

Cycling – the Quiet Revolution in Healthier Transport

sustainable
BUSINESS NETWORK
Reshaping Profit

Increasing the popularity of cycling at work will bring increased health benefits for our people and our communities.

The Sustainable Business Network (SBN) has a membership of more than 500 businesses nationwide. It is leading the BikeNow! project to get more people using bicycles for business, and for commuting. BikeNow! is a partnership between SBN, the New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), AECOM and Fulton Hogan.

In 2014, the government announced \$100 million additional funding for urban cycleways. We are seeing the results in towns and cities all over the country, under the direction of NZTA.

New cycleways are proving popular. Recent studies in Auckland showed a steady increase in cycling. They also show an increase in use of bicycles outside of recreation and fitness. Phil Jones, project lead for BikeNow!, says this is a key focus of the initiative.



"It's all about encouraging workplaces and businesses to do more to encourage cycling by their staff and visitors. It's healthier, cheaper, and often quicker!"

The physical and psychological benefits of cycling are well documented. In New Zealand, physical inactivity contributes to around eight percent of all deaths. It is the second leading risk factor of disability adjusted life years. One in three adults and one in five children in New Zealand is overweight. The Ministry of Health reports that only about half of New Zealand adults are regarded as sufficiently active for health benefits.

Meanwhile, a study in Copenhagen has found those commuting by bicycle for three hours a week had 28 percent less chance of death by all causes. A ground-breaking 2016 study of New Zealand's six largest cities has drawn links between high rates of cycling and walking, and their residents' health. The researchers

at NZ Centre for Sustainable Cities found that cities with higher levels of cycling and walking tended to have better overall population health, with lower incidences of conditions such as high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes.

Cycling makes our streets safer. It reduces air pollution, traffic congestion and helps tackle greenhouse gas emissions.

BikeNow! recently surveyed SBN members. It found that half of the companies that responded understand the link between cycling and the health and wellbeing of their staff, and are acting accordingly. They're providing better facilities for cyclists, and increasingly this means providing 'fleet' bikes for staff to use during the day. The e-bikes revolution is demonstrated with many of these fleet bikes being e-bikes. With the rollout of the safe cycleways network, businesses seem to recognise the potential of bikes for short-distance business travel.

"Businesses are increasingly 'getting it' – the link between cycling and their staff's wellbeing. From major city councils to smaller businesses in provincial centres, we're hearing of more and more organisations encouraging cycling for transport. The quiet revolution is here!" says Phil.

The next steps for the BikeNow! project is helping promote the Aotearoa Bike Challenge, the free and friendly workplace cycling competition in February 2017 – you can sign-up today at www.aotearoa.bike. And we're continuing to showcase great examples of workplace cycling, and assisting businesses through the co-development, with NZTA and other stakeholders, of a workplace cycling guide.



If you would like to know more about BikeNow! or if you know of some great examples of 'businesses backing bikes' please get in touch with:

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