



**THURSDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> MAY - FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE**

## **RIDE OF SILENCE: CYCLISTS SHOW RESPECT IN NATIONAL SILENT RIDE**

The **2008 Ride of Silence**, a worldwide bicycle event, began in North America on May 21, and is still rolling across the globe with over 285 rides in places diverse as Antarctica, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Bolivia, Spain, Hong Kong and Japan. The Ride of Silence, started in Dallas, Texas in 2003 (after the death of a local cyclist), is a peaceful, apolitical ride that follows all road rules and pays homage to fellow riders who have been injured or lost their lives.

Across Australia, the Ride of Silence will start on Saturday 24 May with nine rides in Adelaide, Bendigo, Bowral, Canberra, Gold Coast, Melbourne, Mount Isa, Sydney and Townsville.

During the Ride of Silence, cyclists will take to the roads in a silent procession to honor their fellow riders, it is not a bunch ride nor a critical mass, it is a solemn occasion for riders to contemplate sharing the road with all road users and to remember those riders who are no longer able to enjoy riding though serious injury or fatality.

Every rider has their own story; many ride for personal reasons, to remember a friend, family member or colleague. Other cyclists take part to show respect and to show they still love cycling after injury or road incident.

The Canberra ACT Ride of Silence was organised after a group of cyclists were involved in a 'hit and run' whilst cycling in an on-road bike lane just three weeks ago. "We wanted something positive to come out of the incident, and to raise awareness of the need for all road users to show respect for one another," said local organisers.

In the aftermath of the May 8 'road rage' incident involving an elite road cycling bunch in Sydney, it's important that other road users know that they can contribute towards changing negative attitudes in positive ways that help everyone. People who choose to ride are not just "cyclists"; they are also grandparents, mums, dads, children, neighbours, workmates, and more often than not, people just like you.

Bicycles have a legal right to ride to share the road with motor vehicles, and much of the public is not aware of these rights. Cyclists need adequate space on the road, and an easy way to help is to give at least a meter. Also consider slowing down when approaching riders and taking a calm approach when something unforeseen occurs. Acting in anger can make a situation worse, for everyone.

"To be a good bike rider you have to think as a car driver and to be a good car driver, to think as a bike rider - summarised as, 'do unto others as you would have them do to you,' " said Eddie Barkla, Bendigo Ride of Silence organiser.

"Responding with aggression is never a valid reaction to any situation while driving, as it can have terrible outcomes for everyone involved. As more Australians are deciding to take up riding for commuting, recreation and fun, this year's participants in the Ride of Silence across the globe call on all road users to act with respect towards others and follow road laws". said Chris Star, Melbourne Ride of Silence organiser.

**Further background information available from Ride of Silence: <http://www.rideofsilence.org>**

### **Australian Ride of Silence Contacts**

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