

Sustain-ability



The humble bicycle: how do I love thee? Let me count the ways....

I was biking to Uni this morning and was amazed at the number of people also cycling. Maybe it was the warmer-than-usual weather, or because I left home slightly later, but at one intersection there were at least eight other cyclists lined up. From a driver's perspective, that may not sound like much, but in Christchurch that's a cycle jam. I use a range of transport modes pretty regularly - bike, bus, car, and walking - but there's something about biking that I like the most....

I love how biking - and even more so, walking - feels more in tune with the speed of life. I was waiting at the lights to cross from Hagley Park into Kilmarnock St (a good bike route to Uni) and was captivated by the sound, sight and feel of all the autumn leaves whooshing past me and out onto the road, merely dancing towards the nearest gutter (to flood our streets the next time it rains). One of the most important factors influencing whether a person cares for the environment is how much time they spend outside, and biking and walking offer really good regular opportunities for people to feel connected with our natural world.

The days I drive to Uni, it's rather start, stop, slow, faster, stop, go, stop. While I appreciate the convenience I gain from the car in terms of carrying heavy items or visiting various places after Uni (I currently live up a hill about 45 minutes bike ride away), it doesn't feel free in the same way biking does, where I can whizz past all the cars lined up, stopping only for traffic lights.

I also love how biking provides me with the opportunity to do some exercise without having to schedule it in.

Last year's UC Travel Survey found that for 20 % of UC students, cycling is their main transport to and from campus. Many people bike because it's cheap, it's exercise, it's often faster than driving or bussing, and there are no parking hassles.

If you bike to Uni, or are considering it, here are some services you may find useful:

- On 13 and 14 May (4-6 pm), there is a cycle-skills workshop aimed at staff and students who want to feel more confident riding in city traffic. See www.sustain.canterbury.ac.nz for details.
- Any student can park their bikes in the secure, covered bike stands located around campus, which have Canterbury card access and video surveillance. They even have bike pumps.
- The Dr. Bike team offer free basic bike checks 1-3 pm Wednesdays during term time, at the top of the UCSA amphitheatre near the Ballroom.
- If you get a puncture, the Security office under the Central Library has puncture repair kits and a bike pump that you can borrow.