

Rolling along in the Roobaix de Bool!



Sandra Maguire, from the Warrnambool Citizens Road Race Committee, is part of the team that has organised the inaugural Roobaix de Bool: a fun cycling event to coincide with the 100th running of the Melbourne to Warrnambool Cycling Classic.

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[/dropcap]f you have ever wanted to power across the finish line of the Melbourne to Warrnambool Cycling Classic *without* having to ride 250-plus kilometres, this is the year you can do it.

As part of the 100th race celebrations on Saturday October 17, the Warrnambool Citizens Road Race Committee is launching a fun, family-oriented cycling event with a French twist, the **Roobaix de Bool**.

But unlike the gruelling 258km classic road race that includes several, lung-busting hills, the Roobaix de Bool is all about taking it easy and having a good time.

Riders will have a leisurely five hours, starting from 8am, to complete a scavenger hunt around the back streets, main streets, shops, tourist spots and secret nooks and crannies of Warrnambool, where they will either collect specific items, maybe take a “selfie”, or answer a question.



Another Lycra-free zone: the Melbourne to Warrnambool cycling race was occasionally run in the opposite direction, including the 1922 event that is poised to start on what is now the finish line at Raglan Parade and Liebig Street.

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[/dropcap]nce they have completed the “hunt”, the final stop is to cross the finish line of the historic race – well before the competing cyclists arrive of course! – but in time to cheer them home.

“You don’t need to be a cyclist, you don’t even need to own a bike – just any non-motorised way of getting around,” says committee member and co-organiser **Sandra Maguire**.

This means you can turn up on a scooter, roller skates, or even a penny farthing, but perhaps leave the horse at home and also the dog.

And riders don’t need to worry about squeezing their legs and backsides into Lycra.

“It is also definitely a Lycra-free zone,” Sandra laughs, “so we are encouraging people to dress in whatever they like: the more outrageous or creative, the better.”



The Paris-Roubaix with its bone-jarring, elbow shaking cobblestones. This is from the 1984 event with eventual winner Sean Kelly out front. The Roobaix de Bool will be far less taxing and far more fun.

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[/dropcap]he Roobaix de Bool was inspired by the Melburn

Roobaix, which takes riders through the back streets and alleyways of Melbourne, and that event, in turn, was inspired by the famous French cycling race, the Paris-Roubaix.

The Paris-Roubaix began in 1896, one year after the Melbourne to Warrnambool Classic, and is best-known for taking riders across long sections of lumpy, bumpy, slippery cobblestones – no wonder somebody invented padded cycling pants!

Sandra and co-organiser **Dean Picken** hope the Roobaix de Bool will add another dimension to what is already a feature event on Warrnambool's sporting calendar.

"We hope it will take people to some of the parts of Warrnambool that they don't see every day, or may not even know about, while also getting out, exercising and having a good time," Sandra says.

The Roobiix de Bool will also be a part of what is a history-making event.

The 100th running of the Melbourne to Warrnambool Cycling Classic has seen a huge response from riders, with registrations selling out within six minutes of opening. This year will also see a record number of women cyclists competing in a separate women's category that is being held for the first time.

Author and former race director **John Craven** was also commissioned to write a history of what is Australia's oldest one-day cycling race and the second oldest one-day cycling race in the world. His book, *The 'Warrnambool'*, was released earlier this month.



[box]The first 200 registrations for the Roobaix de Bool will receive a free, quality musette bag. Entry is \$20 adults and children under 16 free. You can find [more information and register here.](#)[/box]

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