



Facts about Cycling in New Zealand

Cycling is popular, safe, responsible and contributes to the community. Having said this, there are a number of myths and misperceptions of cycling. The data below are sourced from Ministry of Transport (MoT), Statistics NZ, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), SPARC, Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) and Injury Prevention Research Unit (IPRU).

How many cyclists are there in NZ?

There are about 1.27 million cyclists in NZ - about 31% of the population (by comparison, there are about 3 million people with car licences). There are about 750,000 regular cyclists (cycling at least once a month) in NZ - about 18% of the population. About 144,000 or 3.5% cycle nearly every day. About 38,000 or 1% ride to work (about 2.5% of commuters) according to the 2006 Census.

How quickly is cycling growing?

Cycling is growing very rapidly, with over a million cycles imported to NZ since 2001 - about 20% growth over the five years from 2001 to 2006 (or about 4% a year). Regular cyclist numbers are also growing, though as a proportion of the population they are steady at about 19% of New Zealanders. Note that cycle commuter (people riding to work) numbers are falling slowly - now about 1% of the population.

How many people do different types of cycling?

Most adult cyclists do recreational (on-road) cycling, more so than any other type of cycling. About 15% of adults are recreational (on-road) cyclists, about 6% are off-road cyclists, about 1% commute (go to work) by cycle, and about 1% cycle competitively. About 6% of adult cyclists commute to work.

What types of people cycle?

In fact, all types of people cycle and the differences between different groups are only relative. By raw numbers the biggest groups of cyclists are males, and people aged 15 - 24 (only by a narrow margin), Aucklanders and people from Christchurch. By proportions cycling is strongest among males, the young, and people in the South Island.

Where is cycling strongest and weakest?

By raw numbers, more people cycle in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington than elsewhere. By proportions it is likely (estimates are involved) more people cycle in Canterbury, Westland, Tasman, Marlborough, Nelson and Wellington than elsewhere. Cycling is proportionally weakest in Northland and South Auckland. The South Island is proportionally stronger in cycling overall, including recreational, off-road and commuting.

How safe and responsible is cycling?

Cycling is relatively safe and responsible. Overall, about 1 in 1,000 cyclists are in on-road injury crashes every year, compared with about 3 in 1,000 car drivers - the cost of car crashes is among the top injury-related health costs in NZ.

Since 2000 about 750 cyclists were injured and 10 killed on average on the road every year, only 5% of the total - this figure is low given the numbers of cyclists on the roads. Note many cycle injuries are not reported in crash statistics, and hospital and other injury data suggest another 1,000 are injured in unreported and off-road crashes per year. This means cyclist crash injury numbers and rates are still low relative to car drivers.

But note that cyclists are more often seriously injured than car users - school-aged cyclists are at highest risk, while regular cyclists appear to have more injury crashes per hour travelled than car users. A key reason for this is that cyclists are inevitably worse off than car occupants in a crash, and frequent cyclists, such as children riding to school, are among the most vulnerable.

But only 40% of on-road cycling crashes are caused directly by the cyclist - this is the lowest rate of any mode. Cyclist traffic offences total less than 1% of all traffic offences per year - a negligible figure.

Who pays for on-road cycling?

Urban roads are partly paid for by ratepayers (through Local Authority rates allocated to roading), and partly by car owners (such as through petrol taxes). Most adult cyclists are also car owners and so pay for their own road use, either as a rate payer or as a motorist.

Note local authority and national budgets for cycling are typically a few percent of the total roading and transport budget. Under New Zealand's sustainable transport strategy such budgets are set to increase, though the actual proportions will still remain very small.

What Councils are doing the most about cycling?

Of the 107 regional, district and local authorities assessed in 2006, about half had a specific cycling strategy or planning for cycling in their transport plan. Most regional and city councils have a cycle strategy in place, but only a third of district councils do. Auckland is the only area where all local authorities have a cycle strategy.

Note that local authorities appear to be encouraging cycling in areas that are weaker, though this may not be deliberate. Areas where cycling is relatively strong should not be neglected.

What detailed data are there?

The data below are the best estimates of cycling in NZ, though some estimates are required where these datasets do not match (as indicated in tables). There are three points to note:

- The categories recreational (road) and off-road are mutually exclusive, while commuting and competitive cycling are not. The figures for recreational (road) and off-road cycling are therefore summed as a conservative estimate of total cycling.
- The figure for youth cycle commuting is an estimate only, pending more specific data.
- Cycling has increased by a significant margin since 2001. For example, cycle import figures suggest a 45% increase in cycle numbers since 2001.

Table 1

The chart below is indicative only and is developed by combining import and local manufacturing (which is minimal) data to estimate the total number of new cycles in a given period. The chart assumes each cycle lasts 10 years, and about 85% of cycles are ridden in a given period (some will be sitting in shops, others in garages!), and about half are sold on the second-hand market. The data is then cross-referenced against any other sources, such as the data in the tables that follow, as well as ad hoc surveys and industry knowledge.

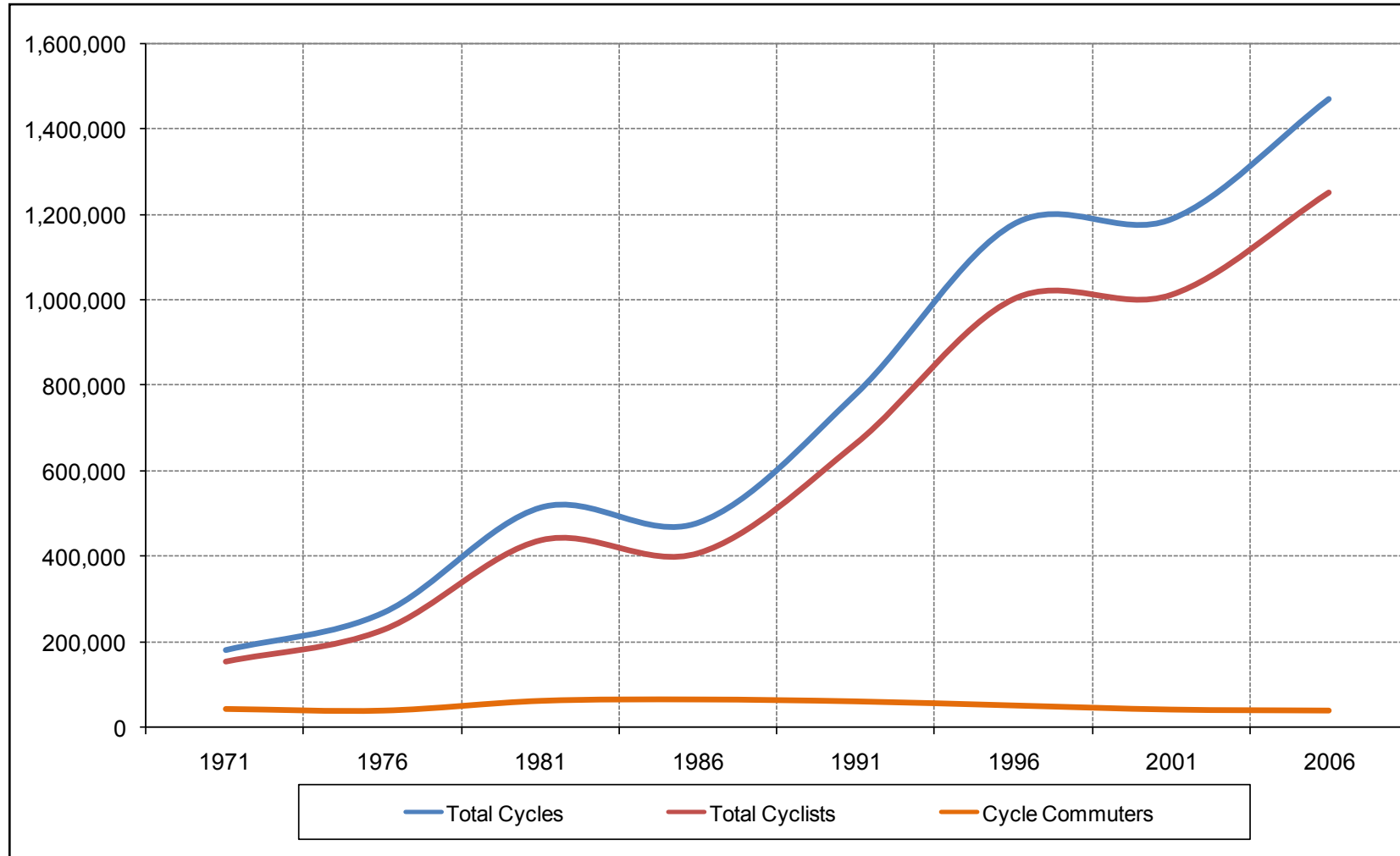


Table 2

Numbers of People Cycling by Frequency and Age (Ministry of Transport Household Travel Survey 2003 - 2006)

	Total Cyclists	Percent Cycling	Days per month cycled					Not in last	Not in last	Total
	in last year	in Age Group	Total Cycled this month	20+ days this month	10-19 days this month	5-9 days this month	1-4 days this month	month	year	Population
0-4	27,726	10%	24,285	3,719	2,608	7,035	10,923	3,441	252,193	279,918
5-9	171,781	60%	149,338	37,136	34,894	37,687	39,621	22,443	112,751	284,533
10-14	217,366	71%	163,820	42,193	28,175	36,202	57,250	53,546	87,769	305,136
15-24	227,381	39%	116,121	15,080	16,361	25,069	59,611	111,260	353,409	580,790
25-34	178,479	33%	86,322	10,776	11,761	15,753	48,032	92,157	360,924	539,403
35-44	210,774	34%	98,527	13,085	13,223	17,933	54,286	112,247	409,214	619,988
45-54	135,742	26%	66,264	11,830	5,558	8,105	40,772	69,478	391,763	527,505
55+	104,871	12%	42,777	9,427	6,584	6,064	20,702	62,094	774,187	879,057
Total	1,274,121	-	747,456	143,247	119,164	153,847	331,198	526,665	2,742,211	4,016,331
Percent of Population	32%	-	19%	4%	3%	4%	8%	13%	68%	100%

Table 3

Adult Men and Women Cycling (SPARC 200 1 and Census 2006)

	Summary			Total Regular Cycling	Numbers				Total Regular Cycling	Percent				
	% Commuting/ Total Population	% Cycling/ Total Population	% Commuting/ Cycling		Commuting	Competitive	Recreational	Off-Road		Commuting	Competitive	Recreational	Off-Road	
Adults 20+	1%	22%	6%	616,941	38,092	31,319	431,172	185,769	22%	1%	1%	15%	6%	2,860,179
Men	2%	27%	8%	370,630	29,331	21,770	233,715	136,916	27%	2%	2%	17%	10%	1,369,155
Women	1%	16%	4%	245,137	8,761	9,543	196,975	48,163	16%	1%	1%	13%	3%	1,491,102
% Men				60%	77%	70%	54%	74%						

Table 4

Cycling by Age Groups (SPARC 200 1 and Census 2006)

	Summary			Total Regular Cycling	Numbers				Total Regular Cycling	Percent				
	% Commuting/ Total Population	% Cycling/ Total Population	% Commuting/ Cycling		Commuting	Competitive	Recreational	Off-Road		Commuting	Competitive	Recreational	Off-Road	
20 - 24 yrs	4%	37%	10%	99,178	10,137	4,390	62,325	36,853	37%	4%	2%	23%	14%	270,978
25 - 34 yrs	2%	33%	7%	169,610	11,715	10,899	105,617	63,993	33%	2%	2%	20%	12%	519,003
35 - 49 yrs	2%	23%	6%	212,629	13,803	10,722	163,107	49,523	23%	2%	1%	18%	5%	908,673
50 - 64 yrs	1%	10%	7%	67,391	5,005	1,865	59,400	7,991	10%	1%	0%	9%	1%	665,916

Table 5

Cycling by Region (SPARC 200 1 and Census 2006)

	Summary			Total Regular Cycling	Numbers				Total Regular Cycling	Percent				
	% Commuting/ Total Population	% Cycling/ Total Population	% Commuting/ Cycling		Commuting	Competitive	Recreational	Off-Road		Commuting	Competitive	Recreational	Off-Road	
North Island	1%	26%	3%	822,701	26,058	46,469	589,937	232,764	26%	1%	1%	19%	7%	3,120,303
South Island	2%	26%	6%	265,503	16,561	12,815	174,460	91,043	26%	2%	1%	17%	9%	1,022,316
North Island														
Northland	0%	13%	3%	20,071	540	926	16,057	4,014	13%	0%	1%	10%	3%	154,392
Greater Auckland	0%	18%	2%	232,377	5,013	12,682	168,965	63,412	18%	0%	1%	13%	5%	1,321,074
Auckland	1%	21%	3%	80,977	2,172	5,132	57,406	23,571	21%	1%	1%	15%	6%	380,172
North Harbour/ Waitakere	0%	18%	2%	70,505	1,536	4,136	52,386	18,119	18%	0%	1%	13%	5%	393,882
Counties Manukau	0%	13%	2%	41,886	969	1,649	31,662	10,224	13%	0%	1%	10%	3%	329,814
Waikato	1%	22%	4%	88,267	3,150	6,291	63,890	24,377	22%	1%	2%	16%	6%	393,171
Bay of Plenty*	1%	23%	3%	60,497	2,100	1,189	45,175	15,322	23%	1%	0%	17%	6%	264,180
Gisborne*	1%	23%	5%	11,099	537	219	8,276	2,823		1%	0%	17%	6%	48,681
Hawkes Bay	1%	20%	6%	30,503	1,896	1,973	25,798	4,704	20%	1%	1%	17%	3%	151,755
Taranaki*	1%	22%	4%	22,929	999	995	16,856	6,072	22%	1%	1%	16%	6%	104,697
Wanganui/ Manawatu*	1%	22%	7%	49,427	3,285	2,144	36,337	13,090		1%	1%	16%	6%	225,696
Wellington	1%	25%	3%	114,164	3,861	9,133	67,128	47,035	25%	1%	2%	15%	10%	456,654
South Island														
Tasman*	2%	26%	8%	12,366	966	676	8,888	3,478	26%	2%	1%	18%	7%	48,306
Nelson*	2%	26%	8%	11,615	907	635	8,348	3,267		2%	1%	18%	7%	45,372
Marlborough*	2%	26%	8%	11,822	924	647	8,497	3,325		2%	1%	18%	7%	46,179
West Coast*	1%	28%	4%	9,929	387	272	6,595	3,333	28%	1%	1%	18%	9%	35,844
Canterbury	2%	28%	7%	150,541	11,043	7,581	100,180	50,361		2%	1%	19%	9%	541,515
Otago*	1%	23%	3%	48,370	1,608	2,099	28,854	19,516		1%	1%	14%	9%	209,850
Southland*	1%	22%	3%	20,859	726	905	13,096	7,763	22%	1%	1%	14%	8%	95,247

* Regional breakdowns in Ministry of Transport, Census and SPARC data do not match so these are best estimates

Note that the categories recreational (road) and off-road are mutually exclusive, while commuting and competitive cycling are not. The figures for recreational (road) and off-road cycling are therefore totaled as a conservative estimate of total cycling.

Table 6**Local Authorities with Cycle Strategies or Inclusion in Planning**

Estimated in 2006	Percent with Strategy	Number with Strategy	Total Authorities
New Zealand	49%	52	107
North Island	47%	29	62
South Island	38%	11	29
Regional authorities	77%	10	13
District councils	29%	18	63
City councils	81%	13	16
Northland	25%	1	4
Greater Auckland	100%	8	8
Auckland	100%	2	2
North Harbour/ Waitakere	100%	3	3
Counties Manukau	100%	3	3
Waikato	33%	4	12
Bay of Plenty	50%	4	8
Hawkes Bay/ Eastland	53%	8	15
Taranaki/ Wanganui/ Manawatu	29%	4	14
Wellington	44%	4	9
Tasman	100%	3	3
Canterbury/ Westland	38%	6	16
Otago/ Southland/ Chatham Is.	20%	2	10

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