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## SLOPES: L'Etape Australia Cycle Race - Report on event

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Dear SLOPES Members and Associates

The inaugural l'Etape Australia 150km cycle race from Crackenback to Perisher via the townships of Jindabyne, Rocky Plains, Berridale and Dalgety to Perisher was a huge success for the almost 4000 amateur cyclists and cheering visitors, locals and their kids who lined much of the route with its colourful sculptures and decorations.

The NSW Government, through its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, had secured the landmark event for three years. SBS, together with Lateral Events, will co-organise and promote L'Etape Australia.

L'Etape Australia by Le Tour de France, is a premier amateur road cycling event, held under the banner of the world's most iconic cycling race, the Tour de France.

L'Etape du Tour (French for 'a stage of the tour') was established in 1993 by ASO (Amaury Sport Organisation) to allow cyclists to experience a stage of the Tour de France first-hand. ASO has since extended the L'Etape concept internationally bringing the unique Tour de France experience to the United Kingdom, Brazil, Chile, Argentina, and now Australia.

An event of this magnitude can only be run on roads closed in stages, as it ran from 7 am through to mid afternoon on December 3, so if you wanted to see it or go somewhere during the race you had to work through the logistics beforehand. The event was supported by police, race officials, medical escorts, emergency services and many volunteers. There were two events on the day:

1. The Race, the flagship competitive ride that finished in Perisher, replicated a stage of the Tour de France. Anthony Evans, a PRR club member and former cross country Olympian was tenth over the line.

2. The Ride followed the same course but finished in Jindabyne. The full results of both are here

<http://letapeaustralia.com/results/>

A few comments overheard:

> Unfortunately the logistics beat me, I didn't go down. I spoke to someone in Jindabyne the next day who said it was great, but logistically you needed to be in Jindabyne due to the extensive road closures (and see the riders as they came through on the way out and the way back).  
The comprehensive road closures had a dramatic effect on mobility of spectators and some people stranded for the duration were unhappy, a small minority, I think

> It was great to catch the Tube down the mountain after the race. (Perisher Blue opened the Ski Tube to transport cyclists back to the start).

> It's not a bad first year and it'll only get bigger.

> The riders at the head of the field at about 115k were serious but so many others were out for a good day and the experience of L'Etape on closed roads in amazing weather.

> I thought they would close the course in front of competitors who didn't make each sector in the time designated but the rule must have been relaxed. It looked like the great majority made it to the finish, a lot of stragglers included.

> Can't work out why some riders who were supposed to finish in Jindabyne rode all the way to Perisher.

> Froome looked very relaxed with such a high pedal cadence on the hill. A few competitors were wearing Tour de France LCL Yellow jerseys as well as Froome but we knew to watch out for a blue helmet.

> Didn't see many spectators at the finish in Perisher but there were lots at the settlements along the route, kids, high fives, accolades and all

Here are some links that may be of interest:

<http://www.sbs.com.au/cyclingcentral/blog/2016/12/05/letape-australia-riders-view>

<https://goo.gl/photos/7bnmHbxWa1dVhYGs8>

Regards

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SLOPES