

MEDIA RELEASE 29th July 2008

Active Transport Taskforce supports 'On Your Bike' Conference 30th July, Shellharbour

The Illawarra Active Transport Taskforce congratulates the State Government for its initiative in getting people out of their cars and onto bikes. The Department of Environment and Climate Change is holding a conference called 'On Your Bike' tomorrow at Shellharbour.

The Illawarra Active Transport Taskforce has been active for several years. It is the peak group in the region, bringing together regional stakeholders to encourage active transport such as cycling and walking. Convened by Healthy Cities Illawarra, members of the Taskforce include bicycle user groups, local councils, representatives of the Heart Foundation, Department of Health and the Roads and Traffic Authority.

Community Environmental Health Officer Jill Merrin said, "we are very pleased that the State Government is holding the 'On Your Bike' conference tomorrow in the Illawarra. The Taskforce has laid the foundations for cooperative action on this issue in the region, and we look forward to working with the Government on furthering this work."

Healthy Cities Illawarra Manager Frank Wallner will be a key speaker at the conference, presenting information about the Taskforce and some of the priorities the Taskforce has identified for our region.

Mr Wallner said, "Healthy Cities Illawarra is dedicated to improving health, well-being and the physical environment."

"This conference is an opportunity to contribute to the development of the NSW plan for active transport, part of addressing the threat of climate change and air pollution as well as the health effects of our increasingly sedentary lifestyles."

The Active Transport Taskforce has released a study which identifies some of the barriers and incentives to the use of active transport. Barriers include the availability and condition of cycleways, distance and time, safety, carrying capacity of bicycles and the weather

"People are encouraged to use active transport if there are plenty of good quality pathways, parking and storage, information and maps, and better planning and design," said Ms Merrin.

Healthy Cities Illawarra works to improve and promote the health, physical environment and quality of life of the people of the Illawarra. It is a non-profit, community based organisation and is part of a global movement founded by the World Health Organisation.

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