

Bike to the future

Did you ride a bike when you were a kid? Do you remember the freedom and fun?



I remember learning to ride a bike at my grandmother's house in Whanganui. I set myself the goal of riding around the house 50 times. I got a growling for making a rut in the lawn, but it was worth it.

Sadly, many New Zealand children miss out on biking. They lose the opportunity to develop fitness, independence, risk management and social skills. They miss out on the fun of exploring their neighbourhood under their own steam.

Cycling Action Network (CAN) says getting kids biking to school is a top priority. How will we achieve this?

Invest in cycling: CAN advocates to the government and councils to fund and build quality cycleways. We talk about the 3 Cs - cycleways need to be convenient, connected and comfortable to ride.

The government and councils are investing \$350 million in 50 cycling projects in 15 cities, with the aim of increasing the number of bike trips by 10 million by 2019. You can expect to see a lot more green paint on the road – or bright pink in the case of Auckland's iconic light path.

Adopt Vision Zero: CAN has called for a fresh approach to road safety. We know that one of the top barriers to cycling is traffic danger. With road deaths increasing again after many years of progress, we say it's time for Vision Zero. This aims to achieve a transport system with no fatalities or serious injuries. This builds on the current Safe System approach, and puts safety at the heart of transport planning. Vision Zero means safer speeds such as 30 km/h in residential streets.

Bikes in Schools: Getting kids biking at school is also part of the solution. Paul McArdle, founder of the Bikes in Schools project, says he has yet to meet a kid who doesn't want to ride a bike. Bikes in Schools has got more than 20,000 kids cycling regularly, by building bike tracks in school grounds, and providing bikes, helmets and instruction.

Expand bike skills instruction: Pedal Ready works in schools and the community, showing kids and adults what they need to know to make more trips by bike.

With two-thirds of urban trips less than 6km, there's massive potential to grow cycling. As we build more cycleways and improve access to bike skills, New Zealand will be a place where we bike to the future.

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