

## SARCC Perfect Ride April 23<sup>rd</sup>

Murray Bridge – Monarto Loop 57kms with 465m of elevation

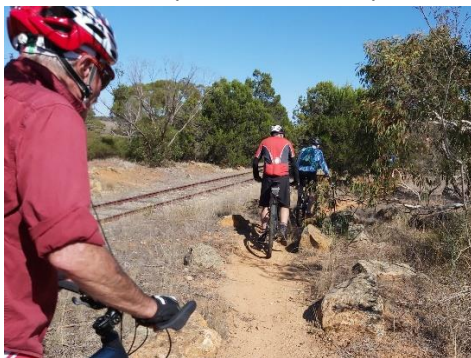
The ride started at the Wetlands to the north of Murray Bridge, close to the burnt-out Thomas Foods meatworks. Nine riders started the ride, however only six completed the full programmed ride. While we began in fog, this soon burnt off to leave a glorious day with only light winds. The fog was perhaps a portent of events later in the day when a Crows footballer with that nick-name kicked a freakish goal to achieve a notable win.

It was quickly apparent that route modifications were necessary as roads were still closed from the summer floods and the route along the levy bank was not possible. Thus some diversion was needed along paved roads as we headed



northwards, where we encountered the majority of the days traffic. After 10 kms we climbed away from the Murray River on some excellent gravel roads. For the next 20 kms we wended our way through mallee country that had yet to receive the rain to enable a germination in the pasture. As well as farms that could benefit from scrap metal merchant visits, we passed solar farms set up with swivels to follow the sun's trajectory and the new (surely close to completion) Thomas Foods meatworks. The roads were excellent and swift progress was made.

After crossing the Palmer Rd we turned down the abandoned Monarto to Sedan railway line. While sometimes riding on the line, most of the cycling was on a path that once may have been a service road. This continued for 12 kms and was slow-going with a couple of railway bridges to negotiate as well as considerable stretches of sand. Both a lack of rain and recent motorbike visitors meant that the sand was quite soft and required walking for periods. A couple of falls in this section ended well.



There was confusion over the re-vamped entrance to the Monarto Zoo. Three were seduced away half way through the rail line, by the lure of coffee/ toilets / lawn for lunch / an easier route home. The rest continued through to lunch near the old entrance to the zoo. There was lots of evidence for sand blowing up onto the land around the rail and one wonders how often the line needed to be dug out from drifting sand. In this section a speedo was lost and despite a

retracing of the route it remains where it fell.



The final section was a pleasant ride along the edge of Monarto Zoo and then past the Kinchina Conservation Park along the Lavendar trail. On the outskirts of Murray Bridge we passed Mobilong Prison, where Sven understands there to be a Dronfield block. Thankfully at this point the route was downhill as the railway section has somewhat sapped energy.

The ride was reviewed appropriately in a local hotel, with the timing such that the Crows fans among us could enjoy a Darcy Fogarty goal to win in Launceston. An excellent ride on a very pleasant autumnal day.