**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Do cyclists make better drivers?**

Harbour Sport is calling for comprehensive cycle training for all young people prior to them attaining their driving licences.

The recommendation comes following a detailed research project into whether teen cyclists make better drivers, and whether any skills they acquire while learning to ride are transferable to behind the wheel. Harbour Sport spent 10 months on the project surveying and interviewing driving instructors and young people, and then compiling a final report.

“The reason we wanted to look into this issue was because we felt that there was lack of empirical evidence to confirm whether cyclists actually do make better drivers,” said Harbour Sport’s Active Communities Manager Jay Martin.

“We spoke to several stakeholders in the cycling and transport sector, who were all interested in what the findings might be,” she said.

In all, 44 driving instructors across New Zealand and 225 young people (aged 15-24) gave their thoughts for the project. Key statistics include:

* Cycling was the second most recommended activity for preparing teens to drive by driving instructors.
* 68% of driving instructors believed cycling is good preparation for driving.
* 88% of driving instructors believe when driving, young people who cycle demonstrate a better understanding of the road environment and 77% demonstrate a heightened awareness of other road users.

“We gathered some great information across the surveys,” said report author Shan Bendall.

“One statistic that did surprise me however was that just 40% of young people believed cycling gave them a better understanding of the road rules.

“I feel if young people are cycling on the road then they will need to know these rules,” she said.

The statistic has helped shape the report’s key recommendations, which include:

* That structured cycle training for all young people is provided prior to them attaining their driver’s licences.
* That any cycle training includes the teaching of road rules and familiarisation of the road environment.
* Encourage more on-road cycling, to improve cyclists’ awareness and understanding of the road rules, environment, road users and other cyclists.

Mrs Martin believes that if such recommendations are followed through by the relevant authorities, there could be numerous benefits in society, including the lowering of the number of motor vehicle accidents involving young people.

“Ministry of Transport figures show drivers aged 15-24 were involved in 73 fatal crashes, 549 serious injury crashes and 2626 minor injury crashes throughout New Zealand in 2012 with a total social cost of $755 million.

“If we can better educate young people on the road rules and road environment when we are teaching them how to ride a bike, then we are likely to make them better drivers,” she said.

***For the full report “Does cycling make young people better drivers?”*** [***click here***](http://www.harboursport.co.nz/upload/usermedia/files/45173/do%20cyclists%20make%20better%20drivers.pdf)***.***

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