

ChainLinks

The newsletter of the Cycling Advocates Network (NZ)

Mar-Apr '06



Cycling naked in Golden Bay

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

EDITORIAL

I smirked when I read that the price of petrol was increasing again as I was having breakfast before cycling to work. While the price rises will impact on other things, driving is the one thing I can control. I love passing the large vehicles each morning. Cycling is cheaper, I'm faster and I'm getting exercise on the way to work.

As the days get shorter and colder, many people get as dull and gloomy as the weather. Not me. I am dazzlingly bright, sparkling – even twinkling. In fact, if my personality were as good as my winter cycle attire, I'd be the most popular person in Christchurch. I love flashing lights and have several adorning my bike and gear. I also believe that one can never wear too much reflective gear and never be too visible.

Last month, Golden Bay cyclists dressed differently to be noticed. Actually, they didn't dress at all for the Naked Bike Ride. Good on them! See page 5 for details.

Many slightly more conservative events were held over Bike Week. I enjoyed a great breakfast of fruit, bagel and a latte in Victoria Square in Christchurch. Hummingbird Coffee were on their second espresso machine by the time I got to the front of the queue but it was worth the wait. (What is it about cyclists and coffee?). Several cities held cycle vs car races which consistently showed cycling to be the best option (which I'm sure doesn't surprise you). The Supermarket Challenge in Christchurch used trailers on the bikes to carry lots of groceries and a couple of kids.

Due to the number of reports on Bike Week in this issue, the best and worst cycle rides and part 2 of "Meet the Exec" will be in the next issue.

Jean Dorrell, ChainLinks Editor

Sorry!

We apologise for the late arrival of this and the previous issue of ChainLinks. We do try to get it out to you in plenty of time, but since we are all volunteers, things don't always go as planned.

Any offers of help or contributions for the newsletter will be gratefully received by chainlinks@can.org.nz or by phoning/faxing 04-972 2552.

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Still available: CAN 'One Less Car' backpack covers!

Keep your stuff dry, increase your visibility on the road and identify yourself as a CAN member with one of these waterproof, incredibly loud yellow backpack covers. Reflective strip, the CAN web address and 'One Less Car' in big friendly letters on the back-remind those car drivers why they should love you.

One size only: now available to CAN members for \$25, and to non-members for \$35. To order, send your cheque to: CAN, PO Box 6491, Auckland, with your name, address, size required and contact phone or email.



NOTICES AND EVENTS

Need funds to print some fliers, stage an event or host a breakfast presentation?

CAN has established the "Local Group Fund" which has \$700 per annum to assist local cycling advocacy groups affiliated to CAN.

Local groups may apply for up to \$200 for projects where the local group is prepared to contribute a minimum 20% (eg: claim \$200 for a \$250 project) or apply for 100% funding of projects up to \$100 in cost.

For an application form or any questions, please contact Bevan...
bevanw@can.org.nz



Bike Wise makes funds available

Bike Wise is pleased to announce that we'll shortly be taking Community Partnership Programme applications for events to be run between June 1st and October 31st 2006.

The Bike Wise Community Partnership Programme makes small grants of up to \$1,000 to help you run events, promotions and programmes that get more people cycling more often, rather than driving their cars everywhere.

Community groups, sporting and active transport organisations, health agencies, health organisations and local Government authorities are all eligible. Schools are not eligible but we will fund events run at school venues.

Last time round we funded 16 events including an adult learn to ride course, a bicycle obstacle ride, a crazy commuter race, a cycle buddy scheme and a children's cycle rodeo.

For further information or to get copies of the application documents contact Thomas Stokell, thomas@hsc.org.nz, (04) 472 5777. Applications close 30 April 2006.

Please note that funds are limited and as such not all eligible events will be funded.



NAKED BIKE RIDE

The World Naked Bike Ride was once again well supported in the wee community rural/coastal Golden Bay, with one hundred riders (including the cyclist on the invisible bike) and hundreds of cheering supporters lining the roadsides of the 3km ride.

This ride had received international media attention due to the attempts of a group who organised a petition against the ride saying it was immoral, and our mayor who endeavoured to get the police to arrest us.

However, the police declared that riding a bike naked was not in fact a crime and they would not make arrests. The police showed up in a friendly manner at the ride and reminded people that helmets must be worn or fines would be issued. No problems occurred. TV One News cut all of the anti-oil statements, but our message of the bicycle being the most environmentally friendly form of transport did get out, many letters to the editor (largely in favour of cycling) flooded our papers. The ride stimulated discussion on this issue which is often hard to achieve, as even though we travel most days, transport is not a sexy topic.



Many of the painted slogans on various body parts pointed out the immoral aspects of burning fossil fuels like there is no tomorrow, and supporting safe cycling in Golden Bay.

The after ride prize-giving at the local cafe, Totally Roasted, saw nine local businesses sponsoring over \$500-worth of prizes to categories such as: most dramatic finish, and best environmental message ["burn fat not fuel"].

The sunny day on the beautiful coastal road proved to be a popular event with a carnival atmosphere.

The World Naked Bike Ride is a global event with northern and southern hemisphere dates. The northern hemisphere ride is June 10. Last year's ride saw 260 naked cyclists ride past the U.S. Embassy in London with a banner saying "Ease Up On Our Oil Mate..."

Victoria Davis, Golden Bay WNBR organiser



BIKE WISE WEEK - AUCKLAND

Learn to Cycle with Confidence in Auckland

Cycle Action Auckland ran a free cycle skills course on the first Sunday of Bike Wise Week. This covered a bike safety check, the theory, off-road practice, then an on-road ride (see picture) followed up by a Q&A session.



We got about 30 riders attending this cycle skills session and now we want to hold these every month.

Breakfast presentation: Cycling in Auckland – Addressing the key issues!

Cycle Action Auckland invited transport professionals and politicians to a breakfast presentation on the Monday of Bike Wise Week to share our perspective on improving cycling conditions in the Auckland region and get a dialogue going. We had about 35 attendees and it has raised the profile of cycling and Cycle Action Auckland. CAA has since been invited to meetings with Transit, MoT and Auckland City Council.

The Great Auckland Commuter Challenge

Cycle Action Auckland previously hosted the Commuter Challenge in 2004 and it was great to do it again this year. The goal of the Commuter Challenge is to highlight the essential role of cycling and public transport in solving Auckland's transport problems.

We got a bunch of well known Aucklanders to participate in four simultaneous races starting at 7:25 am on the Wednesday from the North, South, West and East of Auckland into the City CBD. In each journey a cyclist, a car driver and a bus or train user competed to see who was the quickest commuter.

The finish line was at the Bike to Work breakfast which dove-tailed nicely. The cyclists won 3 of the 4 races, an excellent result especially as the race we lost was from the North Shore - so we put out a press release expressing our frustration at the lack of access over the Auckland Harbour Bridge for cyclists.

Outcomes

Cycle Action Auckland got invaluable funding support from HSC to organise the cycle skills training and the Commuter Challenge - I invoiced Cycle Action Auckland as an independent contractor to carry out most of the work, along with Cycle Action Auckland members volunteering their time.

The media were very interested in what we were doing, but I failed to give the local community papers enough advance notice (they require up to 2 weeks) so will look to get better coverage from them next year. It's important to foster your relationship with your reporters - shout them a coffee and get to know them face to face.

Hosting the breakfast presentation forced Cycle Action Auckland to clarify our message... what is the problem, what should happen, who should do it, etc. I hope we do such an event at least every year!

We are now thinking about other events to stage during the year which provide media opportunity and involve politicians/decision makers - the Auckland Harbour Bridge is next. Then I'd like to see us do "Auckland's Dirty Dozen" - where we have a competition to find Auckland's 12 worst cycling spots, followed up by a competition to create practical, affordable solutions which will be presented to local councils for their consideration (...and implementation? - one can only try and hope!)

Bevan Woodward, Cycle Action Auckland



BIKEWISE WEEK – WELLINGTON

More than 900 cyclists rode in to Wellington's Civic Square this morning to celebrate the tenth birthday of Bike To Work Day in the capital.

Cyclists came from as far away as Pukerua Bay and as near as Willis St for a fabulous breakfast, prizes, live music and prize draws. Glen Cassidy and his daughter Jessica, aged 12, cycled in from Tawa.



Kerry Prendergast and Robert Ibell

Wellington mayor Kerry Prendergast cut the tenth birthday cake. She congratulated event organisers Cycle Aware Wellington (CAW) and Wellington City Council, and said the Council was committed to improving conditions for cyclists in the city.

CAW spokesperson Robert Ibell said organisers were thrilled with the turnout. "We've seen Bike To Work Day grow hugely over its ten years. Last year we had 750 cyclists to the breakfast. We aimed to better that this year, and we certainly succeeded."

"The popularity of Bike To Work Day reflects the fact that cycle commuting is increasing in the capital. The advantages of travelling by bike are pretty obvious, and more and more Wellingtonians are cottoning on to that," said Mr Ibell.

Wellington's Bike to Work Day was one of nearly 30 such events taking place around New Zealand, and was part of Bike Wise Week.



BIKEWISE WEEK CHRISTCHURCH

The Supermarket Challenge



Two preschoolers and a week's worth of groceries - how do you transport them all home from the supermarket? Steven Muir and his team have proven beyond doubt that the fastest, most enjoyable, cost effective, and environmentally friendly manner is to take a bike with a home made trailer towed behind. The event was held to promote a make-your-own bike trailer workshop being held on the 4th March 2006.

The supermarket challenge had six participants, three on bikes and three in cars. They left from Cathedral Square at 4pm and set out in pairs (one bike and one car); one pair went to Pak'n'Save (Moorhouse Ave), another pair to Merivale Fresh Choice, and another to Countdown Colombo Street. Each bike had one child on a front bar seat and one on a rear seat and towed a bike trailer behind for the groceries. The riders were all average commuter cyclists, both male and female, including a teacher, an occupational therapist/housewife and a horticulturalist. Steven had constructed two of the trailers and another had been made at a workshop he had run in 2005. The average cost of making a trailer was around \$10 using recycled metal beds, office dividers and bike parts, and (if well constructed) each can carry remarkably heavy loads (up to 100kg). At that price the trailer is comparable to the petrol used in just one or two trips to the supermarket in a car.



Cyclists preparing to leave from Cathedral Square

The results surprised everybody when the bikes consistently returned ahead of the cars. Even over the short distance (1 km) to Pak'n'Save, the bike achieved a five minute lead over the car getting to the supermarket, and a staggering 21 minute lead returning to the Square. This was not helped by a checkout computer crashing as the car driver went to pay for their groceries, resulting in around seven minutes being lost, but still it was an impressive difference. The Colombo Street Countdown (3 km from the Square) was the closest contest time-wise with the car and bike arriving at the supermarket at exactly the same time, but the bike managed to return two minutes ahead. The bike arrived at the Merivale Fresh Choice (3 km from the Square) eight minutes ahead of the car (due to Papanui road traffic) and kept that lead all the way, returning to the Square eight minutes ahead. The total times taken ranged from 27-48 minutes. (The groceries had been preloaded into a trolley in the supermarket, and the riders/drivers simply had to swap an empty trolley for the full one at the icecream freezer.)

Other measures of success also consistently favoured the bikes. When asked how they enjoyed the journey the riders all reported having a great ride (five out of five), the kids loved being on the bike, they had brief chats with passers by and received admiring looks. They enjoyed the sunny warm day and getting some exercise and the traffic was not too much bother. Even having to brake, to avoid being cut off by a bus pulling in, didn't deter one cyclist who is quite used to dealing with such incidents.

The drivers on the other hand all reported a fairly stressful journey (zero out of five) with kids getting hot and crabby in the car, and traffic congestion becoming irritating.

The consistency of the icecream was checked on return and found to be runnier in the warmth of the cars than on the bikes (although the best result was a mini chillybin in one trailer which did give a distinct advantage). No eggs were broken or peaches bruised by either car or bike. The cars all used 6-7 plastic bags, whereas two of the bikes used no bags whatsoever, loading the groceries directly into their removable trailer bins at the checkout. This gave an additional time advantage when transferring groceries into their trailer as well as the environmental advantage of reducing plastic waste. While cars could theoretically use this approach as well, they tend to resort to bags as the default option, whereas with a bike it is more natural to use the bins.



Rainer about to experience the overbridge with 77 kg extra load

The heaviest load on a bike was 43kg of food, and 34 kg of children (total 77kg), which was carried from the Colombo Street Countdown, involving going over the Colombo Street Overbridge. Even with this load the rider had no problems, simply changing down a couple of gears to cope with the hill. The full list of groceries is available on the website www.cyclingchurch.org.nz and represented a reasonable week's worth of groceries for a family.

A number of people had raised the issue of safety before the event, referring to the danger of children being hurt if a cycling accident occurred. Steven responded by pointing out that a far more dangerous thing than cycling down a busy road, is to sit at home (or in the car) doing nothing.

Lack of exercise claims the lives of 2-3,000 New Zealanders every year, compared to around six or seven deaths from cycling accidents. There is a risk of having an accident on a bike but the riders in the challenge agreed that the perception many people have about the risk of cycling is completely out of proportion to other risks that occur in life, and the safest thing a parent can do for their child is to model and encourage an active lifestyle.

Rainer, who cycled to the Colombo St Countdown, is an Austrian who cycled as a courier in Vienna many years ago. He suggested New Zealanders are addicted to their cars and need to 'harden up' and become more motivated to cycle. He had special chains fitted to his bike in Vienna so he could continue to cycle in the snow all winter, which he says would be beyond most Kiwis' comfort tolerance.



Catherine heading down Colombo St.

Steven Muir



ENVIRONMENT HOUSE IS CYCLE FRIENDLY

The Ministry for the Environment is proud of its new home at Environment House. In June 2005 the Ministry moved from a lesser known address in Boulcott Street to a new building in the heart of the government precinct.

The Ministry takes a leadership role on environmental issues across central and local government, and the community. Incorporating and influencing design features in the new building is one way the Ministry was able to minimise its environmental footprint, despite not being the building owner.

Some of the fit-out features at Environment House include state-of-the-art energy efficient air conditioning and lighting systems, an electronic building management system, Environmental Choice paint and carpets, marmoleum floor coverings (produced without harmful emissions) and provisions for staff to recycle glass, aluminium, plastic and food scraps. Having a crèche in the building is an added bonus and benefit for staff with young families.

And, not only is Environment House only a few minutes walk from the public transport hub of Wellington's of buses and trains, it also has fantastic new cycle facilities!

Sustainability isn't just about the building itself – it's also about how people get to and from work. Having healthy, happy, active staff is important to the Ministry, so alternatives to driving to work have been encouraged. Needs for cyclists were factored into the fit-out of the building by providing showers, lockers, and secure cycle parking for staff who ride to work.



The cycle storage area is contained within a secure metal enclosure. The racks used are Racor B-1R Solo Bike Racks. Each rack holds one bike vertically – this allows for easy storage of bikes and gets them off the floor and out of the way. The security loop means bikes can be locked to the rack. There are showers and lockers in the basement area, with more showers and lockers on the first floor.

So, instead of having to drag bicycles up to the 12th floor of an office building (as was the case in the old building!), cyclists now have their very own facilities in the new building's basement area. And the new facilities have been very much appreciated by Ministry staff – the bike racks are regularly full to capacity.

The facilities got a good workout during Bike Wise Week this year. Twenty-one staff members (all of whom are regular cyclists) cycled a total of 1,841kms during the week. And although the Ministry didn't take home the big prizes, it was placed a very credible 10th in its category.

Sherilyn Gray, Ministry for the Environment



SUNDAY AFTERNOON CYCLING CHURCH AND TE WHARE ROIMATA'S

MAKE-YOUR-OWN BIKE TRAILER WORKSHOP

As part of bike week we ran a make-your-own Bike Trailer Workshop. This is the second such event and both have been successful in producing good trailers and having lots of fun in the process. Seven trailers were produced at the first workshop and twelve at the second. The main purpose of this report is to encourage other centres to run your own workshops so that bike use increases and car use decreases.



An old bed frame becomes two bike trailers

Participants were encouraged to bring their own materials which were listed on the flyer. Old bike frames, front forks and wheels seem very easy to come by, but sturdy springs and rectangular metal frames were more problematic. Much of the old metal that arrived was rusty and difficult to weld, which resulted in longer construction times. We had a selection of new metal (25mm angle iron) that was used, which was much easier to weld, and cost around \$10-\$15 per trailer. However, it does add a creative element to a trailer having an old bunk-bed-end as the main frame, so can be worthwhile despite the increased time.

We considered having frames pre-constructed and obtained a quote for \$60 each for each frame (powder coated) which we considered too expensive, but could be worthwhile if you have rich participants or are pressed for time. It's only one tank of petrol after all!



The old bunk end makes a good frame and fits apple crates nicely.



Final fitting to the bike

Obtaining a trampoline with springs of the correct diameter proved difficult, but two sprung rowing machines gave us enough to get by - they had springs small enough to fit inside the bike tube (as in the plans). Most *new* trampoline springs are 25mm external diameter and too big to fit inside a bike tube, but too small to go over the top of the tube (an acceptable alternative to the plans). Older trampoline springs tend to be fatter (28 - 29 mm external diameter) and so can fit handle-bar-thickness

tube inside them. To locate old springs, try checking the Yellow Pages under “Sporting Equipment” and find someone who repairs trampolines.

The Supershed kindly donated us heaps of old kids bikes to provide the 16” or 20” wheels which are ideal size. It was slightly traumatic chopping up some perfectly good kids bikes for their parts, but there were plenty to choose from.

The event was held outdoors at Te Whare Roimata Trust in Christchurch and unfortunately the weather was cold and rainy which made the day less pleasant than it should have been. The small amounts of verandah space and shed were well utilised during the showers that passed over.

We had two arc-welders operating which was the bottleneck as far as production goes. A third welder would have been useful. Other essential equipment we provided was three large vices (powerful enough to compress steel tubing), drills and bits, angle grinders, skill saws (with metal cutting blades), and some 6mm x 50mm bolts with nylock nuts.

Food was arranged for morning and afternoon tea, as well as lunch which made for a pleasant social environment and was well worth the effort. People enjoyed talking about their potential uses for trailers and the joys of not using their cars as much and it was good to see the interactions of people helping each other master the tools and techniques.

Construction

After a safety briefing, construction got underway. Many people ignored (or didn’t hear) the instruction to wear safety equipment such as goggles when grinding, but fortunately the only injury was a minor cut finger. Written instructions should be given to people on arrival, to attempt better safety practices, and also to make it clear that some help with tidying up is expected. Many people departed at the end of the day leaving lots of old bike bits scattered around and it took more time to clean up than was necessary for the organisers.

Some extra experienced engineers would have been helpful to answer queries about use of vices, drills, extraction of front forks etc, but once pointed in the right direction, many people took the opportunities to learn new skills (e.g. welding) which was all part of the fun.

We had four people assisting (two welding and two fielding questions) which was insufficient for all the twelve trailers being constructed. Our collection of old bikes was well utilised as well as parts people had brought themselves.

We had copies of the plans printed out which are available from www.re-cycle.org. Some issues not mentioned in the plans are:

- Make sure there is a small angle where the hitch attaches to the bike frame, otherwise right turns can result in the hitch scraping against

the tyre or spokes of the back wheel.

- Trailers are prone to flipping if you hit curbs at speed with no load, so some common sense is advised when riding.
- Flags are easily constructed from old ski poles or fishing rods.
- Consider some safety chain on the hitch – I have had a couple fail through over-bending the tube or using light gauge tubing.



The people carrier

Running your own workshop

It would be a great thing if other centres wanted to organise their own workshops. All it takes is for one person to have a go at making their own trailer and get the feel for what is involved so that they can be the instructor.

Contacting a few friends who are engineers or in a trade can soon get the required equipment together. Someone's driveway or backyard provides an adequate venue, although a venue with a lot of verandah space is helpful for wet weather.

Contact Bike Wise who may even be prepared to give you a small grant to help out with expenses (we appreciated their assistance for our workshop).

It was a fairly busy time as an organiser answering everyone's questions about their designs and suitability of parts, but it was very worthwhile seeing many more trailers cycling off down the road at the end of the day. I'm happy to offer advice. Email me on thepope@cyclchurch.org.nz.

Full details of how the workshop was promoted and organised are available on www.cyclchurch.org.nz

Steven Muir

CYCLING NEWS FROM AROUND NEW ZEALAND

Mayors Get On Their Bikes

The first ever national Mayoral Challenge has been a huge success, with 18 mayors around the country leading over 7000 cyclists.

The event, one of a number to mark Bike Wise Week last week, pitted one region against another as they strove to have the most people 'ride behind the mayor'. Extra points were allocated for high profile entrants – including celebrities, councillors, business leaders and journalists.

New Plymouth won the coveted title of New Zealand's Cycle Mad City 2006, with more than 2000 people riding behind mayor Peter Tennent.

Bike Wise manager Brent Skinnon of the HSC said the response had been amazing – particularly for an event being held for the first time.

“All round the country mayors led the way – it was about getting out there and having a go. Eighteen centres entered - Waitakere, Tauranga, Whakatane, Gisborne, Taupo, Rotorua, New Plymouth, South Taranaki, Manawatu, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt, Porirua, Wellington, Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough, Wanganui, and Christchurch.

“We had whole families join in – some with more than one generation.”

He said that going by bike was becoming a way of life for more and more people.

“The response to the Mayoral Challenge proves again that cycling is undergoing something of a renaissance in New Zealand. You only have to look at the streets around you to see how many people use cycling as their preferred mode of transport.

“Cycling is a great way to keep fit – it benefits the heart and lungs, lowers blood pressure, and helps in weight control. And with today's high petrol prices, it makes sense economically too.”

“While a couple of events suffered from bad weather and other biking events running on the same day, the turn-out at most exceeded expectations.”

[Press Release: Health Sponsorship Council, 8 March 2006]



Faster, Fitter, Cleaner, Cheaper

Whangarei cyclists yesterday discovered there is such a thing as a free breakfast - you just have to get on your bike to find it.

About 80 cyclists big and small rolled up to the Cameron St Mall, grabbing a bite to eat on Go By Bike Day - one of the events marking national Bike Wise Week from February 25 to March 5.

Encouraging people to cycle to work and school, and promoting cycling as a form of "active transport" are the aims of the week, says Sport Northland participation manager Anna Batty.

One of Ms Batty's jobs for the week is to track down the most cycle-friendly workplace in town.

Among the bagel and banana munching riders yesterday were a couple of paediatricians, a deputy principal and an engineer.

Paul Doherty, who founded Bike! Whangarei in 2000 and runs a cycle touring business in Northland, said with high petrol prices and traffic headaches for many motorists, biking "just makes sense".

While he calls Bike Wise Week "a celebration of cycling", Mr Doherty is working with the Whangarei District Council to develop a longer-term cycling strategy, and is challenging schools to get on board.

When his mother was at school they had a whole floor devoted to cycle parking - the same school now has space for six bikes and they're rarely full.

When asked how cyclists and motorists get along, Ruth Jarman from Hedgehog Bikes said mutual respect was the name of the game.

"Lots of car users are good, but some could give a bit more consideration," she said.

Breakfast was provided by a host of sponsors.

[The Northern Advocate, 2 March 2006]



CYCLISTS PROVE THEY'RE QUICKEST

Auckland's morning rush-hour traffic nearly claimed the scalp yesterday of a celebrity cyclist who has rowed unscathed across the Atlantic Ocean.

Former Olympian Rob Hamill crashed off a revolutionary reclining bike in Queen St to avoid a turning car, yet beat a field of motor vehicles to the finish line in a "commuter challenge" run by cycling advocates.

Hamill, with minor grazes to his leg and bent handlebars, spent several minutes swapping details with the driver who cut across him into Shortland St before he remounted his "row- bike" to finish a 12km dash from Pt England to Aotea Square in just over half an hour.

He left a hybrid petrol-electric car, a train and a bus in the dust to help a team of four cyclists converging from different parts of Auckland to win the event in an average time of 25 minutes and 15 seconds - more than four minutes faster than the competition.

Auckland Regional Transport Authority chief executive Alan Thompson, who covered most of the distance from Pt England by train in a more sedate 39 minutes, marvelled at how Hamill took off "like a rocket".

Next in after the bikes was a fleet of four cars, one of which took line honours across Auckland Harbour Bridge, after picking up two passengers so it could legally use the Onewa Rd bus lane to zip past a slow-moving queue of driver-only vehicles.

Honda product manager David Herrick said he stayed within the rules by taking advantage of North Shore City Council's provision to encourage efficient use of scarce road space.

But bus and train users, who trailed home in average times of 39m 30s and 48m 30s respectively, had to complete their journeys on foot while the car drivers enjoyed privileged parking in Aotea Square.

"It is an artificial situation really because commuters have to find car parks," said Auckland Regional Council transport chairman Joel Cayford, who finished three minutes behind Mr Herrick after sprinting off his bus from Birkenhead.

Cyclists won three of the four legs, and organisers claim they could have swept the field if only Transit New Zealand allowed them to pedal over the harbour bridge. North Harbour Triathlon Club member Judy Barfoot had to cool her heels for about a quarter of an hour on the Birkenhead ferry before cycling up Queen St to the finishing line.

"It shows once again that the bridge is a major barrier for us, and we are increasingly frustrated at a lack of progress by Transit in carrying out a feasibility study for a walkway and cycleway," said Cycle Action Auckland chairman Bevan Woodward.

Transit says there is no room for bikes on the bridge, and it will take until the end of the year to assess whether an extra structure can be loaded on to the outside "clip-on" lanes.

About 460 other cyclists celebrated "Bike to Work Day" yesterday by joining the commuter challenge contestants in a free breakfast courtesy of Auckland City Council, and similar events were held elsewhere.

[NZ Herald, 2 March 2006]



Funding approved for Cycle Safe programme in Christchurch primary schools

Thousands of Christchurch primary school students will continue to learn safe cycling skills following Land Transport New Zealand's approval of further funding for the city council's Cycle Safe programme.

Land Transport NZ will contribute \$147,000 in funding towards the total cost of \$277,630 for the programme this financial year, with the remainder covered by the council.

Cycle Safe is an education programme run by Christchurch City Council to encourage more students in the city to cycle to school. The programme helps students learn the skills needed to cycle safely, giving them the confidence to ride to school. The aim is to reach 3000 Year 6 students per year.

The programme has been cited as an example of 'best practice' in the Ministry of Transport's national strategy to promote walking and cycling.

Land Transport NZ Southern Partnership Manager Jackie Curtis said support for the programme was part of Land Transport's commitment to promoting healthy, safe and sustainable transport alternatives.

"The health and environmental benefits of cycling have been proven again and again. When students bike to school they arrive alert and they help to reduce traffic volumes – both good things."

Ms Curtis said there was evidence that Cycle Safe had increased the proportion of students cycling to school, but more data was needed and Land Transport's funding was subject to an approved monitoring programme being undertaken.

[Media Release, Land Transport NZ , 2 March 2006]



Oh when the bikes ride everywhere

[Tune: Oh when the saints go marching in]

Oh when the bikes ride everywhere
Oh when the bikes ride everywhere
then the cars will be needed no longer
Oh when the bikes ride everywhere
Oh when the bikes ride round the town
then the air that we breathe will be fresher
Oh when the bikes ride down each street
we can save fossil fuels for tomorrow
Oh when the bikes ride to the school
we will increase the health of our children
Oh when the bikes ride off to work
then the roads will be much less congested

Steven Muir, www.cyclingchurch.org.nz

OVERSEAS NEWS

Have helmet, bell, two wheels — will commute

On her ride to work each morning, Clare Moran hasn't ever noticed the green metal box by the side of the Morell Bridge, near the Botanic Gardens.

But it's been noticing her — and thousands of other cyclists who are happily beating Melbourne's traffic congestion and public transport fares by pedalling their way to work.

In November last year, VicRoads installed 17 counters on key city cycle paths, including on the Morell Bridge, to track how many commuters were taking to their bikes.

An average of 4000 riders a day are pedalling into and out of the CBD on cycle trails, the first release of the research has found.

And more cyclists are using the trails on weekdays than on weekends, the data show, meaning commuters are starting to outnumber recreational users on most Melbourne bicycle trails.

Ms Moran is one of those commuters. She rides to work about 8am most mornings ("unless it's pouring"), putting her in the cyclist rush hour.

"It's pretty busy on the Yarra Trail at that time of morning," said Ms Moran, who lives in Clifton Hill and works at Southbank.

Morning rush hour for cyclists begins about 7.30, peaks at 8am, then drops off sharply about 8.30am, according to the VicRoads research.

The afternoon peak is much more spread out, starting about 4 o'clock and dying off at 7pm.

And more people cycle on Monday than any other day, with a marked drop in the number of cyclists on Fridays.

VicRoads says this sort of research has not been done before, in Melbourne or elsewhere.

"As far as I am aware, this type of installation is the first of its type in the world," said VicRoads bicycle programs manager Tony Barton. Other Australian states were now looking at installing the bicycle monitoring system, he said.

Little data has been available on the number of cyclists riding to work, aside from census figures, which are only updated every five years.

And the census data also doesn't take into account one key variable: miserable weather. "The census data is only collected in early August, when cycling numbers are at their lowest," Mr Barton said.

The counters, which have been buried just below the surface of the bike paths, work the same way as detectors installed at traffic lights: metal loops send up an electric field that is broken by the passage of a bicycle, recording a bike passing.

Lobby group Bicycle Victoria is supporting the bike counters, which will provide plenty of ammunition to argue for further bike path funding around Melbourne.

"We have always known that there are all these bike riders out there, but it's great to finally have a way of proving it," said Bicycle Victoria's general manager, Harry Barber.

"This research really knocks on the head any lingering idea that bicycles are for Saturday outings."

In its submission to the State Government's coming transport and livability statement, to be released after the Commonwealth Games, Bicycle Victoria has asked for annual funding of bike paths across Victoria to be increased from its current level of \$5 million a year to \$13 million.

[Melbourne Age, 12 March 2006]



Matters of Scale

Bicycles per 1,000 people:

United States (mid-1990s) - 385

Germany - 588

Netherlands - 1,000

Percent of urban travel accounted for by cycling:

United States (1995) - 1%

Germany - 12 %

Netherlands - 28%

Percent of adults that are obese:

United States (2003) - 30.6%

Germany - 12.9%

Netherlands - 10.0%

[*World Watch* Magazine, March/April 2006]

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Weblinks

- The Auckland regional cycle maps and Cycle Guide are online at www.maxx.co.nz.
- Overseas Cycle Tourism data – a summary of data on overseas visitor cycling behaviour in NZ, during 1997-2005. It includes both on- and off-road cycling, and includes both cycle tourism and cycling at specific destinations. www.bikenz.org.nz – go to Advocacy Toolkit panel on the left, and scroll down to Tourism.
- Extracts from recent news items on road user charges and carbon taxes suggest possible changes in the way roads are funded and, consequently, how cycling (among other things) might be affected. These papers, and links to the papers themselves, on www.bikenz.org.nz – click on Advocacy Toolbox on the left). This will be beneficial to those putting together submissions on transport-related matters, or applying for funding or in-kind support from central/local government agencies, community trusts or other organizations.
- Bicycle Commuting for Fun and Profit: Roadbikerider.com has an e-book on bike commuting, downloadable for US\$12.95. Read excerpts from it at: http://www.roadbikerider.com/bc_excerpt.htm
- Census at School: an online survey for year 5 - 10 students, includes figures on 'how kids travel to school': <http://www.censusatschool.org.nz/2005/summary-tables/>

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>

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