

Cycleways

by Sarah Connor



Riding a bike is fun! When you know how to ride safely, you can bike downhill without pedalling or cycle around the block to see a friend.

Many towns and cities in Aotearoa New Zealand have cycleways to make cycling safer. A cycleway is a lane for people riding bikes. Some cycleways are part of the road. Others are separated from the road by poles or plants. Cycleways are often painted a different colour so they're easy to see. There are signs so cyclists, drivers, and **pedestrians** know where they can go.

Getting around

Some people like to drive places because it's usually faster, and it's easier when it is raining or windy. Others bike because it's quicker when there's a lot of traffic. Biking or walking are great ways to get to school if you live nearby. You don't have to wait for a bus, and there are no traffic jams. They're both a good way to get exercise.

Bikes are cheap to run and fix, and walking is free. Neither use petrol. As our climate changes, there needs to be fewer cars polluting the air. It's nicer for everyone and better for our environment.



Feeling safe

As our towns and cities grow, we have to make sure there's enough space for everyone to share the streets safely. It will help if more people bike, walk, or take the bus.

But many people don't feel safe riding their bikes beside cars, trucks, and buses. In Wellington, a **survey** found that 75 percent of people would consider biking if cycle lanes were separate from traffic. We can't always widen our roads, but we can make sure bikes and cars share them safely.



Having a choice

Cycleways are one way to keep cyclists safe, but everyone needs a choice about how they get around.

Some people don't own a bike or don't have the money to buy one. Many people drive because there's no public transport near their home or work. Others drive as part of their job.

Disabled people and those who can't walk very far need to park their cars outside their **destination**. If they're visiting a hospital, most people want to park nearby. When cycleways are built, car parks are often taken away.

Everyone has different points of view about cycleways. Some people want more cycleways in their town or city, and others don't. Some people think cycleways need to be designed differently.

Points of view

Charlie

Charlie bikes and scoots to school along the cycleway in his neighbourhood.

Since a cycleway was built near his home, Charlie has seen more kids and families biking. “I feel safer when I bike. It’s easier for drivers to see me on the cycleway.”

A Bikes in Schools programme runs at Charlie’s school. This programme encourages kids to learn how to ride a bike safely and how to look after it. When they’re ready to ride, they use the cycleways. This helps them to become **confident**.

Charlie’s school takes part in Movin’March. Children are encouraged to walk, cycle, skate, or scoot to school every day in March. Since then, Charlie has biked and scooted more often.

“I feel safer knowing that I won’t get whacked by a car door opening when I ride on a cycleway.”



Fran

“Before councils build cycleways, they should think about everyone’s needs – cyclists, drivers, pedestrians, and businesses.”

Fran owns a shop near a cycleway. In the future, the cycleway will run past her shop.



Many of my customers live nearby – some walk or bike to the shop and others drive. When the cycleway is made longer, the car parks outside my shop will be taken away. People won’t be able to park outside. They will have to park further away and walk.

It’s good for our environment when more people ride bikes and fewer people drive. However, cycleways are not always safe. My son loves biking to school, but our local cycleway passes through a dangerous **intersection**. He has found a safer way to bike that’s not on the cycleway.

Instead of more bike lanes, I would like the council to widen the footpaths. Half of the footpath could be painted green for cyclists to use. Pedestrians could use the other half.

Baxter

Baxter uses his car for his job, which takes him all over New Zealand.

Baxter spends a lot of time driving – to get to work, to pick up work equipment, or to go home on the weekends. When he's working, he's often in a hurry.

Baxter thinks cycleways are important because it's better for the environment to have fewer cars on the road. But sometimes they make his trips longer. A new cycleway was built near his work, and there is now only one lane for cars instead of two. At rush hour, he gets stuck in long lines of traffic, and it takes more time to get through the intersection.

“Cycleways are unfair because there are fewer bikes than cars and the cycle lanes are often empty.”



“I don't feel safe biking beside fast cars and buses. Cycleways make biking more fun.” – Rita

Jude, Nick, and Rita

Jude, Nick, and Rita all ride bikes. Sometimes they bike as a family. Sometimes Rita is a passenger on her mum's bike.

When Nick was growing up, there were fewer cars on the road, and he could cycle around safely. But now, he doesn't think it's safe for kids to ride on many roads unless there are bike lanes.

Jude says that separate lanes for bikes allow children to bike safely to school. She likes cycling because “it's more fun and friendly than driving around in a metal box”.

When she's driving, Jude finds that cycleways make it easier for drivers too. It can be hard to share the road with cyclists because bikes and cars go at different speeds. Sometimes it's difficult to guess where a cyclist is going to go next. Cycleways make it easier for everyone to get around. It's clear where everyone can and can't go.



“Some cycleways don’t feel safe.”

Amy

Amy likes walking to work, but she often takes the bus or drives because it’s quicker.

Amy is pleased that more cycleways are being built as she feels nervous driving beside cyclists. She believes that cycleways should be separate from the road. “Some cycleways are easy to see. There are lines painted on the road and barriers to keep cyclists and cars apart.”

Amy thinks that some bike lanes are dangerous. “Sometimes, I have to drive across a cycleway when I’m turning left. It doesn’t feel safe for me or the cyclists.”

Liz

Liz is a cyclist who is disabled. She takes part in cycling events and is working towards her goal to compete in the Paralympic Games in 2024.

Liz has a disease called **multiple sclerosis (MS)**. Because of this, she can’t move or balance as easily as other people. It’s hard for her to change gears and squeeze the brakes on her bike.

Roads without cycleways are dangerous for Liz. Her cycling shoes clip onto her pedals. If she stops at a traffic light, it can be hard for her to clip her shoes in and out of the pedals. She could fall off her bike and into the moving traffic. Cycleways allow Liz to bike safely.



“Roads without cycleways are an obstacle for me.”

What do you think?

Finding ways to share our streets is a big job. We need to think about many things, including taking care of the environment. When changes are made in a town or city, everyone has an opinion or point of view. The best decision for some people might not be the best decision for others.

Now you know more about cycleways and some different views about them, what do you think? What do your friends and family think? Talking and listening to other people's points of view about cycleways might help you decide.

Glossary

confident: feeling certain or sure about something

destination: the place someone is going to

disabled: a person who has a condition that limits their movement, senses, or activities

intersection: the place where two or more roads meet

multiple sclerosis: a disease that makes it difficult for the brain to communicate with the body

pedestrian: a person who is walking, usually on the footpath

survey: questions that ask people what they think about a topic



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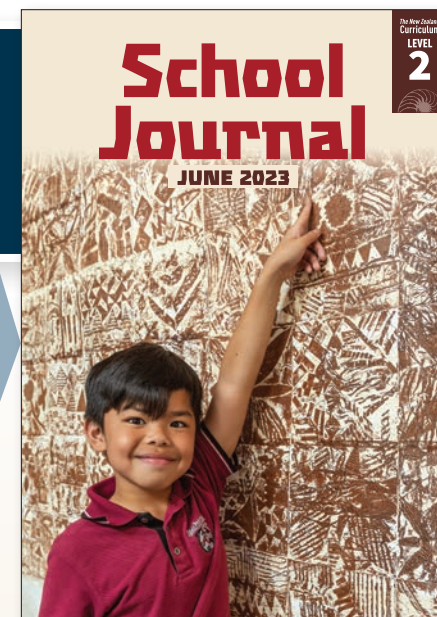
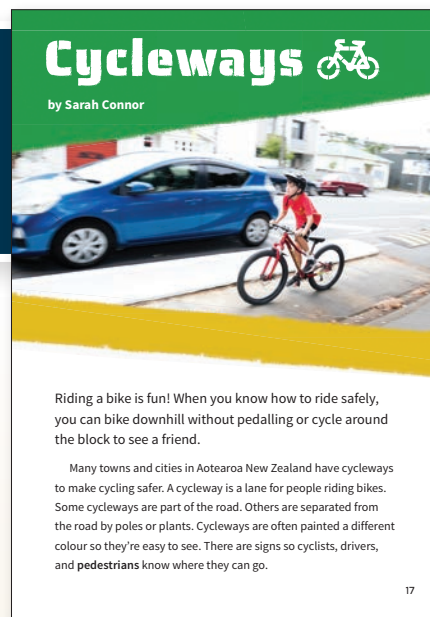
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