

# Cycling in New South Wales

*New South Wales is a great place to cycle, whether it be mountain biking in the Blue Mountains, cycle touring along the Alpine Way or going for a fast spin through Royal National Park to Waterfall.*

The Cycling Promotion Fund has tracked down a heap of useful NSW cycling contacts and resources so you can spend less time searching for information and more time riding your bike.

This fact sheet will help you:

- Find people to ride with
- Campaign for better facilities for cyclists
- Discover the best places to ride
- Learn the road rules for cyclists

## BUGs, Clubs & Cycling Organisations

Cycling can be a great social activity, and for more than a century in Australia groups of like-minded people have been getting together to organise bike rides or to lobby for better cycling facilities. Join a dedicated cycling group to meet new friends, learn about great places to ride and do your bit to improve the cycling network.

**Bicycle User Groups (BUGs)** are local cycling groups: some organise rides, others concentrate on campaigning, while a few do both. They tend to work with local councils and are likely to be able to give great advice on where to ride in your area.

**Bicycle Clubs** usually define themselves by the type of cycling they promote or the types of members they attract. So you have clubs for racing, mountain biking and cycle touring that cater to groups such as young families, veterans or even gourmet adventurers. Clubs usually have a regular cycling program and joining one is a great way to learn from and be inspired by people with similar interests. Some play an active advocacy role.

Go online to find your closest [BUG or touring club](#), [Mountain-bike club](#), or [racing club](#).

**State Cycling Organisations** have been formed in most Australian states and territories to encourage more people to cycle. They do this by organising fun rides or competitions, running education campaigns and by working with governments at all levels to try to improve facilities for cyclists.

**Bicycle New South Wales** (02-9281 4099, [www.bicyclensw.org.au](http://www.bicyclensw.org.au)) has more than 10,000 members, runs a series of campaigns to improve the state's cycling network and operates several popular organised rides.

**Cycling New South Wales** (02-9738 5850, [www.nsw.cycling.org.au](http://www.nsw.cycling.org.au)) is the governing body for cycling competition in New South Wales, with more than 70 affiliated clubs and 4500 affiliated members.

**National Cycling Organisations** represent the interests of a particular group of cyclists, such as mountain bikers or racing cyclists and may administer licensing and insurance:

**Audax Australia** (0500 800 334, [www.audax.org.au/](http://www.audax.org.au/)) is a non-profit national cycling organisation specialising in on-road rides from 50 to 1200km and off-road rides from 35 to 200km. Its website lists its calendar, club contacts and Audax news.

**Bicycle Federation of Australia** (02-6249 6761, [www.bfa.asn.au/](http://www.bfa.asn.au/)) is the peak body representing non-competitive cyclists, and directly represents more than 20,000 cyclists who belong to its member groups, including Bicycle New South Wales. It is a non-profit organisation dedicated to expanding choice and opportunity for recreation, transport and healthy activity for all Australians.

**BMX Australia** (03-9654 2790, [www.bmxaustralia.com.au](http://www.bmxaustralia.com.au)) is the national sporting organisation for BMX racing within Australia. Its website details competitions, clubs contacts, rules and news. Australia is the second-largest BMX nation behind the USA.

**Cycling Australia** (02-9644 3002, [www.cycling.org.au](http://www.cycling.org.au)) is the peak governing body for the competitive sport of road, track and mountain bike cycling in Australia. Their website lists events, contacts for state racing bodies and clubs, and advocacy news.

**Mountain Bike Australia** (0416-228 016, [www.mtba.asn.au/index.shtml](http://www.mtba.asn.au/index.shtml)) is the umbrella organisation for mountain biking in Australia. The organisation is committed to administering, promoting and developing the sport of mountain biking throughout the country. Its website includes clubs contacts, event listings and news.

**Triathlon Australia** (02-9972 7999, [www.triathlon.org.au](http://www.triathlon.org.au)) is the national governing body for triathletes. Its website lists events, news, athlete profiles and club contacts.



# Cycling in New South Wales



## Become a Cycling Advocate

Most special-interest groups are represented by advocacy organisations, such as the NRMA or National Farmers Federation, that work on their members' behalf to improve facilities and services. Bike riders are no different: BUGs, clubs, and state or national cycling organisations work to improve facilities for cyclists and to raise awareness of the health, social and environmental benefits of cycling at all levels of government and in the community.

You can do your bit by joining one of these organisations (see the contact details earlier). You may choose to help in some of their campaigns by writing a letter, signing a petition or visiting an MP.

If you encounter a section of road or bike path that is obstructed or needs repair contact the RTA on 131 700; press 4 to report the problem and they will refer it to the relevant local authority.

## Where to Ride

For hints on great rides talk to other cyclists in BUGs or clubs, chat to your local bike shop owner, surf the web, pore over some maps or grab a cycle-touring guidebook.

**Cycle Touring** New South Wales' varied landscapes, spectacular coastline and network of towns and villages promise weeks of cycle-touring pleasure. Bikes can be easily carried on Sydney's suburban train network; trains going further afield only carry three standard bikes, prebooked and boxed, per service, meaning you need to rely on a car to get to the start of rides.

Load your bike on the train to discover the natural beauty of the Blue Mountains or the beaches around Newcastle, or head to the Illawarra to explore the rolling dales of the Southern Highlands. Alternatively, drive to the Snowy Mountains for days of off-road adventure and the sublime scenery of the Alpine Way; to the Hunter to meander among the vineyards; or across the Dividing Range to explore the old gold-mining country around Mudgee.

For touring in some of the state's beautiful national parks your best source of information is the [National Parks & Wildlife Service website](#), which includes detailed information on the features and facilities of each park. The site features downloadable maps as well as recommending the correct topographical maps for off-road riding.

**Mountain Biking** New South Wales is heaven for mountain bikers, thanks to the rugged Great Dividing Range that runs beside the east coast, and the state's many parks and reserves. Within Sydney forget you're in the city for a few hours by heading to Oatley Park for technical rocky single-track loops and great views of the Georges River or try the picturesque trails at Manly Dam or the short but gratifyingly steep loops at Marsden.

Farther afield, Royal National Park has a huge network of trails; while Mt Keira, near Wollongong, has some steep, technical single track; and the Blue Mountains have superb riding for mountain bikers of all skill levels. In the Southern Highlands the state forest fire trails offer lots of opportunities and you can expect epic days of cycling around Fitzroy Falls in the Kangaroo Valley.

You can generally ride on fire trails, but not walking tracks, in New South Wales national parks. Some parks, such as Royal National Park, have specific cycling maps showing you where you can ride. Kosciuszko National Park offers fabulous cycling on vehicle tracks through remote countryside.

The [Bicentennial National Trail](#) is a 5330km route through Australian bush, wilderness and mountain areas. It starts in Healesville, north-east of Melbourne, and heads all the way up to Cooktown in far north Queensland.

Whenever you go off-road remember to check your bike is in good working order; take warm clothes, spare food, water and repair equipment; tell someone where you're going; and respect the bush and other trail users. Bicycle Victoria, Victoria's bicycle advocacy organisation, has prepared a great list of [guidelines for mountain bikers](#).

**Rail Trails** Consider exploring New South Wales' rail trails by mountain or touring bike. A network of these idyllic cycling, walking and horse-riding trails has been created from former railway lines. Rail Trails travel through areas not reached by roads, have gentle gradients designed for steam trains, and are often surrounded by spectacular bush filled with wildlife. Find out about the trails near you at [www.railtrails.org.au/](http://www.railtrails.org.au/).

**Road Riding & Racing** New South Wales has a very busy racing scene, with the highest number of cyclists in Australia and a dedicated network of racing clubs and facilities.

In spring the state hosts Australia's toughest one-day classic, the 242km Grafton to Inverell, which takes riders across the Gibraltar Range. Also in spring, the 160km Hornsby to Swansea classic doubles as the NSW state road cycling championship. In early 2004 New South Wales will host several events for some of the world's best women cyclists as part of an extensive program to bring more elite women's competition downunder.

Sydney's Centennial Park is the favourite training circuit for inner-city dwellers. Other popular training runs include the almost-car-free old Pacific Highway north of Hornsby up to the central coast and the circuit from Sutherland to Waterfall and back through Royal National Park. Homebush also becoming a popular training destination.

# Cycling in New South Wales



New South Wales' premier track racing venue is the Dunc Gray Velodrome (02-9738 9900, [www.duncgrayvelodrome.com/](http://www.duncgrayvelodrome.com/)), the state's permanent legacy of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. It has a regular program of races, with details posted on the website. Many suburban and regional clubs have their own velodromes and run regular race programs.

Cycling NSW's website includes details of the [track](#) and [road](#) cycling calendar.

For results of major races around the world, plus other cycling news, log onto [Cycling News](#).

Every November the MS Society runs the [Sydney to the Gong](#) ride, which challenges participants to ride 90km from Sydney to Wollongong. The ride has attracted up to 10,000 people in some years.

**Maps** If you want to plan a pleasant, safe route to work or your local shops, or feel like exploring Sydney on the weekend have a look at the [Sydney Cycleways Map](#) produced by the RTA. It shows cycleways and places to ride and is part of a series of maps that cover regions around the state, from the Illawarra to the Hunter, to Sydney's outer west. Order them by calling the RTA on 1800 060 607 or [download](#) them for free.

If you're cycling further afield take a look at the NRMA's road maps. They're designed for motorists but are useful planning resources for cycle tourists. Order copies [online](#), by popping into your local NRMA office or by calling 13 11 22.

The cities of Newcastle and the Shoalhaven have produced a series of ride descriptions and maps for cyclists. You can spend weeks cycling in the Shoalhaven, which stretches along the coast from Berry and Kangaroo Valley south to the Clyde River and deep into the mountainous, remote forests to the east. [Download](#) the 31 ride descriptions in the Shoalhaven Cycling Guide or order a copy by calling 1800 024 261.

Newcastle has a brochure that describes five rides from 15 to 60km, ranging from a coastal ride, to the 'Foodies Delight' excursion around the city, to one that travels through bush and wetland. [Download](#) the brochure or call them on 02-4974 2999.

If you're going off-road you'll need the detail supplied by the [Land and Property Information's topographical maps](#), which come in 1:25,000 and 1:50,000 scales, or the Natmap 1:250,000 series. They show features such as contours, rivers and cliffs as well as roads and walking paths. You can buy maps from outdoor stores, information centres or map shops: you can find [distributors](#) online.

**Books** Cycle-touring guides are stocked by Bicycle New South Wales, many bike shops and good book stores and can be ordered online from [Aussie Cycling Books](#), which also stocks titles on training, biographies and camping. You can also borrow many guides from your local library.

Useful New South Wales trip-planning titles include:

*Around Australia by Bicycle – The Complete Guide*, by Paul Elwood, with detailed route descriptions for the entire 15,000km journey plus comprehensive information on selecting equipment, planning the trip, weather conditions and bike maintenance.

*Bike-It! Sydney*, by Bruce Ashley, is a back-street guide for Sydney cyclists. It's packed full of useful information for both beginners and experienced cyclists keen on seeking the pleasures of the city. As well as 31 detailed bike maps covering the inner Sydney area and regional connections it includes tips on transporting your bike, social riding and good bike shops.

*Cycling Around Sydney*, by Bruce Ashley, details the 25 best rides in and around Sydney. It has more than 30 full-colour maps and includes all the information and inspiration you need to explore Australia's largest city (available February 2004).

*Cycling Australia*, from Lonely Planet, details seven tours in NSW, including routes through the High Country and around the Hunter Valley wineries. It also details an East Coast route from Melbourne to the Gold Coast and includes lots of hints for packing, training and looking after your bike.

*Discovering NSW & Canberra Bike Paths*, by Amanda Lulham, describes more than 1000km of bike paths, with 45 easy-to-read maps.

*Trails Australia*, by Hugh Flower, describes 50 off-road trails in the greater Sydney region.

**Commercial Bike Tours** If you're new to cycle touring or simply want to have someone else organise your next cycling holiday why not take a tour with a commercial operator?

Many of the state cycling organisations run organised tours, which can attract hundreds or even thousands of riders for several days of socialising, great riding and sightseeing. Bicycle NSW runs the [RTA Cycle Sydney](#) day ride and the [RTA Big Ride](#), which will run over nine days from the 20th to the 28th of March 2004. The route will take cyclists from Gloucester through Tuncurry, Bulahdelah, Raymond Terrace, Newcastle, Rocky Point and Ourimbah and will finish in Berowra.

Tour operators organise rides for people of every interest and skill level. Whether you're looking for a leisurely cruise around wineries, a hard-core mountain-biking trip or a punishing road training camp you'll find something to suit you. For a comprehensive list of other commercial tour operators look at the directory prepared by [Pedal Power](#), the ACT's cycling advocacy organisation.



# Cycling in New South Wales



## Ride by the Rules

Australia now has uniform road rules, which means the same laws apply to cyclists throughout the country. The rules allow for bicycles to be treated as vehicles so, for the most part, cyclists need to obey the same laws as motorists: ride on the left-hand side of the road; stop at stop signs and red traffic lights; signal turns; and give way when required.

In addition cyclists are required by law to wear a helmet; ride with front and rear lights at night; and carry a rear reflector and bell or ringing device on their bike.

Some states have legislated to vary some rules from the national standard, particularly in the areas of footpath riding and towing a trailer. For the road rules as they apply to cyclists in New South Wales look at [BikeSaint's Favourite Road Rules](#).



You can also [download](#) the full version of the road rules; Section 15 applies specifically to cyclists.

Other road users are required by law to treat cyclists as vehicles; make yourself visible to motorists, act predictably and be aware that not all drivers understand that bikes share an equal status with cars on the road. If a driver behaves dangerously towards you the best thing you can do is contact the police to report them to help prevent problems in the future for other riders. Take note of the vehicle's make, colour and registration number plus the time of day and location of the incident.

To report a taxi or bus<sup>2</sup> driver driving dangerously call the public transport information line on 131 500 and choose option 5 to log a compliment, suggestion or complaint. You need to record the registration number, time and place, and incident details, while a description of the driver is helpful. These complaints are followed up and will affect the driver's ability to get their commercial driver's licence renewed.

This information has been collated by the Cycling Promotion Fund (03-9818 5400, [www.cyclingpromotion.com](http://www.cyclingpromotion.com)).

Disclaimer: Every attempt has been made to ensure details were accurate at the time of printing; however, things can change quickly and we urge you to check the validity of the information yourself.