

11. "CYCLE SAFE" – ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Community Boards on the City Councils Road Safety Education programme, Cycle Safe.

BACKGROUND

The Cycle Strategy for Christchurch City sets a target for cycle competency training. This target is: 'to provide adequate resources so that the proportion of students who have the opportunity to use the Cycle Safe Christchurch programme by Year 7 (F1) is 100% per annum by 2001, up from 26% in 1998'.

The Christchurch City Council initially provided funding for a cycle competency course in the 1996/7 financial year. This budget was used to research and develop a Cycle Safe programme and to appoint a coordinator to deliver the programme to schools in the City. The coordinators (job sharing 1 full time position) were appointed in 1997 and the 'Cycle Safe' programme was officially launched at the Council on 24 November 1997, with the first visit to schools taking place at the start of the school year in 1998.

Initially the programme was funded for 1 year, with the possibility of an extension should the programme achieve the outcome expected by the Council, which was to deliver the programme to at least twenty schools in the City during 1998. This was achieved. In the 1999/2000 financial year the Council boosted funding for the programme to \$120,000. This additional funding has meant that a second Cycle Safe team could be established and as of the 17 November 1999 four new assistants were appointed to Cycle Safe to form the second team, bringing the total number of staff delivering the programme to 9.

Ministry of Education figures state that there are approximately 2,627 Y6 pupils (10 – 11 year olds) at Christchurch schools. This is Cycle Safes target group. In 1998, 22 schools and 903 children participated in and benefited from the Council's Cycle Safe programme and in 1999 those figures had risen to 28 schools and 1052 children. The aim for 2000 was to deliver the programme to 2000 children approximately ¾ of all Year 6 children. This target was well and truly exceeded with 2,882 (some Year 5 and Year 7 pupils) taking part in the programme. The pass rate was 93%. The inclusion of Year 5 and Year 7 pupils may happen at smaller schools where they have composite classes. The Year 5 pupils are invited to take part in the programme on the understanding that a pass cannot be achieved because of age.

The programme has gone from strength to strength, providing Christchurch children the opportunity to take part in a quality road safety programme. Evaluations received from the schools, parents/caregivers and children after every Cycle Safe programme delivered, support our belief that the programme is a valuable and worthwhile resource for children in the City.

In addition, the schools advocate, has contracted, through funding made available by the Community Trust, Dr Carolyn Coggan from Auckland University's Injury Prevention Unit an independent evaluation of the Cycle Safe programme. This evaluation is due to be completed by July 2001.

The Councils Cycle Safe programme has attracted a lot of interest. Particularly from other local authorities in New Zealand who also wish to support those children already cycling to and from schools in their communities. In addition the Land Transport Safety Authority (LTSA) has shown considerable interest in the programme in particular the format and the way it is delivered.

The advantage that Christchurch has is that the Cycle Safe programme does not work in isolation. The programme is part of an overall strategy by the Council to support children and families generally within the community but with a particular emphasis on the roading environment.

The Councils Road Safety for Schools steering group (RSFS) chaired by Councillor Ron Wright and Councillor Sally Thompson oversees all safety initiatives for school children in the City. The RSFS Steering Group is made up of officers from within the City Streets Unit and Parking Unit along with the road safety co-ordinator for Christchurch. Staff from the LTSA and the Police complete the steering group. In particular the RSFS supports the role of the schools advocate, with the technical expertise and support of the area engineers, to ensure that the road safety concerns of the school communities are acknowledged and addressed.

The RSFS aim is to ensure that the roading environment around schools is improved, through engineering solutions and/or the reduction in speeds so that the Cycle Safe programme and other initiatives can be delivered to their full potential.

The work of the road safety co-ordinator, the LTSA and the Police to educate motorists of their responsibilities through various road safety campaigns and initiatives is invaluable. Along with the work of the Road Safety for Schools Steering Group and the Cycle Safe programme the Council provide the most vulnerable members of our community the support they need to be safer within the roading environment.

HOW DOES CYCLE SAFE WORK?

The Council is the major funding provider of the programme although the programme has attracted a small number of other sponsors. This funding, \$120,000 for the 1999/2000 financial year allows the Council to deliver a 'free to school and pupil' road safety programme. It also covers salaries, uniforms and the leasing of two vehicles and purpose built trailers and purchase of various other road safety equipment. Other sponsors are HRC Helmet Research Company, Pennys Sports Cycles, Clarity Press, MagnumMac, NZ Road Safety Trust, Telecom and until recently Caltex. The teams are fully resourced and able to go to a school and deliver an effective and comprehensive road safety programme.

When a school makes an initial enquiry they are sent an information package that outlines what the programme is, how it works and how much time the school will need to commit to the programme. The 'Cycle Safe' programme consists of five modules and requires pupils to be available four consecutive mornings or afternoons to complete them. Teacher and parent help is a necessary part of the programme especially when it comes to module 5, the on-road test. The school, parents/caregivers are required to sign a permission slip before their children are allowed to take part in the programme. The five modules are:

1. Cycle maintenance, clothing and bike check
2. Riding skills
3. Road Rules and simulations
4. Practical Traffic skills
5. Practical Road Test

The Cycle Safe programme continues to achieve the outcomes required of it. The success of the programme is due to the financial support that the Council has committed to it and to the competency and commitment of the coordinators and their team. Because of the financial support, the programme can be delivered free, thereby benefiting many schools and their pupils who otherwise would not be able to participate. The programme has established itself within the community as a valuable, effective and sought after road safety programme that is working hard to achieve the target set for it by the Councils Cycle Strategy.

AN INVITATION

The schools advocate and the cycle safe co-ordinators would like to issue an invitation to all Community Board members to view the Cycle Safe programme.

Please check the schedule below to see when a Cycle Safe team will be at a school in your board area, and then please contact the schools advocate, Lee Kelly, on direct dial 371 1355 to arrange a visit. We look forward to seeing you.

Cycle Safe dates for the remainder of Term 1 and for all of Term 2. Finalised term 3 and 4 dates will be available shortly.

Riccarton/Wigram Community Board

St Theresa's Catholic School
18/5 – 28/5

Avonhead School
24/4 and 26/4 – 9/5

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairman's Recommendation: That the information be received.