

# CHAIN LINKS

*The newsletter of CAN, the Cycling Advocates Network*

*October 1997*

## Greetings, fellow cycling advocates!

During the long gap since we last sent a newsletter out there has been slow and steady progress in establishing the Cycling Advocates Network. Many thanks to those individuals and groups who have made comments, suggestions and donations.

We now have interim office holders (they will hang around until the first AGM is held). They are:

- Chairperson = Sally Stevens, Dunedin Cycle Action Group, tel.03-477 4938, e-mail envcent@earthlight.co.nz
- Secretary = Robert Ibell, Cycle Aware Wellington, tel.04-385 2557, e-mail can@actrix.gen.nz
- Treasurer = Robbie Cameron, Cycle Aware Wellington, tel.04-474 2832, e-mail robbie@xannax.co.nz

We have a bank account (containing \$200 in donations), a logo, a post box, a phone number and an e-mail address, and soon we'll have a web-site.

An application form is nearing completion - we will mail one to you in two or three weeks. This will give you all the reasons you might need to join us!

As you can see from this miserable attempt at a newsletter, we still need an editor. Is that a job for you? We can't pay you, but will cover your expenses, provide you with plenty of editorial material, and do the copying and distribution for you.

One of the main reasons for CAN's existence is to share experiences, ideas and resources between members. So we need your input. We'd like to run a column of group news, profiling advocacy groups around the country and giving news updates. Please send us your contributions for the next issue or we'll start pestering you.

## **Cyclists & the State Highway Network**

Many cyclists have been trying to get Transit NZ to examine the use cyclists make of state highways and start to provide more adequately for them. These initiatives were given new impetus when a Foxton cyclist, Ken Everett, was killed on the Whirokino Bridge near Levin in April.

Transit has issued a draft National State Highway Strategy for public comment and wrote to Cycle Aware asking for a meeting to get the cycling perspective. CAW has contacted other clubs in the region (including Cycling NZ, whose members make considerable use of state highways) and several are sending representatives to a meeting with Transit on 16 October.

If you've used state highways recently for touring, commuting or recreational riding, we'd like to hear from you. What improvements would you like to see? Wider hard shoulders? Better road sweeping and surface

maintenance? Cycle facilities? What's your highest priority? Contact Robert Ibell of CAN (details below).

## **Group Profile - Cycle Aware Wellington**

Cycle Aware Wellington started in February 1994 after a public meeting attracted a large number of interested people. We have been incorporated for a couple of years. Our membership has grown steadily - we now have 95 financial members (78 memberships) and are running a competition to get us over the 100 mark before the end of the year!

CAW has a fairly loose structure - our only office holders are two co-secretaries and a treasurer (we have no chairperson). Important decisions are made by the committee (any members who attend the monthly meeting, held in one of Wellington City Council's meeting rooms).

Many of our activities are initiated or run by members of our four self-organising Groups: Membership & Publicity, Education & Safety, Technical & Planning, Hutt Valley. These groups meet informally in cafes or members' homes - they've proved to be a good way to involve people who aren't keen on more formal meetings.

We have representatives on WCC's Road Safety Sub-Committee and the Wellington Regional Cycle Forum. We share a rep on the Regional Land Transport Committee with public transport users.

Cycle Aware runs an annual family ride (Bike the Bays) as a fund-raiser - this year we also introduced social rides for members. We do the usual submissions, working parties, leafletting, stalls and displays. We also have a regular column in a local freebie paper.

We set up and run Dr Bike free maintenance clinics with the help of Hillary Commission grants (including purchase of a bike trailer). We've also established cycle maintenance and adult cycling skills courses at local community colleges.

What's in the future for us? Retaining and building membership is a constant challenge. We would like to be able to attract more young people into our organisation. We also need to focus more on the parts of our region that lie outside Wellington and Hutt cities. But one of the hardest things to do is not to take on too much!

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## Road Code & Bike Code

The Land Transport Safety Authority revises the Road Code every six months - the next review will take place in November 1997. Cyclists have the opportunity to make suggestions as to how it can be made more cycle-friendly.

A couple of possible changes are:

- use of pictures of cyclists in diagrams of roading layouts (the lack of them reinforces the impression most motorists & cyclists have that bikes aren't vehicles)
- inclusion of more advisory information for cyclists (e.g. about hand signals) - there used to be more of this, but it has ended up in the Bike Code, which most people don't bother to buy or read.

You may also wish to look at the section entitled "What Cyclists Would Like Motorists to Know". Is it OK? Contact us with your suggestions.

The Road Code has recently been issued on CD ROM, and there are plans to do the same with the Bike Code after it has undergone a major revision. More later...

## TranzRail & Bikes

A meeting between cycling representatives and TranzRail will take place in Wellington on 22 October. The aim is to improve cyclists' access to the rail network. Issues to be raised include:

- cycle carriage on Tranz Scenic services (incl. access, fares & promotion)
- cycle carriage on Tranz Metro services
- cycle carriage on the Interislander
- cycle lockers, cycle parking and signage at rail stations and ferry terminals
- Bike and Ride schemes
- road/rail crossings.

If you've you taken your bike on the train or ferry, did you get a good deal? Have you tried to park your bike at a railway station? Please contact us to tell us of your experiences.

## Bicycle Numberplates?

No, no-one is seriously suggesting (yet) that bikes should be registered! But the LTSA is calling for suggestions for slogans to go on car number plates. The slogans should have a safety focus and consist of no more than 20 characters. Contact CAN or the LTSA direct (Catherine Etheridge, fax 04-494 8606, tel 04-494 8600) before the end of November.

## Cycle Facilities Standards

More than two years of lobbying to get a set of national cycle facilities standards for NZ is beginning to pay off. Recent letters to the Land Transport Safety Authority, Transit NZ and the Minister of Transport resulted in a response from Jenny Shipley, saying the issue was on the agenda for a Traffic Management Workshop to be held in Timaru on 20-22 October this year.

The Minister recognised that the current lack of national standards is leading to inconsistencies between different parts of the country, and in some cases poor facilities. She indicated that officials believe the best option is to adapt Austroads 14 (the Australian standards, which Transit NZ helped design!).

The topic of cycle facilities standards will only occupy a small slot in the programme, but those attending the workshop will be discussing how to progress the issue, not whether we should have national standards at all. We're not there yet, but things are looking hopeful!

## Bicycle Lighting Regulations

The Land Transport Safety Authority consulted with interested parties a few months ago about bicycle lighting regulations.

They responded recently, listing their recommendations to the Ministry of Transport for an amendment to the Traffic Regulations 1976 to:

- treat all bicycles the same - irrespective of their date of manufacture;
- set out basic performance requirements for bicycle lighting instead of referring to approved equipment or compliance with specified standards;
- require a white steady-beam front lamp with the option of an additional white or amber flashing lamp;
- require a red steady-beam or flashing rear lamp;
- require a rear reflector; and
- require pedal reflectors or reflective straps.

These are pretty sensible changes, recognising the difficulty of determining when a bike was made (currently older bikes have different regulations) and the fact that many modern pedals won't take reflectors. The status of flashing 'white' front LED lights still isn't clear, however.

Cabinet will consider these changes in November. The LTSA is meanwhile starting work on a Lighting Rule to cover all aspects of vehicle lighting (including bicycles). So we're going to be consulted all over again!

## PNCC BikePlan

Nigel Perry, a member of Palmerston North City Council's BikePlan Working Party, has put an excellent set of documents about the Plan on the Internet (<http://smis-asterix.massey.ac.nz/city/bikeplan>). They cover the BikePlan's goal, principles, objectives, working party personnel, meeting reports, recommendations to Council, information on other Internet sites, and contact details. If you have Internet access, check this stuff out.

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