growing issue with people modifying their e-bikes to exceed those speeds, effectively making them "illegal motorbikes".

"We know that people do it," Mr Bourke said.

"It is a very conscious decision to deregulate their bikes so they can get the faster speeds."

'Extreme' modifications flourish

John Cowper runs a bicycle mechanic business and often refuses to service e-bikes because they have been modified.

"A simple Google or YouTube and I've seen bikes going upwards of 150km/h, it's extreme," Mr Cowper said.

"I'd say 80 per cent of the stuff that I get through is really good and clients are using them for the purpose that they are being built for.

"But I do still get people asking me to take the speed limiters off, which I am definitely not doing, and asking for power upgrades."

While he has heard the argument that ordinary road bikes can easily reach speeds in excess of 25 kph, he claims those cyclists generally have years of experience.

"So their bike handling skills are good, the bikes are made for purpose, they stop well, they are light, they are very agile," he said.

"Where a lot of e-bikes are heavy, they are not very agile and they don't generally stop that well."

While there is a huge range of quality, purpose-built e-bikes on the market, many people were buying e-bike kits online, removing the speed limiter chips and retro-fitting them to their existing bike, Mr Cowper said.

"It would be like putting a Ferrari motor in a Corolla. They're not really made to handle that power and that weight," he said.

"There are lots of guidelines about how e-bikes should be manufactured and put together, but there is nothing restricting people selling bikes that aren't safe."

Retailers want change

John Schelfhout has been a part of the e-bike market from its infancy.

He began importing e-bikes to Perth in 2008, one of the first to do so in WA.

Back then he was selling mostly to caravaners wanting to use an e-bike at their holiday destination rather than unhitch their car.

"We were buying half a container of bikes every six months ... nowadays it's a container a month almost and very soon it'll probably be two containers a month," he said.

Mr Schelfhout believes the current regulations are pushing cyclists, and some bicycle shops, to ignore the law.

"They affect our business — a lot of people say: 'Oh you only sell legal bikes, I don't care about the law', but if that is what you're going to tell me, go somewhere else to buy it".

"I'm not the fun police, but if I sell a bike to someone and it's over the limit, I am responsible as much as they are."

He regularly commutes to work and often sees e-bike riders doing more than 45 kph on cycleways and footpaths.

"It's very dangerous," Mr Schelfhout said.

"I don't think the bike itself is inherently dangerous, it's the speed and way the rider uses it."

BIA warned bike retailers in December 2018 about the dangers of illegal high-powered e-bikes following the death of an 86-year-old pedestrian in Victoria.

The bike that hit the elderly man was found to have an overpowered motor and the rider was sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

BIA warned there could be substantial repercussions for importers, retailers or service providers of illegal or 'un-roadworthy' products.

Industry push to review regulations

Peter Bourke said BIA was talking with federal and state governments about reviewing the current regulations and recommended increasing the maximum assisted speed to about 32 kph.

"The concern for us as an industry is that this now makes it an illegal motorbike," he said.

"And people can and will be charged as using it as an illegal motorbike ... it could certainly hurt the bicycle industry especially when we're growing significantly."

He believed raising the speed capacity would reduce the number of people modifying their bikes and better align Australia with the rest of the world.

"We are very keen to work with them and have a look at how the e-bike revolution can assist as people are

coming back to work or travelling in general post-COVID."

Mr Schelfhout agreed and said more people would use bikes to commute if they could legally travel faster.

"And to move it to 300 watts would be helpful for the hills," he said.

"But what we want most of all is to stop the illegal bikes."

WA Police were unable to provide data on the number of e-bike riders that have been issued with infringements for riding an illegally-modified electric bicycle.

The National Transport Commission recently published a policy paper on barriers to the safe use of personal mobility devices, but e-bikes were not included.

Wheely interesting

An occasional series introducing you to a Banyule BUG member

Meet Deb Armstrong

- First bike and your memory of early bike riding?

I first learnt to ride a bike when I was pretty young...I'm thinking 6 or 7. There was no option for a three-wheeler or a bike of the right size. I learnt to ride on my brother's bike (too big for me) from our house on top of a steep hill. It was pretty much, "Peddle hard, keep your balance, your on your own, use the foot brakes to stop!"... and that was it. I rode in thongs too often and that meant frequently slipping off the peddles and taking the tops off my toes in the asphalt!

My friend lived half way up the opposite hill so if I took off fast from my house at the top of the hill I could make it to her house without peddling! However, at the bottom of my hill was a cross-road #@*! Yes, I collided with a car coming along that cross-road, knocked myself unconscious and smashed my bike up. (No comment thanks Peter!)

I rode my bike everywhere. It was my vehicle to escape a house with a mum struggling with depression.



- Current (or favourite) bike?

My current bike is a GIANT, LIV and I love it. My friends and family all put money into a collection for my 60th birthday from which I purchased this bike. When I ride it I feel like I am riding with the spirit and love of my friends and family!

- Favourite ride?

I have a few favourite rides:- Fairfield Boat House, The St Kilda Boulevard to Mentone (along the beach), along the new bike track to Wattle Glen (soon to Hurstbridge), along the Merri Creek AND to Werribee! I love the longer rides too like when we camp at Foster (Gordon's ride) and the ride to Bendigo (Alan's ride) that we did earlier this year. I have also ridden a bike in Vietnam which I loved because I got to meet locals living their village life at harvesting time.

- Favourite café on a ride?

During our numerous lockdowns I have ridden with Gordon and more recently Greg and I'm sooooo grateful for the café at La Trobe Uni which also has an undercover outdoor seating area and the barrister there even knows our orders!! We based most of our lockdown



rides around a coffee at the Uni!

- Finish this sentence 'Banyule BUG'
... is a group of inclusive, enthusiastic and fun-loving people! I find many members inspirational and their diverse backgrounds ensures they are so interesting to talk to along the rides, at our coffee breaks and at BUG dinners. If I'm wanting to do household renovations, I just need to ask a question at a BUG ride and the wealth of knowledge I receive minimizes the amount of research I need to do on a particular topic!
Thanks everyone!

- What are some of your other interests?
Most of you know that I had a fantastic career as a primary teacher, 25 years as a PE teacher (including 4 years at a Deaf School), 5 years in the classroom, 1 year teaching in Canada with a scholarship, 10 years as a maths coach (teaching teachers to teach maths better). I have lectured at Monash Uni Frankston for 5 years and RMIT Bundoora for 3 years and brought up 2 beautiful children, home schooling them for a year when we travelled around Australia.

I'm also a High-Performance Coach in Netball. I have played and coached at state Open level and have been an Australian Junior selector. I write material and present for coach education at state and Australian level. Did you know that I coached the Victorian and Australian Deaf Netball teams for 10 years, went to the Deaf Olympics in USA as manager of the women's Basketball team and I'm fluent (or used to be) in sign language (AUSLAN)?

I brought my kids up on 10 acres in Healesville. We had horses there and was very active in the pony club as Larna was growing up. I love animals and nature. I have owned 9 horses throughout my life. I love traveling and have done some amazing bushwalks and travelled to some amazing destinations in my life e.g., Cradle Mountain, USA, Mongolia, Kokoda, Brunei, Antarctica, Vietnam, Turkey (I'm interested in war history too) and walked from coast to coast in England. I love snow skiing and volunteer every year with a school for troubled boys but have enjoyed skiing at Hotham, Falls Creek, Buller, in Canada, Japan, Italy and Saint Moritz!

During lockdown and since retiring last year I have started watercolour painting and learning German. Basically, I'm interested in everything and everyone! ☐ ☐



Taken at Watmough Park on Plenty River Trail yesterday. I couldn't help but imagine a contractor saying to his mate; **"Are you sure it goes there? The boss never said nothin about a bike path in the way!"**

The Banyule BUG AGM 2021

Twenty five members zoomed in to the AGM on 3rd August 2021. Thanks to Club Secretary, Maurie Abbott for organising the successful meeting.

This article is a brief, unofficial summary of the AGM to keep all club members informed before Minutes are circulated.

Annual reports were received and 2020 office holders and committee members thanked.

A new committee of management was appointed from nominees without need for an election. Thanks to all

those listed below.

President – Peter Gurney (also Latte Ride Co-ord), Vice President – John Pietka

Secretary – Maurie Abbott (also Registered Secretary & website/email manager)

Treasurer – John Perkins (also Lycra Ride Co-ord)

Committee – Bob West, Don Astbury, Richard Bysouth, Sue Griffith, Irene Gerrard

Twilight Ride Co-ord – Lou Bosco, Newsletter – Allan Garbutt

Heidelberg Festival Bike Parking Co-ord – Richard Bysouth

Subscriptions: John P recommended a change of insurance providers. Insurance costs are increasing. To cover the increase it was agreed that club subs from July 2022 would be \$35 full membership, \$20 half year membership, associate membership remains \$10.

Maureen Fisher: Les B advised that long time rider and previous committee member Maureen F has recently had a stroke and is in hospital or has just moved to rehabilitation. We wish Maureen a full recovery and hope to see her back with us ASAP. (Latte Group has sent email and card. Les will keep in touch).

Malahang Reserve Bike Shed: Les B invited members to come along and assist this community service of repairing and maintaining bikes when Covid restrictions allow. Please see an article in the newsletter.

Bike Advocacy: John M requested that we get involved in promoting cycling, safety and bike advocacy and he offered to form a working group. Tom M advised that Banyule Council was in the process of developing a Banyule Bicycle Strategy. (Input to that has now closed and we look forward to viewing the plan when finalised in November. The draft strategy is worth perusing and is still available on line:

www.shaping.banyule.vic.gov.au/bicycle)

Thanks to all those who joined the meeting and to all who support our rather unique social cycling club. Happy and safe cycling to all, Peter Gurney.

(From the club secretary. The links are well worth following)

The Melbourne Northern Regional Trails Strategy was developed by a combined effort of the Northern metro councils and released 2016. Banyule Council participated.

I participated in the development of the strategy, along with lots of interested people, I appeared doing some riding in a promotional video and was in attendance at the launch in very large auditorium in the area behind Federation Square.

The strategy is now being reviewed and if you would like to contribute follow the links below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W7HTSDQ>

You can take a look at the existing 2016 version of the strategy here

<https://s23705.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Northern-Regional-Trails-Strategy-Final.pdf>

A promotional video for the launch in 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7wvbK4JVVIM>

Also on another subject, have a look at an upgrade to the Upfield line trail

<https://www.bicyclenetwork.com.au/newsroom/2021/08/12/bell-moreland-trail-opens-next-week/>

Regards,
Maurie
Secretary

That's all for this issue folks. Remember – your contributions are always welcome and can be sent to allang@bigpond.net.au
Thankyou to all those who contributed to this issue.