



Media Guide to Cycling in New Zealand

Cycling is popular, safe, responsible and contributes to the community. Having said this, there are a number of myths and misperceptions of cycling. The data below are sourced from Ministry of Transport (MoT), Statistics NZ, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), SPARC, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and Injury Prevention Research Unit (IPRU). CAN's website (<http://can.org.nz/>) provides more details.

How many cyclists are there in New Zealand?

The MoT Household Travel Survey (2006) shows there are **1.274 million cyclists** in New Zealand, or a **third (31%)** of New Zealanders. By comparison, there are about 3 million people with car licenses.

- About 750,000 or a fifth (18%) of New Zealanders are regular cyclists (cycling at least once a month) and 144,000 or 3.5% cycle nearly every day
- About 38,000 or 1% ride to work (about 2.5% of commuters) according to the 2006 Census

SPARC figures show cycling is in the top five most popular leisure pastimes across children and adults. ACC figures suggest cycling is far safer (has a lower number of injuries among people doing it) than rugby, cricket, basketball, soccer, netball and tennis.

How dangerous and irresponsible is cycling?

Cycling is relatively safe and responsible. MoT traffic crash, IPRU injury and MoJ traffic offence data show:

- About 1 in 1,000 cyclists are in injury crashes every year, compared with about 3 in 1,000 car drivers - and the cost of car crashes is among the top injury-related health costs in NZ
- Since 2000 about 750 cyclists were injured and 10 killed on average on the road every year, only 5% of the total - low given the numbers of cyclists
- Cyclists are more often seriously injured than car users - school-aged cyclists are at highest risk, while regular cyclists appear to have more crashes per hour travelled than car users
- Only 40% of on-road cycling crashes are caused directly by the cyclist - the lowest rate of any mode
- Cyclist traffic offences total less than 1% of all traffic offences per year - a negligible figure

Who pays for on-road cycling?

Urban roads are partly paid for by ratepayers (through Local Authority rates allocated to roading), and partly by car owners (such as through petrol taxes). Most adult cyclists are also car owners and so pay for their own road use, either as a rate payer or as a motorist.

Note local authority and national budgets for cycling are typically a few percent of the total roading and transport budget. Under New Zealand's sustainable transport strategy such budgets are set to increase, though the actual proportions will still remain very small.

Why is cycling important?

Cycling is important because it provides both transport and leisure benefits. The direct benefits include improved physical and mental health with reduced health costs, pollution and traffic congestion. Local and national transport authorities are increasingly prioritising cycling because it is pivotal to reducing carbon emissions and ensuring sustainable transport for a vibrant, healthy community.