



12 January 2004

Challenging Approaches to Better Mental Health

To whom it may concern:

**Re: Reference for Brian Rabinowitz**

In December 2002, I invited Brian to design and coach a training program, tailored to enable 8 Out Doors' participants to undertake the 2003 Great Victorian Bike Ride. I had known Brian for the previous twelve months in his capacity as a spinning class leader at Richmond Recreation Centre, where I am a member.

Out Doors is a not-for-profit organisation in Melbourne, which provides program activities for people with severe mental illness. The organisation reduces the burden of mental illness on the community by breaking down the stigma and building resilience through outdoor activities. Out Doors programs provide measurable improvement in anxiety and depression by reducing social isolation, low self-esteem and poor physical fitness, all of which are hallmarks of people with a serious mental illness.

Brian's program spanned the seven months preceding the Great Victorian Bike Ride. Training sessions in the spinning room, at the velodrome and on the road were designed to increase in intensity and duration, as well as improve participants' cycling proficiency. Hill climbing, effort recovery, road courtesy, cycling dynamics and efficiency and peloton skills were introduced by Brian and reinforced at every opportunity. Consequently, the Out Doors participants were very well prepared for the rigours of the 580 km ride in summer 2003.

Brian ensured that the health and safety of each individual was paramount. His program was specifically tailored to meet the challenges of a vulnerable population with a low base of physical fitness. His motivating force encourage each participant to maximise their potential during the 7 months' preparation. He was personally well-liked by everyone concerned. His thoughtful and flexible style was also greatly valued by the Out Doors staff involved.

I would be delighted to provide a detailed reference for Brian and can be contacted on (tel.) (03) 9417 2111.

Yours faithfully,

**Margaret Buchanan**  
Programs Manager

Out Doors Inc. is a community managed organisation  
Head Office 118 Napier Street Fitzroy Vic 3065  
Telephone (03) 9417 2111 Facsimile (03) 9417 2163  
Email [indoors@outdoorsinc.org.au](mailto:indoors@outdoorsinc.org.au) [www.outdoorsinc.org.au](http://www.outdoorsinc.org.au)  
Association Incorporation No. A14781J  
A.B.N. 25 252 946 980  
Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible