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**NOBEL PEACE RIDE:**

**ON THE ROAD TO A FUTURE FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

The Jessie Street Trust enabled the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Australia, to organise a 900km bicycle advocacy journey from Melbourne to Canberra from 2-20 September 2018. The Ride toured ICAN’s Nobel Peace Prize medal and raised awareness of the new UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in regional centres as well as in Melbourne and Canberra. The project strengthened our support base among the general public, partner organisations and parliamentarians, contributing momentum towards Labor’s commitment to join the treaty in government, declared at their national conference in December. Countless connections were made and new relationships formed along the way.

The Ride involved many public outreach events including:

* + The send-off from the Victorian Parliament House in Melbourne. Speakers included Jeannie Rae (NTEU), Andrew Giles MP (Labor), Senator Janet Rice (Greens), Lucy Turton from #DisarmUnis and the Peace Choir.
  + Benalla Performing Arts and Convention Centre: all day exhibition and 1-hour event with then-Benalla Mayor Don Firth.
  + Albury Library Museum: all day exhibition and 1-hour event with Deputy Mayor Amanda Cohn and Secretary of the North East Border Trades and Labor Council Chip Eling.
  + Gundagai District Services Club: all day exhibition and 1-hour event with MAPW member and historian John Stace.
  + Dinners with locals in Whittlesea, Yea, Benalla, Warrenbayne, Albury, Yass and Canberra.
  + Arrival party outside Parliament and afternoon reception with Labor, Greens and independent federal parliamentarians on Thursday 20 September, the first anniversary of the Treaty opening for signature.
  + The *grand finale* was the Nobel Peace March involving a couple of hundred people, cycling and marching from the Canberra Peace Bell to Parliament House. The speakers included Alex White of Unions ACT, Angela Chen of the Australian Youth Disarmament Network, Anthony Albanese MP, Aunty Sue Coleman-Haseldine (Kokatha nuclear test survivor from South Australia) and Robert Tickner. People travelled from Albury, Melbourne, Sydney and northern NSW to attend. It was a great turn-out and a powerful declaration of support for Australia to join the nuclear weapon ban treaty.

Over the course of our 2.5-week journey we were joined by around 30 cyclists at different sections of the route. A committed group of 5 cyclists journeyed the entire distance.

The journey was smooth, positive, fun, and without any major glitches or issues. The cyclists became fantastic messengers for ICAN, engaging with local people and media along the way and using their own social media platforms to raise awareness. Some days were physically challenging, but balanced well with rest days and shorter cycling days.

The Nobel Peace Ride Coordinator Lavanya Pant designed the route on beautiful country back roads and organised accommodation, dinners and events along the way. The Ride had a safe and supportive culture, with regular check-ins among the group.

Upon our arrival in Canberra, speeches were made and motions were moved in the House of Representatives and the Senate, welcoming the ride and acknowledging ICAN’s work. The ACT Parliament passed a motion calling on the federal government to sign and ratify the nuclear weapon ban treaty.

Thirty-two enormous ICAN flags were flown on Commonwealth Avenue throughout the day on 20 September. Those same flags are now being gifted to cities that endorse the ICAN Cities Appeal to fly annually on the anniversaries of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Ride was well-documented on ICAN’s social media accounts. We reached more than 20,000 people during the journey on Facebook alone. Regional newspapers and TV news covered our journey enthusiastically, and we received good coverage from SBS, NITV and ABC radio.

The 2018 Nobel Peace Ride was a unique and powerful project, highlighting ICAN’s work and advancing the campaign for Australia to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It would not have been possible without the support of the Jessie Street Trust.