

Recumbent rider to clock 100,000km

FOR someone who rides 40km a day on her own, cyclist Lucy Penning attracts quite a crowd.

In fact it's her popularity as one of the only local riders of a recumbent – a bicycle in which the rider lays back and has the pedals in front of them – that has motivated the former Dutch farm worker to this week clock the 100,000km milestone on her bike.

"I would never ride a normal bike because it doesn't attract the attention," she said. "I like meeting people – people wave and smile at me as I ride past."

Four mornings a week she pedals feet-first, Australian flag flying, from South Townsville to Idalia on her unique vehicle. In theory, it's a 7km journey to her job at Day Dawn Nursery, but she enjoys her form of cycling so much that she adds 10km in detours.

"I always go along The Strand, out to the airport or whatever I feel like," she said.

Lucy arrived in Townsville about three-and-a-half years ago having decided to settle in the North during a holiday two years earlier. She migrated from the Dutch town of Dronten, the birthplace of Flevobike recumbents.

Having grown up in a country where 20 per cent of workers cycle to work, Lucy attributes her confidence in Townsville traffic to long experience.

Alexis Gillham



SIT BACK: Lucy Penning loves riding around Townsville on her recumbent bike

Photo: MEGAN TAYLOR

Go back to Budget drawing board on welfare, migration Greens call for review

THE Australian Greens want the Federal Government to go back to the drawing board on welfare changes and skilled migrants, only a day after the Budget was delivered.

The call came as the Prime Minister and Treasurer Wayne Swan took to the airwaves to pitch their \$350 billion Budget, which focused on training, welfare changes and mental health.

The Greens – who helped deliver minority government to Labor and will hold

the Senate balance of power from July 1 – said reforms to get people off welfare and into work were "punitive" and described 16,000 skilled migrants who will be placed in regional areas as "queue jumpers".

Greens leader Bob Brown said that while the parliament was yet to see what parts of the Budget would require legislation, he would open talks with Mr Swan especially to ensure there weren't any "real victims" in the welfare overhaul.

"We will look to see what we can change in parliament, but I would prefer to do it by negotiation with the Government," he said.

He said while the Greens wanted the corporate tax cut for big business to be scrapped – saving about \$18 billion over a decade – the Government would get it through parliament with the Coalition's support.

Finance Minister Penny Wong said she was open to talks with the Greens, but was surprised they did not

support the welfare changes as they were "progressive".

"It is not a progressive thing to have children growing up in jobless families... (or) have single parents on welfare for years," Senator Wong said.

Greens MP Adam Bandt also questioned how the Government would spread the benefits of the mining boom beyond the resources-producing states.

Mr Swan said the mining profits tax revenue would go to superannuation for the

low paid – with super funds pumping money into infrastructure – and small business would get a tax break.

The Government came under fire from the Opposition, who accused Mr Swan of not going far enough with spending cuts and making it more likely interest rates would rise soon.

Opposition treasury spokesman Joe Hockey said he would pin "every interest rate rise" on Labor.

The Prime Minister will get some free advice today in

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott's budget reply speech, when he will outline how he would immediately cut 12,000 public servants and start to pay down Labor's debt, which is set to reach \$106.6 billion in 2012.

The speech will not present an alternative 2011/12 Budget, but rather show the Coalition's broad approach to the economy and describe the Gillard minority government as a "failed experiment".

More reaction: pages 16, 21

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