

# Active TRAVEL:



Paradise editor Lindsay Saunders joins the Council's ride to work campaign

active travel  
An initiative of  
Gold Coast City Council

## WEEK 1

# No more back-peddalling

There's a lot more to riding a bike than just swinging your leg over the saddle, writes Lindsay Saunders

I'M on a velodrome. On a bike. Riding with an Olympic gold-medal winning cyclist. And I'm starting to enjoy myself.

I had no plans to start riding a bike again. The last time I rode was because I was too young to drive.

As soon as I had a car, the bike was forgotten. That was the better part of 28 years ago.

So when I was chosen to get on a bike and ride to work for a month I was, shall we say, a little dubious.

However, it seemed like a good way to get some much-needed exercise and it was only for four weeks.

Plus there was the promise of an electric bike for one of those weeks. How hard could it be?

I had agreed to "volunteer" for the gig as the Bulletin's ambassador for the Gold Coast City Council's Active Travel campaign (thanks, boss).

So, I met Alton Twine, the council's manager of transport planning with the Planning, Environment and Transport Directorate, and Kate Carroll, the marketing and communication project officer for the Active Travel program.

They outlined what was ahead – I'd be given a bike for the four weeks, spend time with the aforementioned cycling legend Sara Carrigan to learn skills and tips, write about my experiences each week and I'd try out an electric bike and a fold-up bike as well.

So after

being handed my bike, a hybrid (that's a mix of a road bike and mountain bike), I met Sara at the Nerang Velodrome to learn how to ride. What? I know how to ride a bike. It's easy. Surely it doesn't matter how long it has been since I threw my leg over a saddle... it's like, well, like riding a bike, right?

Yes and no. Thankfully I didn't fall off the thing straight up.

Brakes, gears, pedals, etc, all as I remembered. Balance not too bad, all things considered.

However, the time I spent with Sara taught me things I'd never known when the deadly treadly was my only means of transport.

From posture (key to all manner of things including true control over my trusty steed) to braking, basic mechanics to gear selection, Sara ran me through the theory and practical and I came away from the session not only feeling informed but much more confident about hitting the road on two wheels.

We also arranged to meet at my house on the Wednesday morning and ride together to work, I think possibly to ensure I didn't stuff up and forget what I'd learnt.

Living in Southport and working in Molendinar means my commute is not a long one. I decided on the Tuesday morning to have a crack and go solo, choosing my route from the council's handy maps of the Coast's cycle ways.

With no idea how long it would take, I set off more than an hour before I was due to start work.

The trip took 15 minutes.

That's not to say I didn't raise a sweat along the way.

Bordering on desperately unfit, for me each hill loomed like Everest, hills that in the car were almost invisible.

After ringing my



Olympic cyclist and trainer Sara Carrigan with Lindsay Saunders

partner to assure her I'd survived the marathon effort, I hit the showers and got ready for work.

With the Gold Coast's climate, being able to shower before work seems a must and my colleagues would no doubt agree.

I was pretty pleased with myself and the trip home that day was equally incident-free.

I'd proved Sara's advice to be correct with eye contact and hand signals and motorists had been happy to share the road with me.

Hang on, I think I'm actually enjoying this.

On Wednesday, Sara joined me

on the commute. After we arrived at the Bulletin, myself in a lather of sweat, herself with barely a raised pulse, she assured me that in not too much time my physical fitness would increase and the ride would become even more enjoyable.

And she said she'd be happy to ride with me again next week. Nice.

It's only early days for my bike riding but already I'm seeing the sense in getting a bike and doing this on a regular basis.

I rode to and from work again on Thursday and Friday, and while my legs may argue the point, I'm really enjoying myself.

## ACTIVE TRAVEL

### What is Active Travel?

Active Travel means getting out of your car and choosing a more sustainable way to get around the Gold Coast.

**There are many Active Travel options available, including:** public transport (bus and train), walking, cycling or car pooling.

### The benefits of Active Travel are:

reduced congestion on our roads, reduced impact on the environment, improved fitness and health, and money saved on the journeys you make.

### How to become an Active Traveller:

- walk or ride to school or university
  - walk or ride to work
  - walk or ride to the local shops
  - walk to the bus stop or train station
  - car pool with your colleagues to work
  - car pool with other parents to take the kids to school or to other activities
- Tips to help you become an Active Traveller**
- plan trips wherever possible to minimise car travel
  - plan the safest route and do a trial run on the weekend
  - visit the Active Travel website for assistance in planning your journey
  - attend one of council's free bike education workshops
  - join a local walking or cycling group

I even went for a ride on the weekend just for fun. Next week, I'll be giving an electric bike a go, which sounds suspiciously like cheating. Stay tuned!

**For you chance to win one of four Sara Carrigan Cycling Skills courses log on to**

**www.goldcoast.com.au/cyclingskills and enter your details. Entries close April 11.**

**View cycleway maps at www.goldcoastcity.com.au/active travel.**

**Thanks to Goldcross Cycles for Lindsay's wheels.**



Working for our future — today

# Get on your bike - it's Bike Week!

Active Travel celebrates Bike Week with 'Ride to Work' day today. Leave the car at home. Whether you walk, cycle, carpool or catch public transport... **activetravel**  
[goldcoastcity.com.au/activetravel](http://goldcoastcity.com.au/activetravel)

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enjoy the way you move

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