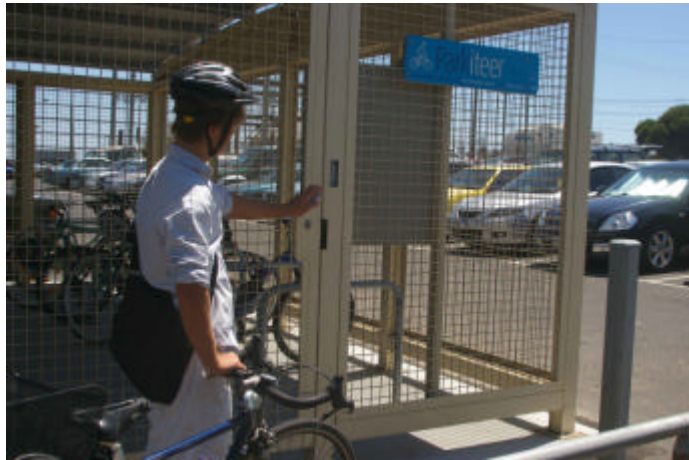


# ride to work day 2009

## Mixed Motion

*You've heard of mixing and matching, but this has nothing to do with your wardrobe. **Ben Earlam** looks at multi-modal commuting solutions*



Parkiteer members have their own swipe card which allows 24-hour entry to the secure cages.

Thousands of workers around the country saddled up on 15 October last year and set off on their merry way to work by bicycle. But not all of those workers arrived at their destination the same way: figures from 2008 National Ride to Work Day show 24% of Australian participants used other means of transport in tandem with their bikes.

“Bicycles used in combination with other transport is on the increase,” says National Ride to Work Day Program Director Lucy Allinson. “It enables people who would otherwise not use a bike to commute, to at least go part of the way by bike. Using other transport modes helps individuals overcome the obstacles of distance and challenging parts of their commuter route.”

As Melbourne’s public transport system bulges at the seams and traffic queues grow, the demand for multi-modal transport solutions is increasing. The “Parkiteer” Bike Cage Program was launched in December 2008 to meet this demand. The government-funded program, implemented by Bicycle Victoria, provides riders with 23 secure bike cages, strategically positioned at train stations around Victoria.

One avid Parkiteer fan is Mark Laidlay, who lives in Melbourne’s north-eastern suburbs. He previously travelled to work by bus and train, but a change in timetables left him stranded. “I had thought about riding my bike to the station but was worried about leaving it unattended all day,” said Mark. “I didn’t like the idea of taking my bike on a peak-hour train either.”

Then Mark heard about the Parkiteer bike cage at his station and decided to sign up. Mark now rides the 4km from home to the station. “The security and convenience of being a member has made it really easy to change my

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routine,” he said. Riding has had a spin-off effect too: Mark is now a recreational rider – his bike, which was previously “down the back of the shed”, is now “up the front”.

The demand for Parkiteers exceeds the supply. “Even without a substantial promotion campaign, 70% of the total capacity of all the cages Victoria-wide has already been filled,” explains Jason den Hollander. “The launch has also piqued the interest of interstate government representatives, university campuses and workplaces.” Transport Minister Lynne Kosky announced in February the planned construction of a further 10 cages in 2009.

Mixing and matching your travel modes doesn’t have to stop when you get off the train: in November 2008, the government announced a new law allowing folding bikes on trams, trains and buses. Having developed from novelty status to a practical accessory, folding bikes have found a growing market.

Xin Xhang from Melbourne bike business Folding Bike Specialist explained, “Folding bikes are retailing anywhere between \$250 and \$2000, and sales have doubled since the store opened five months ago. Customers tell us they use them with trams, trains, on their boats – and we have even designed a special carrier bag to go in an aeroplane hold in response to demand.”

As well as Parkiteer cages and folding bikes, multi-modal travel can include the more traditional approaches of mixing a car journey with a bicycle. David Kearsley found that option appealing when he was looking to combine his daily commute with getting his daughter to childcare. “It’s a great solution for us,” says David. “It enables us to accommodate the needs of two full-time working parents. I can drop my daughter off, then leave my car around the corner from the childcare centre and ride in from there.”

Other workers, like Gerry Gowan, live a little further away and find multi-modal travel a good way to break up the monotony of their daily commute. Gerry commutes 50km from Blackburn to Melbourne CBD for work every day. “I live in Olinda, and about twice a week, I pop the bike in the car and drive to Bayswater,” says Gerry. “Then I jump on the train at Bayswater, get out at Blackburn and ride the rest of the 25km in to work, coming into the city on Yarra Boulevard.”

*This article first appeared in Apr-May 09 issue of Ride On. [Ride On](#) is the bimonthly member magazine for Bicycle Victoria. For more articles like this, members can log on to [Blink](#) and go to the Ride On library.*