

# BIKES IN SCHOOLS

In 1990, New Zealand primary school children were biking an average of 28 minutes per week. Today it is less than 5 minutes per week - with many children not getting to ride a bike at all<sup>1</sup>.



Students from Mahora Primary School doing some laps

## Bikes in Schools

The Bike On New Zealand Charitable Trust believes the best way to reverse this is by helping schools implement the Bikes in Schools package of bikes, helmets, tracks, bike storage and cycle skills training, all within the school. They

aim to help more New Zealanders to experience the many joys and benefits of riding a bike.

With bikes and bike tracks now in over 35 New Zealand schools, Bikes in Schools has so far helped over 8,000 students get to ride a bike on a regular and equal basis at school. Regular riding of a bike goes from approximately 30% to 100% of the pupils - this impact is both immediate and measurable.

*I believe the reason Bikes in Schools is effective in delivering health and fitness outcomes is simply because every kid wants to ride a bike. At all the schools we have worked with we have yet to find a child who doesn't want to ride a bike. We have found that lots of children don't have access, don't have the opportunity, or don't have the skills or confidence to ride a bike. But never a child who doesn't want to ride a bike.*

**Feedback from schools, parents and pupils continually state that it:**

- ☞ raises confidence and self-esteem through a fun activity
- ☞ delivers health and wellbeing outcomes
- ☞ provides an opportunity to self-manage risks within a safe environment
- ☞ instils the habit of using an environmentally-friendly form of transportation
- ☞ results in children and extended family biking more often
- ☞ increases knowledge, skills and confidence to ride safely when riding outside the school area.

### Why is Bikes in Schools successful?

- ☞ It generates positive impacts for all students.
- ☞ All students want to ride bikes.
- ☞ A complete package is available on-site at the school.
- ☞ It provides high level of regular biking/physical activity to an entire school.
- ☞ A low level of school organisational input required.
- ☞ There is an upfront average investment of only approximately \$150 per student.

Bikes in Schools is a national initiative and open to all schools. Funding for schools has come from a diverse range of funders such as DHB's, PHO's, local government, community groups/trusts, businesses and individuals. The Ministry of Education even permit schools to use their property budget towards the cost of building tracks. To be involved, schools need to secure funding, but Bikes in Schools are here to provide advice and assist with applications/submissions.

Local health, community and recreation professionals also play a role in Bikes in Schools - promoting the initiative to schools, supporting schools with funding applications, implementation and linking Bikes in Schools in with other initiatives within schools such as Health Promoting Schools. Bikes in Schools can also be complemented by a Travelwise Safe School Travel Plan (in Auckland) or other local government school road safety or cycle skills training programmes.



Students at Takapau School zooming around their new bike track

For more information please contact  
**Paul McArdle**, The Bike On NZ Charitable Trust,  
[info@bikeon.org.nz](mailto:info@bikeon.org.nz)  
[www.bikeon.org.nz](http://www.bikeon.org.nz)

#### Reference:

1. NZ Transport Agency/ Ministry of Transport. NZ Cycling Safety Summit Briefing Notes 15 April 2014. Retrieved from: [www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/cycling-safety-panel/docs/cycling-safety-summit-briefing-notes-apr-2014.pdf](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/consultation/cycling-safety-panel/docs/cycling-safety-summit-briefing-notes-apr-2014.pdf)