



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Senior Victorians

Sunday, 6 January, 2008

SENIORS ON THEIR BIKES AND GOING FOR THEIR LIVES

Senior Victorians can now participate in a new cycling program to help them remain active and healthy, thanks to more than \$70,000 in Brumby Government funding, the Minister for Senior Victorians, Lisa Neville, announced today.

Ms Neville, who met senior cyclists at Birrarung Marr to launch the program, said *The Riding Life: Seniors 'Go for your life' Bike Riding Program* would encourage senior Victorians to continue or start cycling in a safe environment.

"The aim of the new program is to encourage seniors who haven't considered cycling as an activity, or haven't been on a bike for a few years, to get involved and give it a try," Ms Neville said.

Bicycle Victoria will organise up to 36 senior cycling groups across Victoria – including in regional and rural areas – with a focus on participants from diverse backgrounds. The groups will be led by skilled volunteer ride leaders, who will recruit seniors in their area to join a small riding group.

Ms Neville said the aim was to create social cycling groups that would continue bike riding together once the program is finished.

"We know physical activity improves general health and well-being in seniors, including the prevention of type 2 diabetes, protection against loss of mental function, improved cardiovascular fitness, joint health, increased muscle and bone strength, increased flexibility and reduced body fat," she said.

"*The Riding Life: Seniors 'Go for your life' Bike Riding Program* is another way the Brumby Government is encouraging senior Victorians to get active to help them maintain their mobility, independence and improve their quality of life."

Bicycle Victoria will work closely with the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Victoria to implement the program – tapping into COTA Victoria's experience in successfully managing senior riding groups and leader training within the community.

Harry Barber, Chief Executive Officer of Bicycle Victoria said cycling was a great activity for seniors to get involved in and an easy way to build strength and fitness.

"This program will give seniors motivation, skills, confidence and a social network to assist them in making bike riding part of their everyday life," Mr Barber said.

Ms Neville said the project was a great example of the Brumby Government and the local community working together to benefit senior Victorians, while encouraging cycling as a way to stay fit and healthy.

The Brumby Government will invest \$72 million over 10 years in cycling programs and infrastructure in the biggest injection of funds to cycling in Victoria's history – in addition to the \$4.2 million already spent each year.

Go to www.seniors.vic.gov.au for further information.

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