



## General election 2008 A briefing note for media commentators

**As an election approaches, we want you to have top quality facts on cycling. There are many myths about cycling! And the facts which counter those myths make good media copy.**

### **Who are we?**

CAN (the NZ Cycling Advocates Network) is New Zealand's national network of cycling advocates. We work with government and local authorities on behalf of day-to-day, recreational and leisure cyclists.



## **Burning election issues...**

...make good copy. And cycling is often 'part of the solution' to a range of juicy issues the voters may like you to cover. Here are some examples.

### **Traffic congestion/roading demand**

Most journeys are very short (1/3 under 2km, 2/3 under 6km), so most of the demand for more roading comes from trips which could be cycled. Providing for cycling is far cheaper than building major new roads.

### **Climate change/Kyoto protocol/resource scarcity**

Changing weather patterns and scarcity of resources like oil can be tackled by lots of small actions added together. A single cyclist makes a tiny difference (one less car), but adding all cyclists together makes one big difference.

### **Health/pollution**

Regular cycling (such as work or school commuting) provides the classic preventive health 'prescription' of about half-an-hour of gentle exercise most days of the week. We can build everyday cycling into busy lifestyles more easily than other forms of exercise. For example, we need to travel to work and cycling takes about the same time, saves us money, and saves everyone else from more pollution and congestion.

### **Crime/public safety/urban design**

More cycling means more people are on the street, which deters crime, especially in city centres at night.

### **The economy**

Cycling saves costs in various ways, such as:

- reduced employer costs through a fitter workforce, meaning less sickness and absenteeism
- more personal disposable income (and thus spending power) from saved transport costs
- reduced health service costs through reduced heart disease, obesity and other ailments
- reduced travel time for everyone, through reducing congestion.

### **It's fun!**

- Cycling's a fun way of getting around for adults and children alike, bringing a sense of personal freedom and accomplishment
- Cycling gives children independence and mobility, which are vital for their physical, social and intellectual development.

# Myths and facts

## **Myth: “There aren’t many cyclists”**

### **Fact: About 1/3 of New Zealanders cycle**

- There are 1.274 million cyclists in New Zealand (about 1/3 of the population), and about 1/5 are regular cyclists
- There are about 750,000 cyclists of voting age – about 26% of voters
- More bikes than cars were sold in 2007
- There are about as many cyclists riding to work as people using public transport

## **Myth: “Cycling’s dangerous”**

### **Fact: Cycling is less dangerous than other modes**

- Cyclists are less likely to be involved in on-road injury crashes than other road users (1 in 1,000 cyclists each year, compared to 3 in 1,000 car drivers)
- Cyclists are less likely to cause crashes than other road users (only 40% of on-road cycle crashes are caused directly by the cyclist)
- Cyclist traffic offences total less than 1% of all traffic offences each year

## **Myth: “Cycling isn’t practical for most journeys”**

### **Fact: Cycling is ideal for the most common journeys**

- Most journeys are less than 6km, ideal for cycling rather than driving (1/3 of vehicle trips are less than 2km, 2/3 less than 6km)
- Most car journeys are one person with no luggage
- Hills, weather and luggage-carrying capacity are not major deterrents to cycling, especially if road design and workplace facilities support cycling
- We used to cycle a lot more in past decades when many facilities were lacking
- In congested conditions cycling can be quicker than driving

## **Myth: “We don’t need cycling because everyone drives”**

### **Fact: Up to 1/3 of people have no access to a motor vehicle**

- 30% of people do not have access to a motor vehicle because of disability, age, income or inclination
- 20% of New Zealanders are below the legal driving age, and 10% of households do not own a car

## **Myth: “Transport doesn’t fund health and leisure”**

### **Fact: Health and leisure are already a large part of transport**

- About 1/3 of cycling trips are for leisure – but so are 1/3 of car trips
- Car crashes are one of the largest injury costs within the health sector
- Over 1/3 of New Zealanders are insufficiently active to benefit their health, and this physical inactivity contributes to 1/9 of all deaths (about 2,600 each year)

## **Myth: “Cyclists don’t pay their way”**

### **Fact: Cyclists are already paying their way**

- Cyclists pay local body rates (whether they drive or not), which fund local transport infrastructure
- Most cyclists are also motorists, and so also pay through petrol taxes
- Even though about 1/3 of New Zealanders cycle, only about 1% of the National Land Transport Fund goes on cycling and walking
- Taxes to pay for roads were set up to pay for damage done by motor traffic – and the damage done by cyclists is insignificant
- Generally cycling facilities are only needed because motor traffic hinders cyclists’ safety and accessibility

## A cycle-friendly future

Cyclists and non-cyclists alike support cycling because it is better for all of us – for pressing health, economic and environmental reasons. About 1.3 million New Zealanders cycle, and more support it. That's over a third of the population.

Cycling is increasing in some parts of the world simply because governments have invested and acted over time to build the numbers of cyclists.

Here's CAN's 9-point plan to improve cycling in New Zealand:

### CAN's 9-point plan to help cycling:

1. Run a national Share the Road promotional campaign telling motorists and cyclists how to share roads safely.
2. Change transport planning and funding processes to make sure key problem areas or gaps for cyclists (e.g. Ngauranga to Petone cycleway, Auckland Harbour Bridge) get fixed – no more delays or buck-passing.
3. Spend less on road building and more on encouraging alternatives to driving: more motor vehicles on our roads only make things less safe and attractive for cycling.
4. Promote the use of lower speed zones (particularly 30km/h).
5. Change the tolerance for motor vehicle speed limit enforcement from 10km/h to a maximum of ten per cent of the posted speed limit.
6. Increase the walking and cycling budget in the National Land Transport Programme by a factor of five.
7. Change funding and audit processes to ensure that all roading projects improve the environment for cycling.
8. Change the driver licensing system and driver instruction (including bus and truck drivers) so motorists are educated about how to take care around cyclists.
9. Fund and promote nationwide roll-out of cycle skills training for children and adults.



For more information see:

[www.can.org.nz](http://www.can.org.nz)