



Hi,

My name is Izabela. I am the lucky winner of the trip to Auckland, NZ, from last years SUB event, to see, meet, greet and ride with Sarah Ulmer, Olympic Gold Medallist and Event Ambassador.

The excitement began with an awesome ride in St. Kilda, December last year. During the presentation of fantastic random prizes to participants, I heard my bib number being called out and I was sooooo excited! I had never been to New Zealand! How good was that!

A couple of months later on February the 15<sup>th</sup> 2008, I landed in Auckland. I rolled my bike box out into the airport hall, to be greeted by a friendly Limo driver who took me to my hotel. The ride was in two days. I received a phone call from Sarah and her team welcoming me – they were all very caring. I was able to do some sight seeing around Auckland, the market, the Wharf etc, which was great.

When the BIG DAY came, Sarah picked me up, gave me a cup of coffee and took me to Clevedon grounds from where the ride started. We caught up with other women for a coffee and slice at the local Café. I must say, everybody was very friendly, relaxed, and easy to talk to and Sarah, of course, is a ripper! She is very popular, so approachable, helpful, motivating and full of energy! A great person to know. She told me that the ride would go along the country side, a picturesque place of rolling hills for 65km.

The ride was an adventure! Women of ALL sizes and ages! The weather turned from good to worse, from wind, rain, sunshine and reversed again. Women around me were pedalling, talking with each other, motivating each other and really inspiring everyone on. It was a thrill! I finished in 24<sup>th</sup> place out of 180, with a time of 2.15hours.

At the presentations, I was officially welcomed as “the only rider from Australia” and recipient of the prize. I was called up on stage to talk about the ride and enlighten the New Zealand women about the ride in Melbourne.

I will definitely be doing the SUB Women's Cycle Challenge again this December. I will be doing Around The Bay in a Day and the Degani Kinglake Ride in September, and ...of course I WOULD LOVE to go back to New Zealand and do Lake Taupo 160km, of which a lot of women, who I met were telling me about.

In the past, I considered riding very much a “blokes” sport, but so many motivated women in NZ proved me wrong. I love it! I promote it and I hope to see MANY MORE women this year in St.Kilda on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December enjoying their health, fitness, fun and unity in one ride.

*Izabela.*