

ChainLinks

The newsletter of the Cycling Advocates Network (NZ)

Aug - Sep '04

Remember this?



The CAN Awards are back! See page 26 for more details...

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

More govt money for transport - page 4

Multi-modal cycle strategies? - page 30

Bike parking Euro-style - page 32



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The views expressed in *ChainLinks* are not necessarily those of CAN.

GUEST EDITORIAL

How important are our children?

Are our children more important than business? Is might right? I ask this question because every time I suggest some relief for children on our roads in the district I live in, I am met with a flood of “impossibles” from officials ranging from Council officers to Councillors and representatives from the Land Transport Safety Authority. Always the rules are held forward to me – the rules that guard the rights of people wanting to use their motor vehicles at all times and without restrictions. It seems that those rules do not put the pedestrian and the cyclist first, not even the child pedestrian in a walking school bus, nor the child cyclists on the way to school. The little people have to fit in with rules for traffic, that is motorized traffic, not foot traffic, not cycle traffic. I am told that motorists will not respect a pedestrian crossing here or a reduction of the speed limit there. I ask: what do we have a law for? Are motorists outside the law? I am told that you cannot have a pedestrian crossing in a certain place, because people cross infrequently, therefore motorists will not expect people on the crossing and will hit them. What does the law say about zebra crossings? Are we not supposed to slow down and check?

I had a dream that in this district we would be different. A dream here, but a reality in the small country, far away, that I come from. A reality, where people walking and cycling have first right. Where there are many pedestrian crossings and pedestrian precincts. Where children as young as 7 years of age cycle to school, sometimes with their parents, sometimes together with a friend or even in a group. How is this possible you say? It is possible because in that country provision has been made for children cycling and walking. Simple means such as 30 km/h zones, shifting the blame for accidents onto motorized transport and a mixture of off-road and on-road safe routes for children to follow. My question is: Do we value our children enough to slow down, take the bus, walk or cycle? Do we love them enough to get off the couch and do something about it? What is really Council responsibility - looking after business or people – especially children?

I am asking those of you in authority to change your course – turn the ship around. I am asking our members to come to the workshop in Nelson to join us in our efforts – give a few hours or a day or two of your time.

- *Further details of the Nelson workshop are on page 29*

Liz Mikkelsen (CAN membership secretary)

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Need some cycling advice?

One of the key benefits of being a CAN member is having access to all the collected wisdom of a lot of other experienced cyclists, many of whom are also experts in technical areas like traffic engineering. So if you have some question or problem, make the most of us!

Whether it's something to do with cycle touring, local council procedures, cycleway design, legal issues or whatever, ask us and we'll see if we can get an answer for you. Just send an email to **secretary@can.org.nz**, drop a note to PO Box 6491 Auckland, or phone/fax (04) 972-2552.

Remember too that a lot of useful information is also contained on our website at **<http://www.can.org.nz/>** – maybe it can answer your question!

\$19 BILLION SPEND-UP ON TRANSPORT

The government has announced New Zealand's biggest spend-up on transport - almost \$19 billion earmarked for the next 10 years. This year's \$1.42 billion allocation was 20% - or \$230 million - more than last year's and double that of five years ago.

The \$18.7 billion allocated for the next 10 years was not only "the largest sum ever invested in New Zealand's transport infrastructure, it includes the largest-ever spending on public transport, cycling and walking facilities, state highways, local roads and maintenance", Transport Minister Pete Hodgson said.

Predictably, Auckland gets the biggest slice - \$404.8 million - followed by Waikato (\$137.8m) and Wellington (\$104.8m). "It's getting very, very chunky," Mr Hodgson said. "(Finance Minister) Dr Cullen has become Dr Yes, and we have money."

David Stubbs, chairman of government road builder Transit NZ, said the agency had \$8.6 billion to spend on state highways during the next 10 years but expected that to rise to more than \$10 billion after a new regional petrol tax took effect from April next year. The extra money would allow start dates for some projects to be brought forward. Money for building new roads was \$90 million more than last year, Mr Stubbs said.

Transport funding agency Transfund's chairwoman Jan Wright said that of this year's \$1.42 billion, \$666 million was to be spent on road maintenance, \$492 million on new roads, \$118 million on passenger transport, \$53 million on rail and barging, \$25 million on regional development, \$4 million on promoting walking and cycling, \$4 million on research and \$58 million on administration and project control.

Green Party co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons said the transport programmes showed Transfund and Transit were still "stuck in the mental mire of road-building" as a single solution but contained "glimmers of hope" for a fresh future.

[Dominion Post, 1 July 2004]



Surf the web on your bike!

CAN's website has a vast collection of cycling-related weblinks from around the world, available for you to browse at:

<http://www.can.org.nz/links/>

Unzipping the lightest bicycle in the world

Zipped into a bag, it looks like a large umbrella. Unfolded, it plies the streets like any other bicycle. The A-bike is the brainchild of British inventor Sir Clive Sinclair, who made history in the 1970s by developing the world's first pocket calculator. He described his new invention as 'the world's smallest, lightest foldable bicycle'.

"My original thought was that if you could have a bicycle that was dramatically lighter and more compact than ones that exist today, you would change the way in which bicycles could be used," said Sir Clive.



The mini-bike, unveiled in Singapore and set to go on sale worldwide next year for about US\$300 (NZ\$455), is built for riders as heavy as 112kg and is height-adjustable. It takes about 20 seconds to fold or unfold.

Like the United States-made Segway scooter, the idea was to find a new form of transport to cope with congested cities. Its wheels are a quarter the size of those on a regular bicycle, but Sir Clive promises a smooth and sturdy ride for most cyclists. "You require no extra energy to ride the A-bike and it can go up to 25km/h."

Constructed mainly of plastic and with pneumatic tyres, the 5.5kg bicycle folds into a tiny package. It is expected to go on sale in the US, Britain and Japan in the second quarter of next year. Sir Clive said he hoped it would attract yachtsmen, city executives, campers or anyone needing transport for a short trip.

Research and development started five years ago in a collaboration between Sir Clive's Cambridge-based Sinclair Research and Hong Kong's Daka Designs. Sir Clive, awarded a knighthood in 1983 for leading what was seen as a renaissance in British industry, said the next step for the A-bike would be to add an electric motor in a few years.

[New Zealand Herald, 14 July 2004]



CYCLING NEWS FROM AROUND NEW ZEALAND

June:

- Masterton District Council are finalising a new cycle strategy, with an emphasis on schoolchildren's safety.
- The Nelson Green Bike Trust has reopened, with about 200 bikes available for free use around the city.

- World Naked Bike Ride Day is celebrated in style in Golden Bay...
- Nelson City Council distributes 800 bright green bands to help make cyclists more visible.
- Infrastructure Auckland offers grants of \$5.2 million to Waitakere City for 16 km of 2m-wide (!) shared walkway/cycleways, and \$4.1 million to Manukau City for over 40 km of on/off-road cycleways.

July:

- Transfund releases their 2004/05 National Land Transport Programme, with \$4 million allocated to walking & cycling out of a total of \$1.4 billion.
- Bicycle Nelson Bays are recognised as runners-up in the Sports and Leisure category of this year's TrustPower Nelson City Council Community Awards.
- Intermediate schools on Auckland's North Shore trial a computer program that involves mapping travel habits and identifying obstacles to non-vehicular transport, as part of school travel plans.
- Transit NZ and Nelson City Council will spend \$500,000 on a 10km cycleway between Nelson city and Atawhai to the north.
- Transport Minister Pete Hodgson asks Transit to undertake a feasibility study into a cycleway/walkway across the Auckland Harbour Bridge, following a 5813-signature petition to Government by cyclists and pedestrians.



New executive appointments in government

Prime Minister Helen Clark announced new responsibilities for some existing ministers in early July, with Harry Duynhoven becoming Minister for Transport Safety, in addition to his existing role as Associate Minister of Energy.

Clark said the creation of the Transport Safety portfolio was due to the importance that the government places on transport safety. "Mr Duynhoven has been working in the area of transport safety as an associate minister. The importance of improving safety and the significant overall level of activity in the transport sector has seen the need to create a second ministerial portfolio. Mr Duynhoven will continue to work closely with Pete Hodgson as the senior Minister with Transport responsibilities."

[www.beehive.govt.nz website]



Shake-up in transport sector

Transport Minister Pete Hodgson and State Services Minister Trevor Mallard have announced changes to the government transport sector. Pete Hodgson said these changes are designed to create an affordable, integrated and safe transport system for New Zealand by 2010, as set out in the 2002 New Zealand Transport Strategy (NZTS).

The policy functions of the Land Transport Safety Authority and Transfund will be transferred into the Ministry of Transport, to enable more coherent policy development and delivery across the sector.

The operational functions of LTSA and Transfund will be brought together in a new agency. This will result in both the Ministry of Transport and the new agency being able to take a more cohesive approach to delivering on NZTS' objectives, nationally and regionally. In particular, the safety programme and national land transport programme will be integrated. The relationship between the LTSA and its various service agents will be unchanged following the LTSA's operational responsibilities being transferred to the new agency.

There will be no change to the safety and regulatory roles of the Maritime Safety Authority (MSA), the Transport Accident Investigation Commission (TAIC) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), including the Aviation Security Service (AvSec). They will however have their scope increased to take NZTS objectives into account. There will be no significant changes for Transit.

This sector review came out of the government's 2001 evaluation of New Zealand's public management system, the Review of the Centre. Transport Minister Pete Hodgson said the new structure will reduce fragmentation, enabling the delivery of better, more co-ordinated and responsive, sustainable transport outcomes.

"This government has changed the way New Zealand looks at transport. This was clearly defined in the NZTS. In December 2003, we addressed decades of under-funding, investing \$2.97 billion in land transport through the Investing for Growth transport package," he said.

[NZ Govt Media Release]

STOP PRESS: *The Transport Legislation Bill, intended to implement key recommendations of the Government's Transport Sector Review, has been referred to the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee. The closing date for submissions is 15 September. The Bill is available at: www.transport.govt.nz or from government bookshops.*

*CAN will be making a submission on the Bill, and welcomes input from members - please send your comments to the CAN Secretary by **10 September.***

Funding for travel behaviour change projects

Two trial projects promoting travel behaviour change to Auckland and Christchurch residents have been approved by Transfund New Zealand. The Transfund Board agreed to contribute nearly \$275,000 towards Auckland Regional Council's "Way to Go" project and Environment Canterbury's "Go Smarter 2" project.

Auckland's "Way to Go" project is aimed at reducing the high level of car-dependency through reducing 'low value' car trips, i.e. those which could be combined with other trips, shared with others, shifted to another time or closer destination, or taken by another transport mode with little extra cost and inconvenience. Its aim is to encourage changes in travel behaviour among the targeted population of New Lynn, Kelston and Glen Eden residents by five percent.

Canterbury's "Go Smarter 2" project is the promotion of more efficient travel for residents of Avondale, in Christchurch, through working with households to record their travel behaviour. Suggestions were made to households on how they might change their travel behaviour. Both projects have the support of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority.

Board chair Dr Jan Wright says travel behaviour change initiatives are an emerging area within New Zealand's overall transport policy. "These two projects go some way towards the development of travel behaviour change initiatives for New Zealand," she says.

[Transfund NZ Media Release]



New cycle lane in Petone

Cyclists who use SH2 Western Hutt Road will soon have a dedicated cycle way between the train station park and ride entrance and the Petone Overbridge. The current footpath, on both sides of the highway, is to be converted into a shared cycle and pedestrian path.

Consequently those who park in front of the indoor cricket centre and bowling alley will be unable to do so in order to ensure the footpath is clear for cyclists to use. Safety engineer Stanley Chesterfield says the change will make this stretch of SH2 much safer for cyclists.

"The existing footpath is wider than normal, which will allow us to divide the path quite easily so both pedestrians and cyclists have dedicated lanes. The Western Hutt Road is quite narrow which makes it difficult for cyclists to ride along so having a dedicated lane will take them off the road and hopefully make for a much safer journey."

[Transit NZ Media Release]

A nude sprint to the pub

Mark Brignole swept into the Mussel Inn carpark in Golden Bay with a helmet and backpack but otherwise completely starkers. "The front bit's a bit nippy but the rest of me is fine," he declared before he hurriedly put his clothes back on.

Mr Brignole was one of 32 cyclists who went partially nude or did the "full monty" in Golden Bay's Naked Bike Ride. The event was held to raise awareness of the benefits of cycling and the need for cycle lanes in the bay. However, the scheduled nude marathon from Takaka to Onekaka was scaled down to a nude sprint over the 500m from the Onekaka Hall to the Mussel Inn, after objections from church groups. About 60 cyclists took part in the ride from Takaka's Village Green.

For two cancer sufferers, John Mitchell and Susan Egerton, the day had a more important meaning. Mr Mitchell said he accomplished his goal and "felt great". "I was on crutches a month ago and could hardly walk," he said. "I've got steel pins in my legs."

Mrs Egerton stripped to the waist for the last 500m. "I have had one breast removed from cancer, and I am about to have the other taken off. So it was my last chance to show off," she said. Her husband Graham finished the ride fully clothed. "I did not feel the need to honour the world with a view of my dangly bits."

Organiser Victoria Davis, from Bike Lanes in Paradise, said the police had advised her of the objections the night before the event so it had been scaled down. However, quite a few residents along the route seemed coincidentally to be doing a bit of "roadside gardening" as the riders passed, she joked.

Steve Richards from Tasman, one of the first naked riders to reach the Mussel Inn, said he would have done the whole ride naked but for the cold. Asked why he felt the need to take his clothes off, he offered a simple rationale. "People (in cars) don't take cyclists seriously. Suddenly, if you take your clothes off, they do."

Ms Davis said Golden Bay was the first place in the world to hold the Naked Bike Ride because of time differences. Similar rides were happening on the same day in London, Paris, Milan, Barcelona, Japan and Brazil.

The ride, which had a police escort, resulted in just one accident, Ms Davis said. A woman fell off her bike while moving out the way of an overtaking car on Bird's Hill.

[Nelson Mail, 16 June 2004 - see also Overseas News, p.21]



Tasman strategy to be available soon

Tasman District Council's regional cycling and pedestrian strategy should be available for public consultation in August. Council roading engineer Steve Elkington said the document, currently in draft form, would go to the engineering services committee meeting on August 5.

If it was given the "green light" it would be available for public consultation after that, he said. The strategy, being prepared by Opus International Consultants, comes after Land Transport Safety Authority statistics showed that one in three deaths in the district involved a cyclist or a pedestrian.

[Nelson Mail, 29 June 2004]



Priority on safety for Wairarapa cyclists

The high number of accidents involving cyclists is behind an urgent push in Wairarapa to have special lanes and safe cycling routes in place by the start of this summer. The district is putting the finishing touches on a new cycle strategy that involves a close look at all potential dangers cyclists face.

Wairarapa road safety coordinator Brian Barnes said part of the plan would promote routes where schoolchildren could cycle to school and avoid heavy morning traffic. Those promoting the strategy went to every school and counted bikes to determine how many children were on the roads each day and what areas they were coming from.

"The largest group of cyclists were at Masterton Intermediate, and that is an area where there is a main road and potential for accidents." Children travelled around a large ring road area and there were no safe crossing points.

The new cycle strategy would look at putting cycling signs up on safe routes, encouraging children to travel through South Park on a back road route and across the pedestrian crossing linking to the school, he said. Another problem identified was poor visibility for motorists coming out of many driveways and at risk of backing into a passing cyclist.

Mr Barnes said how much money would be spent on a long-term plan still had not been decided as it was a joint project between Masterton district council and government road builder Transit New Zealand.

The first project, which is being dealt with now, is cutting traffic lanes going north over the Waipoua River bridge from two to one. The redesign will include a cycle lane on the left and reduce the likelihood of pedestrians using a crossing immediately to the north of the bridge being hit by cars.

[Dominion Post, 21 June 2004]

Revived bike scheme takes new approach

A 'green bikes' scheme is up and running in Nelson again, and organisers are hoping it will be a success this time, with more controls over who gets to use the free bicycles.

The Nelson Green Bike Trust announced it would launch the scheme more than a year ago. After a lot of time searching for new premises, it reopened the shed behind the Kahurangi Trust's Halifax St building recently. Trustee Paul Denton said it still hoped to move to a new inner-city home within the next few months.

Workshop manager Marianne Draijer said people had already started making use of the free bicycles, with 17 lent out so far. A similar scheme ran for a short time from the same premises in 2001 but failed because people took advantage of it and stole the bicycles.

Mrs Draijer said things were different this time around, with two types of loan options available. People could borrow a "community bike" for up to a year, bringing it back about every three months for a workshop check. People could also borrow "green bikes" for shorter periods, usually up to a week.

The trust has about 200 bicycles, but Mrs Draijer is whittling them down to about 50 suitably sized ones. At the moment, basic one-speed bikes are the only ones available from the workshop, but the trust plans to have designated points throughout the city, hopefully at businesses, where the bikes can be left or picked up.

The businesses would take the names and contact details of bike users so they could be tracked down if the bikes went missing. Helmets would not be supplied.

[Nelson Mail, 19 June 2004]



Cycle strips cut accidents

Spongy rubber strips designed to prevent cyclists becoming trapped in the gap between road and railway track rails are proving their worth, the Dunedin City Council says.

The number people falling off their bicycles where skewed railway lines crossed Wharf St had declined noticeably since two 11m-long rubber strips were inserted into the groove six months ago as a trial, technical engineer Teresa Matassa said. While exact accident statistics were not known, anecdotally, cyclists found the crossing safer, she said. "I am down there quite a lot checking the strips and cyclists chatting to me say the strips certainly help."

However, they did not prevent Otago Daily Times journalist Juliet Smith from falling and breaking her collarbone while cycling across the tracks. "It was wet and I skidded on the first rail. Even though I was going quite slowly, I lost control and there was nothing I could do," she said.

The first strips, made from recycled car tyres and other materials, disintegrated after about four months and were removed. Two weeks ago, four strips of different compositions were relaid to see which would last the longest.

[Otago Daily Times, 18 June 2004]



New call for Dunedin coastal trail

Dunedin could have a coastal rail trail, a St Leonards cyclist has suggested. Tony Williams has suggested the Dunedin City Council develop a cycle track along the western side of Otago Harbour, on land beside the main-trunk railway line. A second track once occupied the land but was ripped up in the late 1970s.

The Otago Central Rail Trail, a recreational walking and cycling track from Middlemarch to Cromwell, is popular, and Mr Williams said he believed a coastal track would be too. "I have talked to a few people about this and everyone seems to think it is a good idea. I am sure a track would be well used by commuters and recreational cyclists."

The track was well away from State Highway 88, which Mr Williams said cyclists were too frightened to use because it was narrow and frequented by trucks. Mr Williams, who is a jeweller, said: "When I shifted my workshop into town Dunedin last year, I had every intention of biking every day. But I haven't cycled once. The traffic is too terrifying."

The track could link to a walking-cycling track the Otago Regional Council is about to establish between the Boat Harbour Reserve and Ravensbourne, he said. Council senior traffic engineer Ron Minnema said using old railway land for cycling or walking tracks had been done in other cities, but had not been investigated here. "I think Tranz Rail would want to know how much lateral distance there would be between cyclists and trains before agreeing to something like that."

[Otago Daily Times, 18 June 2004]

Want to know how to get in touch with someone?

Find contact details for CAN's national executive, local groups, supporting organisations, Transit champions, etc on our website at:

<http://www.can.org.nz/contacts/>

Controversy over Wellington bus lane use

A storm is brewing between Wellington cyclists and the city council over signage and the right to use bus lanes.

Cycle Aware Wellington spokesman Patrick Morgan said members were angry that the council was not prepared to clearly sign which bus lanes could also be used by cyclists. "Some bus lanes are signed 'bus lanes', some are signed 'buses only', some are painted green and some are not. The council has refused to signpost the cycling-legal lanes, despite our best efforts."

Mr Morgan said the confusion would not encourage people to use bikes. "We should be promoting modes of transport that don't lead to congestion and pollution or accidents. Wellington City Council has decided not to allow taxis to use bus lanes and we support that, but with the number of cyclists rising in Wellington all the time, they should make it clear where we can and can't ride." Wellington was continuing to buck the national trend with a rise in the number of adult commuter cyclists, so it was important to sort the problem out, he said.

Another member of the group, Alan Whiting, said he had recently been pulled over by police while cycling in a bus lane and threatened with a \$150 fine. Though he admitted knowing that it was a buses-only lane, he said it was clear the police were not sure whether he was entitled to use it. When he challenged them, they had to radio for help.

Mr Morgan said someone had recently become so fed up with the unclear signage that they had stencilled a cyclist symbol on several bus lanes. Councillor Ian Hutchings, who chairs the infrastructure committee, said cyclists who drew their own signs angered some councillors and did nothing to gain the backing of committee members.

Mr Morgan said the committee's attitude to the stencils was "petty and small minded". It was a matter of clarity and making sure cyclists were safe.

Though Mr Hutchings said cyclists could use any bus lane, Wellington City Council spokeswoman Trina Saffioti said cyclists could not use lanes marked "buses only". Ms Saffioti said the distinction was made on safety grounds. It would be dangerous for cyclists to use narrow lanes heavily used by buses, which were mainly those in the central city.

"The council is not planning to put up any more signs. We do have bus lanes that cyclists can use but essentially they are for buses first and foremost."

[Dominion Post, 9 June 2004]



Frustration at lack of progress on cycle lanes

Golden Bay cycling advocates have expressed their frustration at Tasman District Council delays in developing bicycle and walking lanes in the bay, despite evidence of strong community support.

A submissions hearing in Takaka into the Long Term Council Community Plan heard that a 1700-signature petition had been collected by a Golden Bay cycle lane advocacy group, and a \$70,000 consultancy report had been commissioned by the council last year to develop a draft regional cycling and walking strategy, but little had come of it.

Cycle lane advocates Helen Bracefield and Victoria Davis told councillors they felt let down by the lack of progress in developing cycle lanes in Golden Bay. They also questioned whether the council was astute enough to obtain Transfund funding for the plan.

Cr Trevor Norriss, who is part of a working group reviewing the council's cycling strategy, said Transit New Zealand had been involved in the process from the beginning, and the reason the council had not obtained funding yet was because it did not have a definitive cycle lane strategy to present yet.

"It's a district-wide strategy which needs to be presented before funding is considered, and this is about to be released for public consultation very soon, before it can be passed on to Transfund," Cr Norriss said.

[Nelson Mail, 16 June 2004]



Blitz on unsafe bikes

Police recently set up a checkpoint outside a Masterton school to identify dangerous bicycles being ridden to school.

Lakeview School caretaker Colin Howie raised the alarm at the state of many bikes being ridden by pupils. Mr Howie locks between 40 to 50 bicycles a day into stands at the school's bike shed, and said he was horrified at what parents were allowing their children to ride. Some bikes did not have brakes and 25% needed repair. Many children arrived without helmets.

Mr Howie became so concerned at the end of last year that he contacted police appealing for something to be done. "We had just had these figures released saying Wairarapa had one of the highest rates of bicycle accidents involving children in the country, and how were we going to improve the problem if these bikes were allowed on the road?"

Police went to the school, armed with a bag of parts, and checked every bike. The officer in charge of community policing, Sergeant Glenn Taplin, said police fixed what they could, but some were beyond repair. "Some of

the bikes were disgusting and we told some kids that they had to get them off the road."

Mr Taplin said it was alarming that the message had not got through. Police had hoped the "shakeup" last year would have stopped the problem, but would now have to take a tougher line. "The easiest way for us is to set up a checkpoint down there and we will just grab all the kids as they come through and refer them to their parents."

Police did not have the power to confiscate a bicycle, but would go and see the parents and put them on notice, Mr Taplin said. "Once we bring it to their attention and they do nothing about it we can take the next step with a family group conference or other action."

Parents must think seriously about the consequences, he said. "How would you feel if you let your child go to school on a bike with no brakes and no helmet and they got killed? It is better to let them walk than take a bike that is wrecked."

[Dominion Post, 15 June 2004]



Nelson cyclists band together

Cyclists in Nelson wearing lime green bands are not trying to form a club - they're simply trying to increase their chances of being seen. The Nelson City Council has produced 800 of the visibility bands and began distributing them on the streets recently.

Council transport and road safety coordinator Margaret Parfitt said it was part of an ongoing cycle safety campaign. She had been leaving the bands on cycle stands throughout the city, and the police had been giving them out as well as cracking down on cyclists without lights, who could be fined \$110.

Mrs Parfitt said that even if cyclists met the legal requirements of having a front and rear light, it might not be enough. "Flashing lights are more visible than static ones because they distinguish cyclists from other lights, while reflective clothing gives added protection."

[Nelson Mail, 3 June 2004]



Colour in the dark

Local multi-sport athlete, chef and teacher-in-training Shane Thrower has helped come up with new high-visibility cycling accessories after being knocked off his bicycle last year.

During his many months of recovery at Burwood Hospital's brain injury unit, Thrower and friend Tim Kerr came up with a solution to the problem

of dark backpacks obscuring brightly coloured jackets. He approached local outdoor equipment manufacturer Cactus Climbing with the idea of a high-visibility pack cover.

Sixty were designed and manufactured as a trial and these sold within a week through word of mouth and an email to the Cycling Advocates Network. A subsequent run of 50 was manufactured, the last of which were snapped up at the recent Brain Injury Resource Team charity auction and dinner.

Made from a hi-visibility waterproof nylon, the covers not only improve cyclist visibility, they protect the backpack and its contents from rain. A reflective strip runs horizontally across the back of the covers and incorporates an attachment point for a supplementary rear lamp.

"An integrated bungy enables easy fitting to all sizes of pack, with a toggle-loop attachment through the pack's shoulder straps ensuring a secure hold on even the windiest of days," says Kerr.

Further covers will be manufactured to meet demand. Profits from the sales are going to the Brain Injury Resource Team, a charitable trust that Thrower has set up to provide an information resource at Burwood Hospital for brain injury patients and their friends and family. Kerr says every effort is being made to keep the price down to ensure cost does not prevent a cyclist from being more visible.

* For more information, email: timkerr37@hotmail.com

[The Christchurch Press, 12 July 2004]



Push for law change on electric bikes

An Australian engineer and 30-year sufferer of arthritis wants New Zealand to change its rules to help disabled people get around on electrically assisted bikes.

Alan Parker, who has had three hip replacements and walks with a stick, told a conference on sustainable engineering and science in Auckland yesterday that electrically assisted bikes were used by several million people in China and Japan.

But in New Zealand and Australia they were stymied by rules classifying them as mopeds that required warrants of fitness, vehicle registration and number plates, making them uneconomic. A Land Transport Amendment Bill now before Parliament would reclassify them as bicycles if they have motors of less than 200 watts.

But Mr Parker said 200 watts was "underpowered for New Zealand elderly males, who are much heavier than the elderly females who make up the

majority of Japanese users". He urged MPs to allow electric bikes with up to 500-watt motors.

If anyone disagreed, he challenged them to run tests "riding up hills in an urban environment [using] elderly male and female test riders - one of whom should have osteoarthritis of the hip that restricts walking".

Electrically assisted bikes differ from motorbikes because they still require pedalling. A small motor gives the cyclist an extra push up hills or against the wind. The Japanese models are designed to halve the pedalling effort required, and the latest versions have computer chips which fade out power assistance at 25km/h - about the maximum speed a fit cyclist could reach without assistance.

Europe changed its rules two years ago to define bikes as having power assistance of less than 250 watts and the US introduced legislation last year to set a limit of 750 watts.

[New Zealand Herald, 9 July 2004]



Greater attention needed for needs of cyclists and pedestrians

The safety of cyclists and pedestrians on New Zealand roads needs to be made a priority if alarming accident statistics are to be turned around, says a leading authority on traffic and transportation.

At the NZ Traffic Institute's (Trafinz) annual conference in Napier, Glen Koorey, technical and policy adviser for the Cycling Advocates Network, said safety rules employed for motorists were not always effective for cyclists and pedestrians, and safety measures needed to look beyond the provision of specialist facilities for them.

Since 1988 injuries through motor vehicle crashes had halved despite an increase in usage of more than 70 percent. In contrast, cycle and pedestrian accidents had increased in the face of dropping numbers. "We've talked a lot about the big reduction in injury and accident rates due to various measures but walking and cycling have not seen those benefits and we've got to look at why that is."

Mr Koorey said the under-reporting of cycle and pedestrian accidents meant less funding was available to tackle safety issues and there was a misconception that the solution to safety problems was to spend heavily on specialist facilities.

Instead he advocated the adoption of a European model which saw the reduction of traffic volumes and speed, better traffic management and a reallocation of existing space all considered before creating new safety infrastructure.

Improving driver safety was a key concern at the three-day conference, and Trafinz president Andy Foster said only time would tell if the issues raised in Napier would have an impact on overall road safety. "We now have a clear indication of what we can do better. We've done the easy things and the future gains will not be as easy," Mr Foster said. "What we need is a better resourced, non-political body to publicly advocate for road safety and change the culture that says killing people on the roads is acceptable."

[New Zealand Press Association, 21 July 2004]

ERRATA

The CAN executive sends *ChainLinks* not only to our members, but also to Government transport agencies and we thought to test whether our newsletter is actually being read. Thus, we placed a couple of inaccuracies in the last edition (June/July '04 *ChainLinks*) and *voilà*, they were both picked up! So here are the 'true' stories.

In the Transfund article on pages 21/22, it was incorrectly stated that the size of the walking and cycling fund was set by the Transfund Board. Readers should be aware that it is in fact Government that decides on the sizes of the different land transport funds.

And on page 42, it was stated that cycling on a footpath is not legal unless delivering newspapers. The other exception, which was omitted, is when a "child's toy" is being used. That's a bike with wheels not exceeding a diameter of 355mm.

Apologies if these inaccuracies have caused any grief to anybody.

Can YOU help us?

CAN is a voluntary organisation and therefore relies largely on the enthusiasm and skills of its members to make things happen. This doesn't have to mean an ongoing commitment; we might have just a small project that could benefit from your talents.

It's not just cycling-related expertise that CAN needs. Skills such as fundraising, accounting, graphic design, public relations, and copywriting could all come in handy for different activities that CAN does. And sometimes we just need a willingness to **be there and do something!**

If you're keen to help make a difference, contact our membership secretary Liz (phone 06-3648187, email membership@can.org.nz). If you have any specialist skills that might be useful, we'd be particularly interested in hearing about them.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"I just think people get so wrapped in whatever little world they are in they forget there are other people out there."

Paremata cyclist Peter Brocklehurst is getting a little frustrated after six minor incidents in just three months of bike riding in and out of Wellington. (Dominion Post, 19/05/04)

"It appears that my 'fault' is based solely on a technicality in the Road Code that was never intended for a cyclist versus car situation."

Lower Hutt cyclist Marcus Smith is somewhat puzzled at being (incorrectly) fined for "carelessly riding a cycle on the road" after passing stationary traffic on the left and being hit by a crossing car. (Dominion Post, 27/05/04)

"The council is not planning to put up any more signs. We do have bus lanes that cyclists can use but essentially they are for buses first and foremost."

Is this a new vehicle hierarchy we're not aware of? Wellington City Council spokeswoman Trina Saffioti tries to explain the council's confusing system of bus-lanes, only some of which are available for cyclists. (Dominion Post, 09/06/04)

"People (in cars) don't take cyclists seriously. Suddenly, if you take your clothes off, they do."

A new advocacy strategy perhaps? Tasman resident Steve Richards offers a simple rationale for taking part in the worldwide Naked Bike Ride in Golden Bay. (Nelson Mail, 14/06/04)

"I am down there quite a lot checking the strips and cyclists chatting to me say the strips certainly help."

Dunedin City Council engineer Teresa Matassa comments on the anecdotal success to date of new cycle-friendly rubber strips being trialled at railway crossings. (Otago Daily Times, 18/06/04)

"I truly believe parents are taking away their children's choices... When they (the children) grow older they will not be able to make informed decisions."

North Shore City Council's Travelwise coordinator Isy Kennedy is "dumbfounded" with the finding that some local parents living only

500m from their children's school are driving them there.
(Stuff.co.nz, 12/07/04)

"...the stand-out challenge for us today is that roads alone are not the transport solution. We can't afford them economically, socially or environmentally."

New Transit NZ Chief Executive (and keen mountain-biker) Rick van Barneveld sets a promising tone for the future direction of the State Highway organisation. (NZ Herald, 26/07/04)

"Each time I pass under the bridge, it drives me crazy that I can't get over it."

Auckland cyclist Bevan Woodward expresses the frustration of many of his fellow pedestrians and cyclists at having to take the ferry instead of the bridge when crossing Waitemata Harbour. (NZ Herald, 28/07/04)

WEDDING OF THE YEAR?



Newly-wed CAN members Paul Doyle and Susi Gross (in rickshaw) and their bicycle wedding convoy, on the way from the church to the reception – the wedding was held in Moenchengladbach, Germany on 10 July 2004.

OVERSEAS NEWS

Naked bike protest goes international

Hundreds of cyclists protesting at their daily jousts with cars rode naked through the city centres of Madrid, Saragossa and Barcelona at the weekend. "I'm part cyclist and part nudist," said Ramón Linaza Iglesias, an enthusiastic first-time rider. "But I'd never thought of putting the two together before."

A statement published on the internet from an organisation calling itself the Coordinator of Nudist Cycling Collectives said: "We denounce the fact that our streets have been hijacked by private cars that make our cities hostile and dangerous places. The car is a killer and we are outraged by its impunity."

In Saragossa, the crowd included a strong contingent of heavy metal fans in town for a Metallica concert that night. The demonstrators left the city's main square fully dressed before stripping off in a nearby university building. The 400 cyclists then lapped the city centre for an hour.

"The Metallica fans loved it," said Chan Baos, a member of Saragossa Ecologists in Action, who rode with his two-year-old son. None of them stripped off, though. You have to have a bike to take part." He added: "We chose this time year for the weather, but by the end it was getting a bit chilly."

In Madrid, the ride got off to an inauspicious start when a middle-aged protestor was hit by a taxi. At first, the emergency services thought he was a bystander unwittingly caught up in the demonstration since he was dressed in full cycling kit. However, to their surprise, as he was being stretchered off he raised his fist and shouted, "Bicycle lanes, now!"

The man suffered only minor injuries. But he did demonstrate the point of the exercise, as Mr Baos explained: "We stripped not to attract attention, but to demonstrate the fragility of the human body when compared to the car."

[The Guardian, UK, 21 June 2004]



No apologies for law-breaking

Ian Knox bikes from his home in Allston to his job as a financial analyst in downtown Boston every weekday, cruising through red lights with no apologies. Contrary to state law, the 24-year-old says he sees no reason to stop.

"Yeah, I should probably be obeying the lights... (But) I never seem to get in trouble and I make sure not to hit people," he said, stopped by a reporter after running a red light at the intersection of Kneeland and

Charles Streets on Friday afternoon. "I think as a cyclist you feel like you can take those liberties," he said.

Over a two-day period at three intersections in Boston and Cambridge, the Herald watched an overwhelming majority of bicyclists - nearly 95% at the worst intersection surveyed - run red lights. Also rampant were bicyclists making daring lane changes and riding the wrong way on a one-way street.

"(Bicyclists) running red lights annoys and aggravates a lot of motorists who sit and watch bicyclists flout the law," said Boston attorney Andrew Fischer, who represents about 50 bicyclists a year in accident cases. "Having seen the car coming or not coming, the bicyclist has a duty to stop and look at the light too," he said. "That's law."

Accidents in Boston involving bicycles and motor vehicles more than doubled in 2003, from 40 in 2002 to 89. There have been 24 such incidents so far in 2004, with many bikeriding months still ahead. Police have the option of issuing a \$25 (NZ\$38) ticket to offenders, but typically opt not to.

[Boston Herald, USA, 27 June 2004]



Bike storage 'must be part of home renovations'

Homeowners in Yarra doing renovations are to be forced to include space to store or park bicycles. The council wants renovators to provide plans for secure, weatherproof bike storage when lodging their development applications. The bike rules will apply to home renovations that increase floor space by at least 30 per cent. New retail and commercial developments will also have to provide "end of trip" facilities for cyclists, such as showers, change rooms and clothes lockers.

The scheme has been greeted with disbelief by the Master Builders Association. "The council should get a grip on reality," executive director Brian Welch said. "Well motivated though it might be... we would think it is absolute nonsense. Many inner-suburban blocks are at a premium on space and it may mean that the shed or hanging space for bicycles would reduce the available area for other purposes."

Yarra councillor Deborah Di Natale said the council wanted to encourage greater bicycle use and less road traffic. "We are hoping this will encourage the use of bikes for destination, rather than recreation," she said. "Studies have shown if people don't have a space to park their bike they are less likely to take their bike."

[Melbourne Herald-Sun, Australia, 15 July 2004]



Borrow-a-bike scheme takes off

A ground-breaking scheme that allows Winchester residents to borrow a bicycle free of charge has proved a great success, environment chiefs claim. The scheme, called Bikeabout, was launched last month in a bid to encourage people to use greener means of travelling around the city to cut pollution.

Anyone can borrow one of the 50 white bicycles being used in the scheme, provided they register first and then return the bikes after they have used them. So far those in charge of the scheme say it has been very favourably received, with everyone who has signed up commenting on what a good idea the bikes are.

A spokesman confirmed that about 30 people have already registered to use the bikes, and that up to 20 people are actually using them each day. Project manager Andy Wren said: "It's picking up, but more people need to be aware of the scheme. We have received many enquiries."

Users must pay a £15 (NZ\$42) registration fee and receive a cycle helmet, fluorescent jacket and cycle map. The bikes can be picked up from a kiosk outside the city's railway station from 7am-7pm six days a week, and users then have up to 24 hours before returning them to the kiosk.

[Newsquest Media Group Newspapers, UK, 13 July 2004]



Mobile phones offer better bike rental

A scheme has been launched in London whereby rental bikes can be picked up in one location and dropped in another, all via mobile phone.

The brainchild of inventor Bernie Hanning, the scheme allows people to hire a bike for as little as 30p (NZ\$5c) for a short ride. If successful, it could lead to up to 50,000 bicycles available for rent in London. Commuters could use them to get from their mainline station to the office, while others could use them instead of the Tube or a taxi.

The system, which starts off with a pilot in Hammersmith and Fulham, uses bikes attached to rental stations by an electronic lock with a display. If a registered user wants to hire a bike, they phone the Oybike office and an operator gives them the code to unlock the bike. Rental starts at 30p for a quarter of an hour rising to £2 (NZ\$5.70) for an hour.

[The Evening Standard, UK, 9 July 2004]

Bicycle lanes for Bangkok suburbs to cut congestion

The city administration plans to build bicycle lanes along most of 28 new roads in Bangkok's suburbs to promote cycling as a means to help ease traffic congestion and air pollution.

Town planning deputy chief Somsak Sethanan said promoting bicycle use is an integral part of the Interior Ministry's regulations on the 2004 town and city planning programme to be implemented by the year's end.

"Each day, some 800 new vehicles hit our roads, half of which are private cars. If one car is about five metres long, it means each day we have to build 2,000 metres of road surface to accommodate half of the number of new vehicles. That's impossible," Mr Somsak told a seminar on promotion of bicycle use in Bangkok.

Under the city's plan, 25 out of 28 new roads will have bike lanes on both sides. They will feed the skytrain and subway networks expected to be completed in about six years. Each bike lane will not be longer than 3-5 kilometres.

Mr Somsak blamed the failure of the city's existing bike-lane projects on substandard construction and lack of facilities to serve cyclists. For example, cyclists have to share the bike lane along Prachachuen road with pedestrians. "We used to provide a bike lane, with bicycles on loan for residents on Navamin road. It went well until the bikes were stolen," Mr Somsak said.

[Bangkok Post, Thailand, 9 July 2004]



Funding boost to improve station security for bicycles

The Australian Federal Government is to spend \$2.4 million installing more than 250 new bicycle lockers at suburban stations in Australia to encourage commuters to ride to train stations.

Transport Minister Peter Batchelor said the new lockers would be built at metropolitan and regional commuter stations, and would mean a total of 850 lockers would soon be available for commuters. "By providing safe and secure bicycle storage we hope to encourage bike use as an alternative to car travel."

Mr Batchelor said that for the first time, bike lockers would be made available free of charge, removing the disparity between the cost of commuter car parking and bike lockers.

Connex and V/Line Passenger will install, manage and maintain the lockers at their stations and the lockers will be sited to maximise occupancy rates. The new arrangements will come into place early next year. Commuters will need to apply at their nearest Premium Station and provide a deposit.

The bike locker initiative forms part of the Bracks Government's Melbourne 2030 strategy to implement projects that will help develop sustainable transport options like walking, cycling and using public transport. 🚲

CHILDREN'S PAGE

BOOK REVIEW: Mrs Parata Rides Again

by Ruth Darroch (illustrated by Bob Darroch)

Reed Publishing, 2004 ISBN 1-86948-679-X

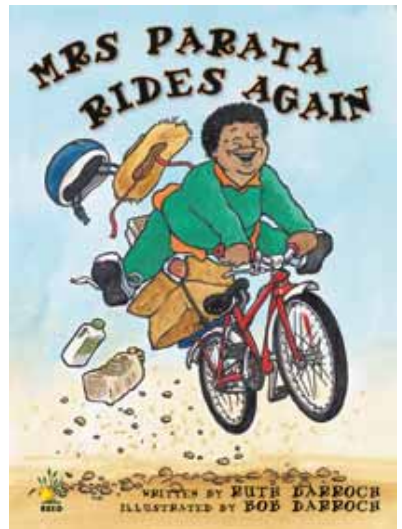
RRP \$14.99

It's not every day you come across a kid's book in which the main character "loves riding her old bike to town" because "it gives her the chance to chat to everyone she meets and gives her some great exercise at the same time."

It's certainly rare to find such a book that's written by a New Zealander and has a concise but interesting storyline involving wonky pedals, a bike trailer, and the disadvantages of using a car instead. Mrs Parata Rides Again does all this, and manages to do it without sounding preachy or losing the essential fun of a kid's story.

The verdict: recommended bedtime reading material for self-propelled kids young and old- particularly the next generation of Kiwi cycling advocates! And with the current pace of change in the transport sector (faster than a speeding continent?) it looks like we'll probably be needing them...

Adrian Croucher, CAN secretary



ON-LINE BIKE GAME

CAN members might be interested in a new game for children on the LTSA's RoadSense website. The content of the Bike Quiz challenge was put together by representatives from Bikewise, Police and the LTSA, and turned into the game format by Oktobor Interactive.

We've had some pretty positive feedback from children we trialed it with so here's hoping it plays a small part in upskilling them cycle-wise!

http://www.roadsense.co.nz/kids/game_bikequiz.php

Maria Cunningham
Senior Education Advisor, LTSA
Wellington 🚲

CAN “CYCLE-FRIENDLY AWARDS” 2003/04



Proudly supported by SPARC

Once again, CAN is pleased to bring you the “Cycle-Friendly” Awards, celebrating initiatives to promote cycling and create a cycle-friendly environment at both national and local levels. Last year’s inaugural awards were a great success in helping to identify and acknowledge some of the wonderful efforts in the wider community. This year, we aim to get an even bigger and better selection to choose from – that’s where we need your help!

As with last year, there will be four award categories:

- *Best Cycle Facility Project*
- *Best Cycling Promotion*
- *Cycle-Friendly Commitment by Business*
- *Cycle-Friendly Commitment by Public Organisation*

Nominations should be based on activities carried out some time during the 18-month period **January 2003 – June 2004**. The finalists will be invited to attend an awards ceremony in Wellington in November. All finalists will receive a certificate, while the category winners will receive the famous “bike-bell” trophy to adorn their cabinet.

Anyone can nominate somebody for a CAN Award – even if you are involved in the nominee organisation! Check out all the details on our website www.can.org.nz/awards/, where you can view more information, download nomination forms and find out about last year’s finalists/winners. Or you can contact Glen Koorey for further information (koorey@paradise.net.nz, ph.03-3317504)

Start thinking about who or what you think might be worth nominating. Gather together all the relevant details and send it in with the nomination form by **Friday 8th October 2004** (electronic submission is preferred). Good luck to everyone!



More than words can say...

CAN is extremely grateful for the generous support of Julian Waters of words.co.nz, for hosting our website. For professional assistance with your website developments, visit Julian at:

<http://www.words.co.nz>

RECENT CAN EXEC ACTIVITIES

Another couple of months, and once again your CAN Executive Committee has had plenty to keep themselves busy:

- Met with BikeNZ's new Advocacy Manager in a number of meetings/workshops and discussed various cycling issues
- Held meetings in Wellington with the Secretary of Transport, Transfund Board, Transit NZ staff, and LTSA staff
- Helped address Parliament's Transport & Industrial Relations Select Committee on cycling/walking access for Auckland Harbour Bridge
- Attended BikeWise (Cycle Steering Cm'tee) & BikeNZ Board meetings
- Collated and sent out *e.CAN* issues
- Discussed the implications for cycling of the transport sector review
- Firmed up venue and programme arrangements for the 2004 CAN Workshop
- Started planning for this year's CAN "cycle-friendly" awards
- Provided feedback to BikeNZ regarding their Strategic Plan and Management Panel
- Gave a presentation on walking/cycling safety to the NZ Traffic Institute (TRAFINZ) Annual Conference.
- Assisted local cyclists/groups with advice on pathways along stopbanks, cycle audit tools, and benefits for cycle networks interconnecting town centres
- Discussed the effects of the proposed Land Transport Amendment Bill, particularly with regard to electric bikes
- Reviewed our list of desirable acquisitions for CAN's library
- Considered options for future membership promotion
- Investigated provision for online credit-card payment of CAN subs
- Further investigated progress by Transit NZ on the *Cycling Design Supplement*
- Prepared a submission on Transfund NZ's Funding Allocation Process
- Discussed Transfund's proposed revised policy on walking/cycling funding
- Considered funding support for a new NZ cycling history book
- Updated CAN's website pages, including research and local group sites
- Held an Exec teleconference meeting to progress various actions
- Prepared this issue of *ChainLinks*

If you want to know more details about anything, contact Adrian (secretary@can.org.nz). 

CAN Meetings

A round of meetings with government agencies was held in May: following on from the details of the Transfund meeting in the last edition of *ChainLinks*, here are notes of the meeting with SPARC.

SPARC

Members of the CAN committee (David Laing, Glen Koorey, Axel Wilke, and Jane Dawson) met with Sport & Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) staff members Deb Hurdle and Richard Lindsay on 4 May. It was again a very positive meeting, and we thank Deb and Richard for their time to discuss the various issues.

Detailed notes from the meeting are on CAN's website, but here's a summary of the discussion topics.

Funding for Cycling:

CAN would like to see more funding available for cycling promotion on a national level. As SPARC's new role is as a policy body, they have a limited advocacy role. SPARC has identified three 'revitalisation sports' (i.e. sports that could appeal to many people) – athletics, cycling, and swimming. These play a role in developing the physical literacy of young New Zealanders. SPARC will be following up on this with BikeNZ.

SPARC – BikeNZ – CAN interaction:

At the time of the meeting, the BikeNZ advocacy manager appointment was pending. CAN sees itself as always having an advocacy role, even now that Stephen Knight has been appointed. SPARC said that a good relationship is important to them, and a channelisation of CAN's issues through BikeNZ is not always necessary. It is likely that there will be times when BikeNZ is in the best position to liaise with SPARC and there will be other times that CAN will liaise direct. CAN does not foresee any problems, as we have a longstanding and good relationship with Stephen that goes back prior to him starting in his new role.

Cycle-friendly Employers Guide:

SPARC has engaged CAN member Patrick Morgan again to update the CFE Guide.

CAN Awards:

SPARC intends to continue supporting the CAN Awards, with Richard volunteering to be on the judging panel again this year.

Kiwi Rides:

We had a discussion on whether the idea of developing 'Kiwi Rides' (much like 'Kiwi Walks') should be followed up on. SPARC could consider the item in its future planning. ☺

CYCLING ADVOCATES WORKSHOP

NELSON SUNDAY 24TH - MONDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2004

(LABOUR WEEKEND)

Central Government and Local Governments are dragging their feet on cycle provision. Now is the time for us to get together to come up with all these brilliant ideas of how to tackle this inertia.

Be there! It will be fun, it will challenge your brain cells and it will breathe new life into your lobbying. Not forgetting that this is a chance for us all to go cycling together.

Included with this issue you should find:

- Registration Form
- Programme
- Tahuna Beach Accommodation Park information
- Map of Nelson cycle routes & cycle hire information
- Travel Information

The Programme is subject to changes, so please check out **www.can.org.nz/workshop/** for final programme details. If you would like further registration forms or need more information please contact:

Liz Mikkelsen

Email: **kapiticycling@xtra.co.nz**

Telephone: 06-364-8187 Fax: 06-364-8185

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CYCLE STRATEGIES: A 'MULTI-MODAL' APPROACH FOR ALL VULNERABLE ROAD USERS?

by Christine Cheyne

Many local authorities are being funded through the new Transfund Walking and Cycling fund to develop their first cycling strategy (or perhaps a walking and cycling strategy). Some, however, are moving to review an existing strategy. Ideally they will be developing new goals and policies that reflect current best practice and drawing as best they can on the relevant expertise. Cycling advocates such as CAN's constituent groups and other members can make an important contribution to strategy development. It is timely to look at how local advocates are being engaged by councils, and the form that strategies are taking. Cycle Aware Palmerston North (CAPN) has had a recent experience that may be of interest to other groups.

Palmerston North and Christchurch City Councils are both reviewing an existing strategy. PNCC has taken a rather different approach to that of Christchurch. In May 2004, PNCC's Transportation Officer, Sandi Morris, wrote a report to Council that recommended the Bike Plan (the city's cycling strategy adopted in 1998 with targets to be achieved by 2003) be replaced by a multimodal strategy that covers all "vulnerable road users".

For at least a couple of years, CAPN had been seeking a review of the Bike Plan as we were aware that the initial targets were set for achievement by 2003. We were keen to see a review of progress towards achieving these targets, and an evaluation of targets and the existing goals and policies. However, we had not recommended a multi-modal strategy.

Christchurch City Council has included cycle advocates in the Cycle Strategy review, while in Palmerston North there has been a very deliberate decision to exclude the local advocacy group, Cycle Aware Palmerston North. The Transportation Officer recommended that the membership of the review group be comprised as follows: Cycling Club representatives, recreational walking club representative, Age Concern, Disability Persons Association [sic], PNCC Transportation Planner, PNCC secretary/admin, Road Safe Central Road Safety Co-ordinator, Horizons Regional Council Team Leader Transport, LTSA Regional Education Advisor, AA executive member, Midcentral Health Promotion Development Advisor, ACC Injury Prevention consultant, NZ Police road safety representative, one PNCC councillor and "any other relevant vulnerable road user groups".

When clarification was sought from her as to whether CAPN was included in the review group as a cycling club she replied, "CAPN recently clarified themselves as an advocacy group and therefore is not a cycling club." True, we don't refer to ourselves as a club; but then again we don't see ourselves as a vulnerable road user group.

We weren't able to find out why only cycling clubs were included as representatives of cyclists, and why only sporting and recreational cycling and why a representative of a group active in promoting everyday cycling would not be included in the review group. Maybe the Council sees us as a vulnerable road user group, so we tried to ascertain whether we could be included. In her report the Transportation Officer noted "community members who are active in creating safer and active communities should be members of the working party". That seemed like us!

As mentioned, the focus of the working party and the new strategy is on vulnerable road users. This is a further reason for questioning the inclusion of representatives of sporting clubs and the exclusion of everyday cycling. It would appear that the majority of the crashes that are reported in the Council's cycle crash statistics involve people using bikes as their mode of transport around the city rather than cyclists involved in a sporting activity. Sporting and recreational cycling have very specific needs and concerns; indeed some recreational and sporting cyclists are not found predominantly on roads (they are on off-road tracks). This is not to suggest they should not be on the review group but simply to highlight the lack of rationale for excluding representatives of everyday cycling.

A couple of months ago, we wrote to a senior Council officer expressing concern that the proposed membership of the group reviewing the Bike Plan and developing a plan for vulnerable road users does not include a representative from CAPN. We pointed out that because CAPN is engaged in promoting cycling as an everyday activity, for transport as well as other purposes, and works to achieve the conditions where that is a safe and popular choice for all age groups, it is a very suitable group to have representation on the proposed working party. (Somewhat ironically, in another area of Council's activities the Council has recently made staff redundant saying that it prefers to utilise the expertise of community groups.)

To date there has been no response and we await the terms of reference for the Bike Plan review. ☺

- *What do others think about a multi-modal strategy for "all vulnerable road users"? ChainLinks is keen to hear about others' experiences of strategy development and implementation.*

Want to check out old copies of *ChainLinks*?

Check all back-copies of *ChainLinks* on our website at:

<http://www.can.org.nz/chainlinks/>

IMPRESSIONS FROM EUROPE: BIKE PARKING

Many European cities astonish their overseas visitors by the sheer number of bikes parked in the city centres. And to a Kiwi, it must look rather strange having hundreds, and sometimes thousands of bikes parked in one spot. But looking a little closer, the observer realises that the vast majority of the bikes are only a short ride away from the dump. Bike theft is rampant, and bikes parked in public places ought to be of the worthless sort so as to not attract the attention of criminals.



Figure 1:

Bike parking at the railway station (Delft, Netherlands)

One of the most impressive stories that I heard at the 2003 Velocity conference (Martin, 2003) in Paris goes like this: Apeldoorn, a Dutch city of some 150,000 inhabitants, had a bicycle modal share of 30% and the city councillors tasked their staff to increase that proportion. The brief specified that the gain had to come from car traffic, as they didn't want to convert public transport users or pedestrians to cyclists, as one of the objectives was to reduce car traffic. So staff surveyed motorists about what stopped them from using bikes, and found that many had expensive bikes at home, which they used for leisure rides only. The most common reason given for using the car for commuting was for fear of bike theft! So at great expense, 2,000 free, supervised bike parks were established in the city centre financed from car parking revenue, and within a three-year period, the bicycle modal share had risen to over 40%. And now 1,000 more bike parks are planned.

So what other, more secure bike parking facilities can be found in Europe?

- Bicycle lockers are available for individual bikes, usually for long-term parking, often at transport interchanges.
- Some cities convert on-street car parks to communal bicycle lockers if enough residents of apartment buildings are interested.
- Some cities have established parking buildings for bicycles (see Figure 2).

- More and more railway stations complement a supervised bike parking service with a bike hire service and repair shop.



Figure 2:

Bike parking building with 3,000 spaces a few days before opening (Münster, Germany)

But despite what I said earlier about bike theft, things are obviously a little different in law-abiding Switzerland. As shown in Figure 3, whole streets had open bike sheds in front of every apartment building. The area was close to the city centre, and very little residential on-street parking could be observed, and most sections had no off-street parking. Car ownership was obviously quite low, and the streets were very lively with pedestrians and cyclists.



Figure 3:

Open bike sheds in front of every apartment building (Winterthur, Switzerland)

So what can New Zealand learn from this? Well, if we are serious about getting more people onto bikes more often, then perhaps we have to think harder about secure bike parking.

Axel Wilke - CAN Technical Advisor

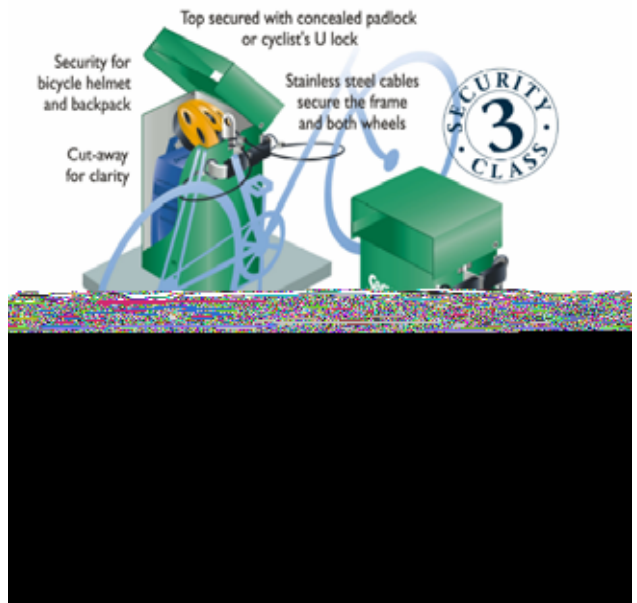
References:

Martin, Oscar (2003) Free guarded cycle parking as successful modal shift trigger. *Proc Velo-city 2003 conference (Paris)*, 23-26 September, p.142. 🚲

BIKE PARKING & SECURITY

The Australian manufacturer of security products Leda has published a new brochure on 'Bicycle Parking & Security'. It is easily the most comprehensive catalogue dealing with bike parking that I have come across. Any active advocate out there who is in dialogue with local authorities, architects or developers is well advised to order a catalogue from the NZ distributor. Peter Tutt (General Manager Traffic Products) from Harding Traffic is happy to file your requests for the catalogue. You can contact Peter by phone (04 - 238 4690) or e-mail (ptutt@hardingsystems.com).

The catalogue has a comprehensive range of bicycle rails, racks, lockers and cages. It specifically advises to replace the old-style 'toast racks' (whereas most other suppliers happily list toast racks as one of the parking facilities). The catalogue is supplemented with a discussion on design considerations (including recommended bicycle parking provision for different land use types), and different security classes offered by the various products.



I'm especially impressed with the 'Mini Locker' (pictured above). A small compartment is provided for helmet, pannier and other luggage, with the cyclist's padlock securing the bike and locker lid. I'd like to get feedback from people who have tried this device (either as users or as asset manager).

It should be noted that CAN is not in the business of endorsing one equipment supplier over another. If another company comes up with better products or a catalogue, please get in touch. If we think that our members might be interested, we'll write a review.

Axel Wilke - CAN Technical Advisor



How to get an exemption from the bicycle helmet regulation

by Patrick Morgan

For 20 years I wore a helmet while cycling, and thought you'd have to be soft in the head not to. After all, it can't hurt and it might help, right? But I met an emergency room doctor who maintained that the helmet law was misguided and harmful to the safety of cyclists. So I looked into it and found that there are many problems with New Zealand's law (check out www.cyclinghealth.org.nz for more information).

Exemptions

It's possible to seek an exemption from wearing a cycle helmet, under clause 3 of "Traffic Regulations 1976 Part 3, Regulation 38A Safety Helmets for Cyclists". You can apply under religious, medical or other reasonable grounds. I applied on "other reasonable grounds", was declined, and appealed it to the District Court. The Court was not sympathetic.

So I applied under medical grounds, as below, and was granted an exemption. An exemption takes the form of a laminated card issued by the LTSA which you are supposed to carry when cycling.

How to get an exemption


1. Go to your doctor. Tell them that you suffer from headaches, heat rash, migraine etc when you wear a cycling helmet. Ask them to write you a letter along these lines:

"To Whom It May Concern: I write to support on medical grounds (name) not wearing a cycle helmet. S/he is prone to headaches and s/he gets these frequently in hot weather and cycling in conditions where s/he gets hot, for example up hills. This is hard to avoid in Wellington."

[Signed]

2. Send this off to: Land Transport Safety Authority, Team Leader Medical Review, Transport Registry Centre, Private Bag, Palmerston North

Add a covering letter saying you are applying for a bicycle helmet exemption. Something like: "Under subclause 3 of 'Traffic Regulations 1976 Part 3, Regulation 38A Safety Helmets for Cyclists', I seek an exemption from wearing a helmet on medical grounds. See the enclosed letter from my doctor."

3. Keep copies of your application - my first application was 'lost'! 

[Please note: Because of the wide-ranging views of our members, CAN has no definitive view on helmet wearing or helmet legislation. Our policy states: "There is evidence that mandatory cycle helmet wearing legislation is not working as intended and should be reviewed. Priority needs to be given to other safety issues such as motorist behaviour and roading improvements."]

CYCLING DESIGN & PLANNING

It's not about the bike lane (with apologies to Lance Armstrong...)

Many local cycling strategies appear to focus on the specification of a network of cycle routes for planning and implementation. In some cases, this seems to have been developed like this because of a (mis)perception that "providing for cyclists" equates to "providing cycle facilities".

Leaving aside the fact that there are many non-infrastructure activities that are just as important as the physical stuff (i.e. the "Three E's" of Education, Enforcement, and Encouragement), a philosophy that concentrates on specific cycle routes and facilities probably won't satisfy the Engineering component of providing for cyclists either.

UK's Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT 1996) proposed a "five-step hierarchy" of physical measures for cyclists. In order of priority they are:

1. **Reduce traffic volumes:** Quite simply, cyclists would rather not have to tangle with motor vehicles. Local area traffic management schemes that divert or restrict traffic (particularly where cyclists can bypass the restrictions) and off-road shortcuts are some ways of achieving this.
2. **Reduce traffic speeds:** If cyclists have to interact with motor vehicles, lower speeds reduce the speed differential and relative risk of severe injury (or at least the perceived risk). Some options here include 30-km/h speed zones, traffic calming measures, narrowing of very wide streets, and deflection at roundabouts.
3. **Intersection treatment and traffic management:** Many of cyclists' biggest impediments are actually relatively small "pinch points", e.g. no waiting space or approach routes at intersections, narrow bridges, one-way restrictions, and the good old drainage grate. It is this "death of a thousand cuts" that puts off many would-be cyclists.
4. **Reallocation of carriageway/corridor space:** Road corridors often have more than enough room to cater for cyclists, particularly if under-used or over-sized traffic/parking lanes are removed or modified. Shared facilities like bus/bike lanes are another alternative. A less preferable option is to borrow footpath space from pedestrians.
5. **Separate cycle facilities:** If the above approaches are not able to produce a viable solution, then specific provision of separate cycle lanes and off-road paths may be required.

The first thing that strikes you about this list is that traditional "cycle facility" solutions are at the very bottom, i.e. they should be the *last* thing to consider. The next thing to notice is that the treatments above this are often barely discussed in local cycling strategies. Interestingly they also tend to benefit other road users better as well.

The idea is that you work your way down the hierarchy, asking “*can I do anything at this step that would help cyclists?*” Now it’s not expected that you can always apply the items at the top. Along a major arterial, for example, it is pretty difficult to reduce traffic volumes; however you might be able to reduce high traffic speeds, and you can probably deal with intersection pinch-points and other traffic management issues. The key is to at least *think* about the possibilities.

You have to be a bit careful about interpreting this hierarchy. For example, some might say that an off-road cycle path helps to meet objectives (1) and (2) in the hierarchy by shifting cyclists away from traffic. This is no good however to many cyclists if the path in question is less direct than the on-road route they would prefer to take, or if it introduces new problems at intersections and road crossings (violating hierarchy objective 3) or with sharing the space with pedestrians and other non-motorised users (hierarchy objective 4).

In many respects, the hierarchy is intuitive in terms of why many people say they *don't* cycle. The stock reply is often “*cycling is too dangerous*”, but if this is teased out then more specific answers are likely to be “*I'm afraid of all that traffic*”, “*the traffic is much too fast*”, “*I hate the pinch point at xyz*”, or “*I keep getting squeezed by motorists*”. As you can see, these responses are dealt with by the first four steps of the hierarchy. It is far less likely for people not to cycle *solely* because there are no cycle lanes or paths.



A Dutch ‘woonerf’: no cycle facilities needed here

happens to be a quiet residential cul-de-sac; it may be more of a problem if you’re heading for a major shopping centre on an arterial road. Therefore councils should always take heed of the credo from the famous Geelong Bike Plan of 1977 that “*every street is a cycling street*”.

The hierarchy also reflects the fact that, even with a comprehensive network of cycle facilities, many cycle trip ends will be on the conventional street network, and much of the cycling is also likely to be away from specific cycle facilities. This is OK if your destination

Using the hierarchy allows you to concentrate more on area-wide treatments (e.g. traffic calming a whole neighbourhood, or treating a whole lot of intersections first). As explained very well by Patterson *et al* (2003), this avoids the problem whereby only certain “routes” are improved for cyclists, while other streets don’t receive any consideration and often become worse over time for cyclists.

Useful References

- Bicycle Victoria, 2004. *Better local traffic controls for safer cycling & walking*. Web: <http://www.bv.com.au> (search for “LATM”)
- IHT, 1996. *Cycle-friendly Infrastructure: Guidelines for Planning and Design*. Institution for Highways and Transportation, Cyclists’ Touring Club, Bicycle Association, & Department of Transport, London, UK.
- F. Patterson, *et al*, 2003. *From the city to the outback – next generation bicycle planning in South Australia*. Proceedings, NZ Cycling Conference 2003, North Shore, pp.109-124.

Glen Koorey (koorey@paradise.net.nz, ph.03-3317504)

How to encourage corporates to develop a bike to work plan

by Sridhar Ekambaram, NZSC Data Services and Management

It is generally agreed that cycling to work is a healthy, economical and environmentally-friendly concept. People willing to bike to work can be broadly divided into three categories:-

- Hardcore bikies - Those who will bike, irrespective of weather conditions and workplace facilities
- Semi-hardcore bikies – Those who will bike provided weather conditions are good, irrespective of workplace facilities.
- Fence sitters – Those who will bike **if** weather conditions are good and there are enough workplace facilities.

(I happen to be a semi-hardcore bikie.)

The only variable factor that is within human control is workplace conditions. Ideally these should include the ability to store your bike in a safe place and suitable facilities such as a shower. People are ready to put up with limited shower facilities, like two for 10 to 15 bikies. However, lack of secure storage facilities is the main cause that the fence sitters are not willing to ride to work. No-one is willing to have his or her bike stolen just because it does not cost as much as a car.

Bikies understandably expect their employees to provide them with the required facilities. Employers on the other hand expect to see substantial benefits in providing these facilities. Physical and mental benefits, in terms of reduced sick leave and improved productivity of biking employees, that have a direct positive impact for employers is beyond argument. However, what employers also look for is significant financial benefits. This is where local government can play a crucial role.

Currently, almost all large corporates are willing to provide free or subsidised car parking facilities to a select group of employees. Not only does this not provide an incentive to take alternate modes of transport, but also has the ability to increase traffic congestion.

However, if local government can provide enough incentives, corporates will be more than willing to encourage their employees to bike to work. How is this possible?

The most useful weapon in the local governments' arsenal is property tax or rates. Companies who allot space for parking bicycles (if necessary at the expense of car parks), preferably secure, can be given discounts in their rates. This discount can be proportional to the space allotted to cycle parking facilities over the entire space available and can go up in steps. For example, for 1 to 5% of car parks allotted to cycle stands, the discount can be 1%. For 6 to 10% of space allotted to cycle stands, the discount level can go up to 2%. For a large corporate with a large building, this 2% can give them significant savings.

The discount will be a recognition of employer's efforts in reducing traffic congestion and also promoting health of its employees, that will bring substantial returns to the economy with reduced oil import bill, improved environmental conditions, greater productivity of employees and improved savings of its employees.

There is a cost, though. Although the city council provides the discount, the returns will not be available directly to the council. This discrepancy can be sorted out with the government stepping in the form of subsidies and grants - after all, the benefits stated above will be first available to the national government.

When encouraging alternate modes all interested parties need to understand that not everyone is capable or motivated enough to bike to work. However, there are many who, if given an opportunity, will be willing to give it a try.



CYCLING RESEARCH

Made in New Zealand

Much of the time, these *ChainLinks* research articles are reporting on cycling research from around the world. But it's not always appropriate to take overseas research and apply it directly here. Our legislative, social, and roading environments are often quite different for starters, and it's fair to say that we don't necessarily have the same "cycling culture" that many other places do. So what research is carried out here in New Zealand?

Transfund NZ has an annual research programme that covers a wide variety of land transport topics. Gradually the programme is starting to address more issues of interest to cyclists (and of sustainable transport in general). Here are some relevant Transfund projects recently awarded or undertaken in the past year or so:

- "NZ Walking/Cycling Strategies - Best Practice" (MWH NZ Ltd & others) – contact Andrew Macbeth (MWH, Christchurch) for more information, <andrew.g.macbeth@mwhglobal.com>.
- "Improved Multi-lane roundabout designs for cyclists" (City Design) – contact Duncan Campbell (City Design, Auckland) for more information, <duncan.campbell@citydesign.co.nz>.
- "Benefits from provision for interface between cycling and public transport" (Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd) – contact Tim Booth (BCHF, Auckland) for more information <tbooth@beca.co.nz>.
- "Targeting cycling and walking" (Capital Research, Wellington) – contact Dr Charles Sullivan for more information, <Sullivan@capitalresearch.co.nz>. (*Sounds dangerous: I thought we already were targeted by motorists...*)
- "Predicting Accident Rates for Cyclists & Pedestrians" (Beca Carter Hollings & Ferner Ltd). Contact Dr Shane Turner (BCHF, Christchurch) for more information, <sturner@beca.co.nz>.
- "School Journey Safety: A Comparative Study of Engineering Devices" (TERNZ Ltd). Contact Dr Peter Baas (TERNZ, Manukau) for more information, <p.baas@ternz.co.nz>.
- "Understanding Short Trips and Potential for Energy Efficient Modes" (Pinnacle Research, Wellington). Contact Dr Carolyn O'Fallon for more information, <pinnacle.research@clear.net.nz>.
- "Balancing the Needs of Cyclists and Motorists" (Opus Central Laboratories). Contact Dr Darren Walton (Opus, Lower Hutt) for more information, <darren.walton@opus.co.nz>.

It's not just Transfund who undertake research in this area. The LTSA are increasingly looking into local cycling research, as part of their pedestrian and cycling safety framework. One interesting project they are currently undertaking with MWH is looking at perceptions of different cycling facilities. A pilot "Cycle for Science" ride saw about 60 cyclists of all experiences survey facilities along roads and at intersections. Contact Tim Hughes (LTSA, Christchurch) for more information, <Tim.Hughes@ltsa.govt.nz>.

Other relevant work is sponsored by agencies such as the Foundation for Research Science & Technology (FRST), the Road Safety Trust, and ACC. A number of studies are also carried out as university research projects by students. And in some cases, local councils (such as Christchurch City)

ARTICLE: SHARING THE ROAD SPACE

Based on his experiences bicycling overseas, Nelson's Stephen White assesses cycling in New Zealand and, more specifically, in Nelson.

Yet another article in The Nelson Mail in April highlighted the on-going conflict on New Zealand roads between car drivers and cyclists.

In this case, the cyclist - who competes internationally in triathlons and cycle events and is therefore no newcomer to bikes - was injured when a car actually drove into him. He was then verbally abused by a female occupant of the car. The trouble seems to have arisen when the car passed too close to the cyclist.

This incident puts me in mind of the more tragic accident earlier this year on the road near Craft Habitat. My heart went out to the family and by extension to the families of all those who have been injured or killed in clashes with cars.

I'm further reminded of the European couple who had planned to spend several months on a cycle tour of New Zealand and left after only one month, saying that road conditions and driving in this country make cycling a near suicidal occupation.

And these are only the incidents that make it to the newspapers. What can be so wrong, to make cycling such a hazardous pastime in this country?

I cycled on and off for years in New Zealand, thankfully without major problems, and thought little of it. I suppose I assumed that there are simply inherent hazards associated with cycling on the road.

But that was before I went to Germany and learned that there are better ways to look after road users. There I was happily surprised to find that city cycling is a delight compared with similar-sized towns in New Zealand. There are road signs and traffic lights especially designed for cyclists, extensive networks of cycle lanes, both on and off the roads and the attitude of drivers to cyclists is radically different.

Almost all car drivers give way to cyclists in exactly the same way as they give way to other cars. And why is the attitude of car drivers toward cyclists so much more tolerant and courteous, even though the population and traffic density is far higher than in most New Zealand towns?

A great part of the reason must be that, at some time or other, almost all car drivers are themselves also cyclists. In New Zealand, where we view ourselves as a people attuned to, and caring for, the environment, far fewer of us opt for energy-efficient, non-polluting forms of transport such as bikes. The eco-friendly habits of people in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium, to name just a few European countries, put us to shame.

In Würzburg, where I lived for two and a half years, hundreds of people daily go grocery shopping with their bikes. They travel between suburbs, they visit friends, they meet in the evenings at a café, as often travelling by bike as by car - or if not by bike, then using the well-planned public transport systems that let them take their bikes on board.



A European cycle path: Wuppertal, Germany

There are pragmatic reasons for this. Traffic density is higher than here, parking for cars can be scarce and dedicated, well-designed, bike parks are common. Many frustrations are avoided by being able to lock one's bike right outside the place you're going to.

And all this in a part of Germany where other German people say cycling is relatively hazardous! What bliss it must be to ride in even more cycle-friendly places!

In short, cycling is an accepted norm for many Europeans. There is no stigma attached to arriving by bike, families routinely spend a Sunday afternoon making a short bike tour together and it is not viewed particularly as a "sporting" activity. These are values I feel we might do well to reconsider in New Zealand.

From Germany I went to Abu Dhabi, where I lived for a further two years. The contrast could not be greater. Cycling there really is suicidal. Cycle lanes are rare, most kerbs are 20-40cm high, respect for cyclists from drivers is essentially non-existent, and cycling is an activity considered to belong to the low socio-economic (expatriate) groups. Anyone with any social standing is discouraged from cycling. In fact, the only people who commonly cycle are poor, poorly-paid expatriate paper delivery "boys" (i.e., men with families to support) from Pakistan, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh - and Western expatriates with an extremely high tolerance for dangerous cycling conditions, exhaust fumes and a climate which, for six months of the year, makes outdoor activities intolerable anyway.

Driver awareness of cyclists is so poor in Abu Dhabi, that most paper deliverers actually cycle against the traffic, on the wrong side of the road, so they can watch the cars and trucks coming!

New Zealand lies somewhere between these extremes, but I'm beginning to wonder if we're not closer to the Abu Dhabi end of the spectrum. As I see

it, cycle safety is a three-way responsibility. Firstly, it is the responsibility of cyclists to cycle safely. This means follow the road rules, don't jump red lights, use hand signals, look behind often, push your bike across pedestrian crossings, wear bright clothing, use lights at night, maintain your bike - especially keep brakes in good condition - and don't cycle against the traffic.

Of course, cyclists also have a responsibility to wear helmets. But while helmets undoubtedly reduce head injuries, I believe they are primarily an injury prevention measure, not a safety feature. Wearing a helmet will not stop you being knocked off your bike.

Incidentally, cyclists also have a responsibility to respect pedestrians, which includes not cycling on the footpath where there is no cycle lane indicated (and I admit, I've been guilty of this). Similarly, pedestrians have a responsibility to make room for cyclists where cyclists are legitimately using the same paths.

Many cyclists will tell you, though, that the reason they don't follow road rules is as a form of self-defence. If the chances are high that a car is not going to give way to a cyclist, the cyclist responds by finding other ways to get from A to B.

The second group with responsibility for cycle safety is all motorists. Except on designated motorways, where cycle lanes do not exist, cyclists also have a right to be on the road.

Primary problems are; drivers not allowing enough space as they pass cyclists, passing in difficult or dangerous situations, such as on bends or intersections, not allowing for extra length or width when towing a trailer or caravan, coming too quickly out of driveways and side-roads (also a hazard for pedestrians) and one of my greatest fears, opening the driver's door of a parked car without first looking behind.

Drivers need to be aware that cyclists may sometimes swerve to avoid potholes or manhole covers. And it is also important for drivers to not occupy the cycle lanes, even when there are no cyclists in sight.

Here I'm thinking particularly of the cycle lane along Haven Road and Rocks Road in Nelson. This is simply a bad habit to get into and one day, when there is a cyclist, the car driver will still be in the cycle lane, with possibly fatal consequences.

Some of these problems arise from drivers being too impatient. It seems that some simply cannot take their foot off the accelerator for a second or two to let the cyclist first get around the bend before making their passing manoeuvre.

Many drivers do wait and I appreciate this. But lack of patience cannot be the only reason for these problems. The general level of awareness by car drivers of cyclists is woefully low. It seems that many car drivers are

simply baffled or irritated when they see in their rear-view mirror a cyclist indicating in no uncertain way that they consider they've been badly treated.

Recently I tapped on the window of a man's car as we stopped together at a traffic light. I asked as tactfully as I could if he realised that he had just come within a hand's width of taking my right leg with him as he passed? He seemed genuinely astonished. I think he had no idea how close he had been to me.

I've been equally astonished to see that many drivers spend most of their time at intersections looking left. There is often only a cursory glance to the right before accelerating. I sometimes wonder if the driver is going to look right at all, and if he or she does, whether they will actually see me.

The third party with its share of responsibility for cycle safety is the local council and affiliated regulatory bodies. Indeed, it could be argued that the council and roading authorities have the gravest responsibility because only they can provide the facilities and primary conditions to accommodate cyclists on our roads.

I congratulate the roading authorities for providing the cycle lanes that we do have. I only wish that there were more, not necessarily shared with motor traffic. The underpass near Craft Habitat is an essential facility, but sadly the job was only half done. Without adequate signage guiding cyclists to a safe route it is not at all obvious how to get through. A similar problem exists where the cycle path ends along Wakatu Drive, near the WOW complex.

I also congratulate roading authorities on the large sign that warns drivers to watch out for cyclists as they go north over the hill at Bishopdale in the direction of Nelson City.

Using a bike as an alternative to driving to the supermarket, for instance, is simply a question of being organised. As a friend said to me recently, now that she uses a bike because she has sold her car, she realises she needs to allow a little more time to get things done. But then we both agreed that most of the time we're in too much of a hurry anyway. It can't be all wrong to slow down.



Urban cycling is not the rural idyll...

[The Nelson Mail, 1 May 2004]



LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I have a query regarding Adrian Croucher's article entitled "Lighten Up!" on cycle lights in the June/July 04 issue pp.28-30. I grew up in Europe where most bicycles at the time came with little friction-driven generators that powered front and rear lights. The advantage is obviously that one doesn't have to worry about batteries running flat and the lower environmental impact associated with less consumption of disposable batteries. The downside is that the lights go out when the bike stands still. During the last couple of decades I have seen very few bikes that were equipped with this kind of power source. Is there a supplier in New Zealand or overseas that anyone knows of? Please let me know at a.lautensach@auckland.ac.nz
Thank you.

Alex Lautensach

Dear Alex,

Dynamo lights are pretty hard to come by in NZ, though they are certainly still alive and well in Europe. They do have some advantages - besides not having batteries to go flat or throw away, they're always there on the bike when you need them- and some of the more recent systems include gizmos to keep the lights shining for a while after you stop. Some of them can even sense the ambient light intensity and turn themselves on and off accordingly. Dynamos do sap a bit of your energy as you ride, although technological advances have meant that this is no longer as much of an issue as it once was. If you have money to burn, there are some hubs available (such as the SON hub) with super-efficient dynamos built in-possibly the ultimate solution to urban bike lighting.

Getting these things in NZ is another story, unfortunately- presumably because the commuter/ utility cycling market here is small and the shops tend to concentrate on the sport side of things. Perhaps some of our readers have some useful leads? Otherwise, ordering what you need via the internet may not be a bad option.

*Adrian Croucher
CAN Secretary*

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