



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2008

### **BIKE RIDERS CASH IN FOR ASTHMA!**

The Asthma Foundation of WA would like to thank the community and the media, for their support of the Freeway Bike Hike for Asthma, which took place on March 16<sup>th</sup> 2008. The iconic bike ride attracted over 7,000 participants, who collectively contributed over \$60,000, in registrations and fundraising, for the 220,000+ Western Australians who are diagnosed with asthma.

The annual bike ride is the only one of its kind in Perth, and involved a record number of cyclists and families this year, that raced past the Joondalup finish line. New to the bike route this year was a 60km leg along the freeway from Kwinana and Joondalup, and an impressive 2,276 competitive cyclists tackled this leg.

Asthma Foundation CEO, Mr. John Gummer said "We are absolutely delighted with the interest and support shown by the community for the Freeway Bike Hike for Asthma. With asthma impacting such a large proportion of people living in WA, it is great to see people contributing to the services that educate and potentially save lives".

All funds raised through the fundraising and awareness event, will work directly to broaden asthma education and to help reduce the number of asthma related deaths in the community.

"National research shows that hospital admissions and the incidence of asthma attacks among children increase during the month of May every year. As a result, the Asthma Foundation of WA needs to reach even more people with their asthma education, advice and community support. We encourage the community to continue to support the Foundation throughout the year, as our team focus on assisting people in the WA community", Mr. Gummer said.

Asthma affects 1 in 6 children under the age of 15, and is the leading cause of hospital admissions in children under 12.

The community and media support from the Freeway Bike Hike for Asthma came at a crucial time amidst recent findings, from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, that show that deaths due to asthma are on the increase, and therefore the work of the Asthma Foundation of WA is imperative in the prevention of asthma mortality.

The alarming news from the recent statistics indicates a 26% jump, from 318 registered deaths in 2005 to 402 deaths in 2006. With 1 in 9 adults suffering from asthma, the statistics also point to almost double the mortality rate in females than in males. Asthma was also identified as an associated or underlying cause of 1,255 deaths registered in 2006.

The Asthma Foundation of WA is heading in to its annual Donations Appeal and encourages the community to dig deep to support those living with asthma. To donate, or for more information about the Asthma Foundation please visit the website [www.asthmawa.org.au](http://www.asthmawa.org.au) or call (08) 9289 3600.

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