



Cycling: *Cycling Australia*

'A major player in Australian's sporting culture . . . growing from its rich heritage into a truly national sporting activity accessible to all Australians'.¹

Australians cycle for many reasons, including transport, recreation, health, economics, sport and social interaction, and are present across all socio-demographic groups.²

The profile of cycling in Australia has been elevated in recent times by the outstanding success of the national team at the Athens Olympic Games and the impact of that success has carried on into 2006. The national championships attracted widespread coverage, as did Australian performances on the international stage in track and road events and, to a lesser extent, mountain bike events.

In 2006, Australia had its largest contingent yet to ride the Tour de France, with Cadel Evans finishing fourth overall and Robbie McEwen winning the coveted green jersey for the Tour's best sprinter.³ In fact there is rarely a week when cycling does not feature in the sports section of a major daily newspaper.

Cycling Australia

Cycling Australia is the national governing body for the competitive cycling disciplines of road, track and mountain bike in Australia (and soon to integrate bicycling motocross (BMX)).⁴

Each territory and state cycling association is an affiliated organisation (member) of Cycling Australia. All cyclists are members of their state associations through cycling club membership, with over 230 affiliated cycling clubs nationally.

Cycling Australia is affiliated with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), the International Cycling Union, the Australian Olympic Committee and the Australian Commonwealth Games Association.

Who cycles?

Cycling is available to all Australians regardless of their age, gender, race, geographical location or ability and is growing in popularity.⁵

In 2005, the sport had amazing growth in formal club membership – a record increase of over 12.5 per cent – allowing it to eclipse 12,000 (12,437) members for the first time ever.⁶

The increase was reflected across a number of membership categories, including the 'Ride It' recreational and non-competitive membership, a 10 per cent growth in masters cyclists

and good growth in junior age groups from U11 through to U17. Female membership grew by three per cent in 2005, and women now represent 17.5 per cent of total membership, compared with less than 10 per cent in the late 1990s.⁷

Much of this growth can be attributed to the work of development staff and the continued success of the sport at the elite level. The challenge is to harness and capitalise on this trend to maximise cycling's growth opportunities.⁸

The highest rates of bicycle ownership are in the Australian Capital Territory, Hobart and Perth, where more than 60 per cent of people have access to a bicycle. The lowest rate of bicycle ownership is in Sydney, where less than 30 per cent of people have access to a bicycle.⁹

There is no data on participation levels of Indigenous people or those from a cultural or linguistically diverse background.

Sport development

Cycling Australia CEO Graham Fredericks said: "2005 was a key year in the planning of the next quadrennial cycle through to Beijing (2008), and beyond. A greater focus has been placed on underpinning programs, developing the next generation of athletes, coach development and athlete welfare".¹⁰

Despite this statement, there are no identifiable programs that are specifically aimed at increasing participation amongst Indigenous people or people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. However, Cycling Australia has stated that they see no reason to focus on particular groups as they encourage membership and participation from everyone.

Increasing participation



Cycling is characterised by a very large community participation rate in the activity of cycling, but a relatively low membership rate in the sport of cycling. To address this gap, Cycling Australia, in conjunction with the ASC, has developed a new participation program designed to attract new riders called 'Full Cycle'.¹⁰

'Full Cycle' is based around increasing participation at the grass roots level in order to provide cycling as a viable alternative sport choice for all Australians.

Full Cycle consists of three supporting programs consisting of a new participation licence category and participation event program called 'RideIt', and two skills based programs: 'J-Cycle' aimed at children ages 6-16 and 'SkillCycle' aimed at people aged 25 to 55 years.¹¹

'RideIt' provides recreational and novice cyclists with friendly events in a professionally run and managed setting. There is an emphasis on the core values of personal challenge, participation with others and fun. It is envisioned that the 'RideIt' national calendar of events will include several 'Ride with the Champions' participation rides that will allow people to meet Australia's world champion athletes.

'SkillCycle' is a club-based program targeted at recreational cyclists aged between 20 and 65 years that offers skills training, fitness development and participation in simple competitions.

'J-Cycle' is a skills-based program run over eight sessions covering the fundamental safety issues, as well as an introduction to the skills required for racing. *'J-Cycle'* is aimed to encourage children to be 'cyclist aware' as well develop an interest in cycling.¹²

The program is highly suited to regional areas where many strong clubs exist, but there is no geographic factor that limits the suitability of the program to any specific area. Regional clubs have been vocal in seeking this type of development activity for young participants.

An increase in membership in 2005 has confirmed the success of the program, *'Ride-It'* recreational events are becoming more popular, and Cycling Australia's clubs and promoters are joining in this trend with numerous small and large scale rides being organised around the country.

2006 is the third and final year of ASC funding for the *'Full Cycle'* project under the Targeted Sports Participation Growth Program. Cycling Australia is confident that *'Ride-It'* and the skills course will continue as development programs and further resources will be allocated to support their marketability and implementation. These resources will include audio visual material on DVD to promote the benefits and content of the programs.¹³

Cycling Australia has also produced a handbook titled *'Getting Started In Cycling'* on behalf of its affiliated clubs to assist new members adapt to the sport. It aims to answer questions from new members on road, track or mountain bike cycling.

Junior sport policy

Given the length of time since the junior sport policy has been reviewed and that the Australian Sports Commission now has a new framework in place as a base for such a policy, Cycling Australia is currently redrafting this document. Accordingly, the current policy has now been withdrawn (from July 2006).

The Cycling Australia Coaching Commission is reviewing this document and will submit a new policy for adoption by the Board of Management as soon as possible.¹⁴

P.E.D.A.L.

P.E.D.A.L. is a five-point plan developed by the Cycling Australia in 2004 to set fundamental guidelines that promote cultural awareness and support for the promotion of a drug-free environment in cycling; and to enhance the holistic individual development of athletes, encompassing sport, career, education and personal life skills. Of relevance to this project, this includes:

Progressive introduction

Cycling Australia will actively encourage young cyclists to either finish school or learn a trade or job skill before beginning full-time participation in the national program. They will be introduced into the program in stages to enable them to make an easier transition into the world of a full-time cyclist.

Athlete advocate

Cycling Australia will introduce 'athlete advocates'; people who are respected by both athletes and the staff and who can act as mentors and counsellors for the elite cyclists.

Advocates will also sit down with each new recruit and explain the athlete agreement, code of conduct, disciplinary procedures and anti-doping policy and answer any questions the athlete may have.

Life skills and personal responsibility

This system will form an integral part of the national program and is already in place with the Under 23 program in Italy; where athletes are given a place to live, an allowance and are responsible for their own budgets, cooking, cleaning, washing and other domestic responsibilities. Educational opportunities will be available to assist athletes to learn skills and gain experience for later life. The athletes will be actively involved in developing this scheme.¹⁵

Code of conduct

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to describe the type of behaviour which Cycling Australia seeks to promote and encourages its members and supporters to adopt.¹⁶ This includes:

- treat all persons with respect and courtesy and have proper regard for their dignity, rights and obligations;
- operate within the rules and spirit of the sport;
- comply with all relevant Australian laws (federal and state), particularly anti-discrimination and child protection laws.¹⁷

The code states that Cycling Australia wishes to operate in an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination, where everyone is treated equally regardless of gender, ethnic origin or religion. (Cycling Australia also refers to ASC Guidelines for Harassment-Free Sport).

The code also protects against 'sledding' other athletes, officials or event organisers. Sledding is defined as a statement that is deemed to denigrate and/or intimidate another person, or behaviour likely to constitute emotional abuse and any form of harassment.¹⁸

Member Protection Policy

Cycling Australia recognises that all those involved in the sport cannot enjoy themselves, perform to their best, or be effective or fully productive if they are being treated unfairly, discriminated against or harassed because of their sex, marital status, pregnancy, parental status, race, age, disability, homosexuality, sexuality, transgender, religion, political belief and/or industrial activity.¹⁹

Cycling Australia prohibits all forms of harassment and discrimination, not only because it is against the law, but because it is extremely distressing, offensive, humiliating and/or threatening and creates an uncomfortable and unpleasant environment.

Their Member Protection Policy aims to ensure its core values, good reputation and positive behaviours and attitudes are maintained. It assists in ensuring that every person involved in the sport is treated with respect and dignity, and is safe and protected from abuse. This policy also ensures that everyone involved in the sport is aware of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities.

Part of this MPP are policies which provide procedures to show their commitment to eliminating discrimination, harassment, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour from cycling. As part of this commitment, Cycling Australia will take disciplinary action against any person or organisation bound by this policy if they breach it.

Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Cycling Australia aims to provide a sport environment where all those involved in its activities are treated with dignity and respect, and without harassment or discrimination.

Descriptions of some of the types of behaviour which could be regarded as harassment or discrimination are provided below:

Discrimination means treating or proposing to treat a person less favourably than someone else in certain areas of public life on the basis of an attribute or personal characteristic they have – such as race or religious belief/activity.²⁰ Some states and territories include additional characteristics.

Discrimination is not permitted in the areas of employment (including volunteer and unpaid employment); the provision of goods and services; the selection or otherwise of any person for competition or a team (domestic or international); the entry or otherwise of any player or other person to any competition; obtaining or retaining membership of an organisation (including the rights and privileges of membership).

Requesting, assisting, instructing, inducing or encouraging another person to engage in discrimination may also be discriminatory conduct.

Harassment is any type of behaviour that the other person does not want and does not return and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening. The behaviour is unwelcome and of a type that a reasonable person would recognise as being unwelcome and likely to cause the recipient to feel offended, humiliated or intimidated.

Unlawful harassment may include targeting a person because of their race, sex, pregnancy, marital status or sexuality. Whether or not the behaviour is harassment is determined from the point of view of the person receiving the harassment. The basic rule is if someone else finds it harassing then it could be harassment.

Harassment may be a single incident or repeated. It may be explicit or implicit, verbal or non-verbal.

Vilification involves a person or organisation doing public acts to incite hatred towards, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons having any of the attributes or characteristics within the meaning of discrimination. Public acts that may amount to vilification include any form of communication to the public and any conduct observable by the public.

Complaints

The organisation aims to provide an easy-to-use, confidential and trustworthy procedure for complaints, based on the principles of natural justice. Any person may report a complaint about a person/s or organisation if they reasonably believe that they have breached the policy. A complaint should be reported to a MPO or the CEO.

A complaint may be reported in an informal or formal way. The complainant decides whether the complaint will be dealt with informally or formally unless the MPO, in consultation with the CEO, considers that the complaint falls outside the parameters of the organisation's policies and would be better dealt with another way.

All complaints are to be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially.

Promoting these policies

In the interests of ensuring these policies are understood and adhered to, Cycling Australia affiliated associations and clubs must:

- adopt, implement and comply with this policy;
- publish, distribute and promote this policy and the consequences for breaching it;
- promote appropriate standards of conduct at all times;
- promptly deal with any breaches of or complaints made under this policy in an impartial, sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner;
- apply this policy consistently without fear or favour;
- recognise and enforce any penalty imposed under this policy;
- ensure that a copy of this policy is available or accessible to the persons to whom this policy applies;
- appoint or have access to appropriately trained people as Member Protection Officers (MPOs) to receive and handle complaints and allegations and display the names and contact details of MPOs in a way that is readily accessible; and
- monitor and review this policy at least annually.²¹

Cycling Australia is pushing ahead with the next phase of the cycling National Operations Centre (NOC), which will encompass a single content management system for all Cycling Australia and state websites, a central web structure, design and maintenance service, on-line race entry services available to all states, legislation compliant centralised e-mail server, upgraded security protocols and an e-commerce facility with provision for new membership on-line.

The online membership renewal was successful in its first year of implementation, with increased membership growth accounted in part to the easier registration processes. Further improvements to the processes will follow in 2007.²²

Endnotes

- ¹ Cycling Australia's *Vision Statement* at <http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/Mission/Mission.htm>
- ² Australian Cycling: *The National Strategy 1999–2004* at <http://www.abc.dotars.gov.au/downloads/auscycling.pdf>.
- ³ www.cycling.org.au.
- ⁴ http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/News_and_Media/CA_Memos/Communique_11.htm.
- ⁵ www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/Mission/Mission.html.
- ⁶ <http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/AnnualReport/05Annualreport.pdf>.
- ⁷ <http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/AnnualReport/05Annualreport.pdf>.
- ⁸ <http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/AnnualReport/05Annualreport.pdf>.
- ⁹ *Bicycling Australia: Bicycle Ownership, Use and Demographics 2004* at http://www.abc.dotars.gov.au/downloads/Australia_Cycling-Draft-July_2004.pdf.
- ¹⁰ <http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/AnnualReport/05Annualreport.pdf>.
- ¹¹ <http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/SportDevelopment/Participation/Participation.htm>.
- ¹² <http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/SportDevelopment/Participation/Participation.htm>.
- ¹³ <http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/AnnualReport/05Annualreport.pdf>.
- ¹⁴ www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/News_and_Media/CA_Memos/060713_Withdrawal_Ju.htm.
- ¹⁵ http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/P_E_D_A_L/P_E_D_A_L.htm.
- ¹⁶ www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/Mission/Mission.htm.
- ¹⁷ *Cycling Australia Code of Conduct* at <http://www.cycling.org.au/SourceCollections/ACFAF0F.PDF>.
- ¹⁸ *Cycling Australia Code of Conduct* at <http://www.cycling.org.au/SourceCollections/ACFAF0F.PDF>.
- ¹⁹ *Cycling Australia Code of Conduct* at <http://www.cycling.org.au/SourceCollections/ACFAF0F.PDF>.
- ²⁰ *Cycling Australia Code of Conduct* at <http://www.cycling.org.au/SourceCollections/ACFAF0F.PDF>.
- ²¹ *Cycling Australia Code of Conduct* at <http://www.cycling.org.au/SourceCollections/ACFAF0F.PDF>.
- ²² http://www.cycling.org.au/Content/NavigationMenu/News_and_Media/CA_Memos/Communique_11.htm.

