

Rathdowney Rumble Ride Report 29/7/2018 - Justin Bennett

The Rathdowney Rumble has been on my to-do list for the past few years. This year I was glad to finally make it along for the ride, it was certainly well worth the wait. Roger (RO) knew that I had been keen for a while to ride this, so had asked me early on in the morning to share my thoughts from my first Rathdowney Rumble.

Reading the previous year's ride report, I was expecting temperatures to be close to zero, I wasn't looking forward to the cold start. I am not the biggest fan of the colder weather, so was happy when I arrived, got out of the car, and found the weather to be rather warm for this year's event. A few other riders suggesting temps were around 8c-9c. Perfect temps for a day out.

58 entrants gathered at Rathdowney, by far the most attended Queensland Audax ride I have ridden. We rolled out of the show-grounds a little after 6:30am and headed for Woodenbong. I was riding with Peter and Roger at the back of the pack, the usual views of Mount Barney and Mount Lindesay were not to be seen due to thick fog. I was the final rider into Woodenbong, the usual quiet town buzzing with our group of riders. We were treated to a food and coffee feast thanks to our support team. I rode out with Roger after the first checkpoint, and met up with Graham, Sarah, Ben and Robert at Old Koorelah. Next challenge was Mount Tooloom. Having only climbed this once before (Audax - Scenic Rims 2017) I knew what was ahead - a great big hill and a great big view. It's well worth the effort. I got to the top, took the helmet off and spent about 10 minutes looking back towards the state border, Main Range and Killarney.

Temperatures had dropped at the top of Tooloom, so I carried on and started the descent down the mountain, passing through Wallaby Creek, Coutts Crown and a short stretch of gravel had us at the Tooloom Falls section of the Yabbra State Forest. The support crew had setup lunch for the riders at the top of the Falls, drinks, fried rice, sandwiches, lollies, chocolates, the lists goes on. I've taken note of this spot for future camping trips, the falls would be a great place to spend the night.

Bruce kept me company for the final stretch of the ride. We had a good chat for a while, and I got to know a bit about the Smiling for Smiddy rides he had previously ridden. We travelled through Woodenbong and backtracked along this morning's course, Summerland Way, over the state border and along Mount Lindesay Highway. The support vehicle was just short of Rathdowney and Bruce and myself had a final on-course drinks break before our last 10km stretch over the finish line.

A huge thanks must go to the support crew, Jennie, Tony, Andie, Andy, Lily and Kim. Many thanks for giving up your time to keep us riders safe and happy. I definitely appreciated the food and drinks along the way and also the encouragement. Big thanks to Roger for being RO, cooking great food for the day and also for the coffee at Woodenbong. I'll see you there next year!! Justin Bennett