

Developing Green Habits – Cycling!

Earth First

By Stephen Nugent, ECCO

National Ride to Work Day cycled into lives on Wednesday this week. Some people probably rode to work for the first time ever, some did their annual bit for the environment, and some rode because that's how they get to work everyday.

The cool weather and welcome rain would have dampened participant numbers in Orange, but there are other reasons why people didn't get involved. A work colleague sent me an email saying she would love to ride to work but had two problems, '1. No Bike and 2. No Fitness'.

The first is a barrier for sure, and without the first, the second is harder to overcome. For those with bikes who chose to brave the elements, the next challenge is to make it a regular occurrence. After all, that's what the day is all about. It aims to be catalyst for lasting change, not just a one-off novelty.

6-Step Plan

The Bicycle Network produces a great little brochure to help us overcome our addiction to the convenience and immediacy of travelling to work in the car. It includes a 5-Step Prep for people thinking about riding to work.

Step 1 is to 'Gear Up' by getting the bike out of the shed and getting it in good working order; and if you don't have a bike, now's a great time to buy one. There are two speciality bike shops in Orange and various second-hand options.

Step 2 is to 'Go for a Cruise'. Go for a ride on the weekend with the kids or some friends. Make it fun and do it at a time when you're not rushing to be somewhere by a certain time.

Step 3 suggests you 'Get the Low Down' by talking to other riders at work and asking their advice on where to securely park your bike, where to shower (if you think you'll need to) and where to leave your personal gear.

In Step 4, you 'Ease into It' by doing a trial ride past work on the weekend, remembering to time your ride as a reminder of how efficient cycling to work can be.

Finally, in Step 5, you 'Ride to Work' and celebrate when you arrive.

To these I would add a Step 6, 'Make it Easy to Develop the Habit'. Get a system worked out, get into a routine with your clothes and gear, don't beat yourself up if you occasionally fall back on the car option, and give yourself time to develop the habit. You are breaking one and developing another, and it's important to acknowledge the challenge and triumph of doing so.

And of course one of the many benefits is that you will be fitting more exercise into your normal routine and staying healthy as a result.

National Water Week 18-24 October

As we say farewell to Ride to Work Day for another year, we flow into National Water Week (NWW). This event starts tomorrow, Sunday October 18, and is hosted by the Australian Water Association in partnership with the National Water Commission.

In the words of its website, NWW 'is the only nationally-focussed event designed to assist our community to take actions that help protect and conserve our most precious resource – water'. Given Orange is on Level 5 water restrictions and our water supplies are dwindling, this is particularly apt.

If you want to know more about National Water Week and what you can do to protect our most precious resource, visit the NWW website:

www.nationalwaterweek.org.au

Green Dates for the Calendar

October 31 – Closing Date for Entries for the Spring Local Environment Awards.

December 12 – Walk Against Warming (it's never too early to start planning).