



By no means all of the Bucketts Way has dud road surface, as this photo shows.

RATING	Keep one eye on the road, one eye on your speedo – and have a good time!
MAP REF	Map 27, D11 – C12
START/END	Raymond Terrace, Nabitac
DISTANCE	134km
INFORMATION	Gloucester (02) 6558 1408, Raymond Terrace (02) 4980 0255

## By the Bucketts

I have to admit that I'm in two minds about recommending this road, or pair of roads. There's no doubt in my mind that they are terrific bike roads, but they're also (over part of their length) in pretty poor condition. The authorities have even acknowledged that – by putting a low speed limit on those stretches.

I suppose they'll fix them eventually. We live in hope.

Anyway, turn off the Pacific Highway just north of **Raymond Terrace** onto the Bucketts Way. For the first half of the stretch to Gloucester the road more or less follows the Karuah River, but you don't see much of it. Instead you get a mixture of State Forest and (mainly) open paddocks. Make a note of the turnoff to the right that you pass at **Booral**; that's the road over the Devils Hills to Bulahdelah, and it's well worth taking – on another day.

**Stroud** takes part in one of those weird festivals where, on one particular day of the year, people all over

the world in major conurbations with the same name – Stroud, in this case – throw rolling pins and wheel their wives around and such. Fortunately the store also has truly excellent hamburgers.

The rugged hills that begin to emerge on your left are the Bucketts, so-called after their Aboriginal name which apparently means 'rocks'. You can't argue with that.

**Gloucester** is a terrific town with one of our favourite country restaurants, Perenti, in the main street.

Continue following the Bucketts Way out the eastern side of town and across the railway bridge. It's a long and exciting pull up the side of the hill to the little lookout at the top, and then there's a good run waiting for you all the way out to **Nabitac**, back on the Pacific Highway. The **Krambach** pub is bike friendly. If you're heading north you can take the back road from here to Purfleet and Taree, but why not continue to Nabitac and sample the bike museum?

Lunch in Gloucester has always been a favourite activity of mine.

