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JUMP ON A BIKE TO LIGHTEN YOUR GREENHOUSE FOOTPRINT

People from across Australia today took part in the inaugural National Ride to Work Day to help improve their health and the environment.

Secretary of the Department of the Environment and Water Resources, Mr David Borthwick said that cycling to work is a great way to integrate exercise into your daily life, while also doing your bit for the environment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

“Ride to Work Day is an opportunity for new and regular riders to discover the joy of cycling to work. It also helps save money on petrol and parking costs while also taking the stress out of trying to find a parking space,” Mr Borthwick said.

“My department actively supports this event. It’s great to see it become national this year with every state and territory adopting the day and promoting the health and environmental benefits to employees.

“I took up the role as Ride to Work Day Ambassador to encourage my staff to practice what they preach and leave their cars at home and instead jump on their bicycles for a healthy and environmentally friendly way to get to work.”

“I’m also glad to launch the Department’s bike fleet which now includes 6 bikes which aim to provide an alternate means of green travel for off-site meetings.”

Transport emissions are responsible for around 14 per cent of Australia’s total greenhouse gas emissions, almost 8 per cent of this is passenger cars.

“Simple actions like riding or walking instead of driving have an important part to play in helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and addressing the challenge of climate change,” Mr Borthwick said.

“Congratulations to everyone who participated today, you have all set a great example for other organisations to emulate.”

Now in its 14th year, Ride to Work day was established by Bicycle Victoria, a community organisation based in Melbourne dedicated to getting *More People Cycling More Often*.

Mr Borthwick was speaking at the Department of the Environment and Water Resources Ride to Work Day breakfast held this morning in Parkes, ACT, which saw participating staff from the department and other surrounding departments celebrating riding to work to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and improve their health.

The Australian Government supports the uptake of sustainable modes of transport through the TravelSmart Australia programme which aims to encourage people to reduce their reliance on cars and make smart choices about other forms of transport.

Organisations wishing to set up their own bike fleet should refer to the *How to Set up a Successful Bike Fleet – Toolkit*, developed by the Bicycle Federation of Australia for the Department of the Environment and Water Resources. The toolkit can be downloaded from www.travelsmart.gov.au/toolkits

For more information about Ride to Work Day and active transport options please visit www.bv.com.au and www.travelsmart.gov.au

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