

NOMINATION 2006 BICYCLING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS - Award for Contribution to Cycling by a Politician



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Nominated for: Award for Contribution to Cycling by a Politician

Janet Rice has long been a proponent of cycling. Janet worked with Bicycle Victoria between 1993- 1997 and developed the Ride to Work Day program that has continued since then, which features cycling promotion and breakfasts at workplaces and the flagship Ride to Work Day breakfast in central Melbourne. She has been a commuter cyclist for over twenty years.

In her current role as Mayor of Maribyrnong City Council Janet's commitment and dedication to cycling was put in to practice early on in her mayoral term when she gave up the six-cylinder mayoral car and opted instead for a Mayoral Bike – a first for Council. Janet commutes from home to work and rides to the majority of her meetings on a Trek hybrid, fully equipped with lights, speedometer and a rack and pannier bag. This sends a positive message to the community as Janet is leading by example.

On average Janet rides 40km a week on Council related business, and has covered around 1400 km since her election in November, with a saving to the community both financially and in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

Janet continues to advocate for improved cycling infrastructure and implement cycling policy. A new bicycle strategy for Maribyrnong was adopted in 2004, a year after Janet was elected to Council. Janet was actively involved in its development. More significantly she has ensured that in each Council budget since then the strategy has had the required allocation of funding allocated to it so that the strategy is able to be fully implemented in its planned ten year time span. In an era of very tight budgets this has required some significant advocacy from time to time during budget negotiations.

The result of this is that over the last three years multiple new bike lanes and bike parking racks have been rolled out across the municipality. Council has committed \$820,000 for cycling on and off road paths in the period 05-07.

Janet was also instrumental in Maribyrnong being successful in its application to the state government to be one of two municipalities in which the largest TravelSmart program was undertaken in Victoria. As part of that initiative Maribyrnong's contribution was to employ a sustainable transport officer to deliver

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TravelSmart initiatives in the municipality. This officer has worked extremely successfully with schools and workplaces and the community to promote cycling.

Janet is a proud founding member of the Maribyrnong Bicycle Users Group and is involved in advocacy, rides and training with MazzaBUG.

Recently Janet travelled overseas on a MAV fellowship to learn from best-practice overseas examples of sustainable transport including cycling promotion. A highlight of her trip was visiting (and cycling in) Amsterdam, Groningen and Copenhagen which are amongst the world's top cycling cities. Reporting back on this trip has been a very important part of the fellowship. In the three months since returning home Janet has given six presentations based on her research, including two presentations to 150 – 200 people at transport forums at the Melbourne Town Hall and the Melbourne Museum, and a presentation to Councillors from across Victoria at a MAV conference.. Each of these presentations has had a strong focus on the benefits of excellent facilities for cycling. Whilst she was away Janet also enjoyed doing a radio interview from Hamburg for prime time ABC morning radio which focused on the phenomenal facilities for cycling in Amsterdam.

Janet has generated significant media coverage promoting cycling during her time as a Councillor including as Mayor. She has been photographed on or with her bike for the local newspapers at least ten times over the last three years.

Janet continues to promote cycling and sustainable transport throughout the municipality and in new developments with dispensations for carparking on the condition that Green Travel Plans are developed for the sites. The Green Travel Plans provide for the provision of cycling end-of-trip facilities and infrastructure including parking and access paths.

Internally Janet has advocated for budget allocations for cycling infrastructure to assist staff in their commute to work, allocating money for the installation of the new bike cage and staff lockers at the Footscray Town Hall. Council staff have also been encouraged to use a bike for work purposes with the introduction of the Fleet Bikes, comprising five bikes, one of which is the Mayoral bike. Staff have embraced this initiative.

Janet is Chair of the Melbourne Metropolitan Transport Forum which brings together sixteen of Melbourne's municipalities to advocate and share information on sustainable transport. In her time as Chair the MTF has had a strong focus on planning for and promoting cycling, and has held a cycling specific forum at one of its monthly meetings each year.

Other relevant state wide activities and positions held by Janet include membership of the Municipal Association of Victoria's Transport Advisory Group and the MAV – VicRoads Liaison Committee where advocating for cycling is always on Janet's agenda. Janet is also a Vice-President of the Victorian Local Governance Association, and has helped maintain this organisation's strong record in cycling promotion; and has regularly participated in the VLGA's Mayors on Bikes event held on Ride to Work Day each year.

Mayors on Bikes this year will be hosted by City of Maribyrnong – and Janet's commitment and enthusiasm for cycling is a significant factor in bringing this about.

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Janet with her children (left) and testing out the new bike lanes with Council Officers in Footscray.



Janet with hired bike in Amsterdam May 2006