

11. NEW ZEALAND CYCLING CONFERENCE 2001

Officer responsible
City Streets Manager

Author
Alix Newman; Transport Planning - Cycling , DDI 371-1472

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of the outcomes of the New Zealand Cycling Conference held in Christchurch in September 2001

CYCLING CONFERENCE CONDUCT

The NZ Cycling Conference was held at the Chateau on the Park on 21 and 22 September. It was attended by approximately 200 people. The attendees came from all over New Zealand, and from Australia (two people from Perth). The Keynote speaker was Karel de Roy from Utrecht, and other invited speakers included Colin Graham, manager of the Travel Smart programme in Perth, Australia and Graham Fraine, a transport psychologist from Queensland University.

The opening session, including an address by Hon. Judith Tizard (Assoc. Min of Transport), and the keynote speech, set an inspiring tone for the conference. The current New Zealand political picture was described and outlined a number of challenges on which to move forward, while the keynote speaker identified how some of these challenges had been addressed overseas and the benefits and costs of aiming for more of the population to cycle.

The programme also included a political panel, in which MPs of the five main political parties outlined their party's (and sometimes personal) stance on cycling. This proved to be similarly challenging, with a reasonable level of disagreement between the political realities of improving cycling, and the audience enthusiasm to see things move.

The remainder of the two days saw presentations covering a very broad range of topics, including cycle touring routes, cycle competence training, infrastructure development, community collaboration processes, effective advocacy and health.

The organising team of this conference made particular effort to include policy developers and managers from within government departments. Subsequently, the conference was informed on the status of the 2010 Road Safety Strategy, Transfund and Transit attitudes toward cycling, the status of the National Transport Strategy, and the formation and status of road rule changes.

The Australian Bicycle Promotion fund awarded two \$500 prizes for the most interesting, and the most inspiring presentations. The most interesting presentation prize was awarded to Colin Graham for his explanation of the Perth Travel Smart programme. The most inspiring prize went to Pippa Pettigrew, of Villa Maria college, for her discussion on getting the youth of today onto cycling.

CONFERENCE FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall feedback from the delegates was extremely positive. The location was superb, particularly in relation to Christchurch's cycle facilities. The content appeared to have been pitched at just the right level, offering a sophisticated mix of political, practical and process. The only complaint received on the feedback forms was one relating to running out of hot water during one of the tea breaks.

The Railway Cycleway was opened by the Mayor midday on the second day. The pathway received major accolades from the delegates from all over the country, and may be considered as a model for future similar development throughout the country.

The key issues raised in the progress of the conference were:

- New Zealand helmet wearing legislation is ready for review - both for immediate and long term effectiveness and impacts on cycling.
- Funding of cycle infrastructure is still an issue requiring further debate at a national level.
- The health benefits of cycling are gaining greater prominence internationally, and there is room in many New Zealand policies, both transport and non-transport related, to take cognisance of that.
- Cycle infrastructure standards are in need of centralised co-ordination, research and national acceptance.

- Cycle touring has an increasing role to play in NZ tourism, and state highways are the backbone of touring. Transit NZ has an important role to play in moving forward with this.

In general, the conference was considered as a very positive contribution to cycling in New Zealand, was commended for being extremely well organised, and provided an excellent forum for networking and knowledge sharing.

Christchurch too, was well praised for the extent of its infrastructure, promotion and safety programmes, and the support the Council gives to cycling. Essentially the conference showed Christchurch, and its Council, in a very positive light.

CONFERENCE POSTSCRIPT

Since the NZ Cycling Conference, two national level groups have been established. Transit NZ are hosting the first meeting of a national cycle facilities working party, and Transfund NZ are leading a national cycle policy working group. The Council has a representative on the Transit NZ group, while membership of the latter is yet to be determined. It is hoped that Christchurch City Council will have a representative on both.

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received and the Committee express its thanks to the staff and organisers of the conference and congratulate them on its success.