

# MASSIVE

# critical mass

October 1997

Critical Mass Sydney

## Reclaim the streets!

Reclaim the Streets is a direct action network dealing with the environmental issue that effects us all every day - transport. Reclaim the Streets is committed to better public transport, cycling, walking and livable neighbourhoods. Reclaim the Streets stands against the car-culture. Our streets have been hijacked by the motorcar, the heavy road freight industry, and the RTA. We want 'em back!

### What about this Street Party thing?

The southern hemisphere's first Reclaim the Streets Street Party takes over the streets in Newtown on Sat 1st Nov., as simultaneous street parties are celebrated in Oxford UK, and Berlin Germany. Reclaim the Streets is a new worldwide movement of citizens re-asserting their right to shape their own city's destiny - free from the dead hands of compromised politicians, inept bureaucrats and "special interest" corporations.

Old forms of political dissent - the demonstration, the march, the rally - are moribund, participants reduced to passive observers of a "spectacle". The Street Party is a grassroots celebration of direct action and street-level democracy, empowering, exciting and joyful!

In the UK, Reclaim the Streets has grown since 1995 to become a major event with parties attracting crowds of up to 13,000 people.

In Sydney, Reclaim the Streets draws it's inspiration from sources as diverse as "Freeway Busters", the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, "Critical Mass", and Newtown's legendary "Vibe Tribe" - a symbiosis of the underground free-party scene, the street festival and the direct-action, anti-motorway/alternative transport movement.

Labour Party? Liberal Party? National Party? One Nation Party? Bugger that lot, let's

**STREET PARTY!**



Revellers at last years' street party in the UK.

### Reclaim the streets

1pm Saturday 1st November

**DJs:** Abel, Womble Thump, Marty B, Seymour Butz, Vic, Amino Acid, Sub Bass Snarl.

Meet at Lennox St, Camperdown Memorial Rest Park (then walk to secret site.)



### Cops on bikes

Leichardt Police are now patrolling the suburb's streets on bicycles. Crime "hot spots" will be targetted according to intelligence information.

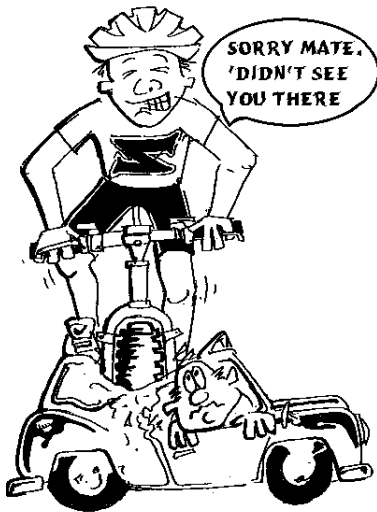
The new pedal pigs are reported to be more maneuverable and flexible than their motorised counterparts, particularly when chasing suspects on foot.

Nice helmets guys, guess you'll be getting tickets for that huh?

## Critical Mass turns 5

Last month marked the fifth anniversary of the organised coincidence Critical Mass. Five years ago about 60 cyclists happened to ride home together through the streets of San Francisco.

Around 2,000 riders turned up to celebrate the anniversary, handing out cards with "SF—You Rock! Thank you San Francisco for your smiles and support" printed on them.



## New masses in Wollongong, Hobart

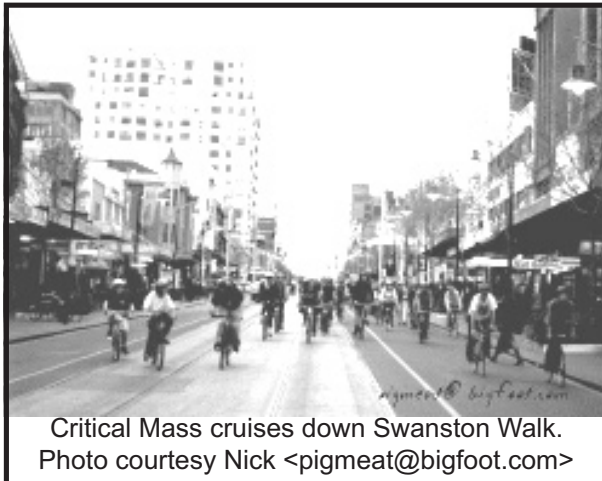
Wollongong had their first Mass last month on the 24th. It was a success and all involved are keen to repeat the experience. The small turnout of nine was just enough with our "One Less Car" patches to turn some heads. From now the plan is to have one on the last Friday of each month departing from the Northfields Taxi rank at Wollongong Uni around 5pm.

Contact: Jason Leske <jsl01@uow.edu.au>

Hobart has apparently had some huge success with their first ride drawing five hundred people! A big bike path loop around the city and heaps of community discussion in local papers and on TV have reportedly begun since the Mass began.

Contact: David Detrick <davidd@delm.tasgov.au>

## Melbourne gains momentum



Critical Mass cruises down Swanston Walk.  
Photo courtesy Nick <pigmeat@bigfoot.com>

CM Melbourne are celebrating a victory for cycling alongside their second anniversary. Swanston Walk, a picturesque mall carrying only trams, bicycles and taxis, was at risk of reverting back to a car zone under pressure from retailers. Following fierce lobbying from both sides, including a ride by Critical Mass last month the Council decided to keep the street car-free.

Also in Melbourne news, a new web page has been put online packed with photos of the Mass alongside flyers and other activist photos.

<http://home.hyperlink.net.au/~damon/photos.htm>

### Critical Mass online

Critical Mass online has been taking off around the country. A number of states now have discussion mailing lists where we arrange things and discuss issues important to the cycling community.

Get involved with the vibrant and highly active online community. Get online and check out these cities:

Sydney:	<a href="http://www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmss.html">www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmss.html</a>
Melbourne:	<a href="http://www.ecr.mu.oz.au/~amorton/cmss.html">www.ecr.mu.oz.au/~amorton/cmss.html</a>
Brisbane:	<a href="http://www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmbrisbane.html">www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmbrisbane.html</a>
Hobart:	<a href="http://www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmhobart.html">www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmhobart.html</a>
Perth:	<a href="http://www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmperth.html">www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmperth.html</a>
Newcastle:	<a href="http://www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmnewcastle.html">www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmnewcastle.html</a>
Canberra:	<a href="http://www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmcanberra.html">www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~eddie/cmcanberra.html</a>

# Kyoto Climax

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In December this year, nations from around the world are meeting at Kyoto in Japan to decide whether or not to set uniform binding targets for reducing greenhouse gases.

This is the perfect opportunity to promote cycling as a solution to our greenhouse woes!

Here in Sydney we came up with the idea of having a global greenhouse critical mass on the 28th of November. Being only days before the Kyoto meeting, we could have a huge international impact.

Cycling produces no greenhouse gases. If governments around the world are serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, then they should be promoting cycling - that means more cycle paths, more bike stands, bike access on public transport, more traffic calming, less road building ... I'm sure you all know what needs to be done!



On the 28th of November cycle groups around the world will raise awareness by -

- issuing media releases which stress cycling as a solution to the greenhouse effect
- distributing leaflets
- flying banners about greenhouse
- flying blue flags from bikes to symbolise clean air (this looks very dramatic - imagine if it was a symbol at critical masses all around the world - it would make beautiful television footage!)
- pulling stunts - such as the reverse pollution vehicle which we ran here a few months ago (it was a car painted with clouds to symbolise clean air, filled with plants which converted the pollution into oxygen for people to breathe, and pulled by two tandems - we made the TV news on two channels with this)
- doing any other wild and crazy, zany things we can think of!

## Hey web nrrrds!

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A meeting is being held for all able-bodied webmaestros. The plan is to break the Critical Mass site up into a number of sections to be maintained by different people, spreading the workload and ensuring the information is all up-to-date.

Green Iguana, King Street Newtown      6:30pm  
Tuesday 4th November

## UNSW cashed up

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The UNSW Bicycle User Group has had a small victory. \$12,000 has been allocated to us to use for bicycle facilities. We want anyone's input on the best way to spend it (must be used for facilities). If you have any ideas, please e-mail me, or if you must, phone. It may only be a small amount of money, but it all helps.

Byron Ross <bkmr@hotmail.com> (9387 5026)

## South Sydney approves bike plan

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After around two years of glacial activity, South Sydney Council unexpectedly approved its bike plan last Wednesday night. The BUG had been trying to get it before council for several months, but no one told us that it was up last Wednesday! The plan is conservative (of course), but the budget is much better than we had hoped for. Council is putting up around \$40,000, which will be combined with RTA money, Section 94 money, and other special funds for about \$120,000 a year. I was told that this is the highest budget of any Sydney Council (does anyone else know for sure?)

Thanks to all the members of the Marrickville-South Sydney BUG, and to all those who wrote letters to the council this year.

Geoffrey Phipps, Marrickville South Sydney BUG  
**Meetings:** First Thursday of every month, 7:30pm,  
Green Iguana Cafe, King St Newtown.

# Anarchist motorists clog city

Motorists hit the road en masse today, clogging streets and roads and holding up traffic in the Sydney area.

"This is crazy! I have to get to work!" said Nancy Shaver, a cyclist who crosses town on Cleveland St. to get to her job at St. Vincent's Hospital. "In some places cars are 3 abreast in 2 lanes of traffic, and some are blocking the road at 45 degree angles!"

She reports that local motorists hold their Critical Mass drives on more than just an occasional basis. "I bike along here on my way to work at 3 p.m. and it's clogged nearly every day. Same thing when I come home after a night shift at 8 a.m."

Shaver wishes the motorists would show a little more courtesy when planning their mass drives. "I respect their rights to promote a transportation style that involves massive pollution, health risks, alienation and the like if that's what they really believe in, but you'd think they could respect those of us who have to get around and stay out of our way! It's not like they even stick to one street, they're everywhere! It really slows everybody down."

She also questions the attitude of some of the motorists involved in the drive. "They grimace at you from behind their windshields. They're always butting into traffic illegally, and in some cases are obviously trying to intimidate other road users."



Frustrated cyclists wait until traffic clears behind the motorists' "Mass".

It appears no one is immune to these attacks, not even other motorists. "I'm surprised they can pull this off on such a regular basis, considering their lack of organization and apparent bad feelings towards everybody— even each other!"

"There is little we can do," Senior Sergeant Frank Henry of Sydney Police Station told *Massive*.

"They're a legitimate form of traffic and are afforded the same rights as buses and bicycles. We have to just wait until it's all over so the rest of the traffic can flow again."

Road users, particularly cyclists and pedestrians, are advised to use caution when negotiating Sydney roads, until the mass drives are called to a halt.

## Calendar

**Reclaim the Streets** **November 1st** **1:00pm**  
DJs Abel, Wobble Thump, Marty B, Seymour Butz, Vic, Amino Acid and Sub Bass Snarl mix it up in a huge community street party taking back the streets from the tyranny of the cars.

**Web meeting** **November 4th** **6:30pm**  
Meeting for Web maestros regarding the Critical Mass Sydney site. Meet at the Green Iguana, King Street, Newtown.

**Recycled Bikes meeting** **November 11th** **6:30pm**  
Meeting to discuss the recycling of bicycles. Basically plan is to take in a whole bunch of old bikes, fix them up and pass them on to those who need them. Meet at the Green Iguana, Newtown.

**Sunday Mass** **November 9th** **11:00am**  
The Sunday Mass of the month. Generally a more relaxed ride followed by lunch and socialising.

**Critical Mass meeting** **November 18th** **6:30pm**  
Meeting at the Green Iguana, King Street, Newtown to discuss everything regarding Critical Mass. Have your say, come along.

**Critical Mass November** **November 28th** **5:30pm**  
**Kyoto Climax** will be our protest against the offensive stance taken by our Howard government towards greenhouse gas emission targets accepted by the rest of the world. So far we appear as environmental vandals to the rest of the world. Protest to ensure our mediocre government recognises the importance of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

**Critical Mass December** **December 19th** **5:30pm**  
The last Mass of the year will be held one week early on the 19th as it is the last working Friday of the month.