

What's the buzz about e-bikes – Tauranga's initiative

Tuesday 13 November, 11:40am – 12:00pm

The idea for the e-bike initiative was conceived about a year ago. It started with a chat around the coffee machine. A few of us were talking about e-bikes and how great they are. We also started taking about a pending office move to new premises and the opportunity this presented to do more in the staff travel space. As the conversation progressed, the idea came up for making e-bikes available as part of a new staff travel initiative. We recognised that electric bikes were well aligned with Council's transportation strategy and staff travel plan. We arranged 'a try before you buy' demonstration day with a local electric bike retailer, this generated a huge amount of interest amongst staff. We were lucky to have the support of Council's executive leadership team, who approved the forward funding of personal e-bikes plus the inclusion of a number of e-bikes for the organisation's vehicle fleet.

52 staff took up the offer. About 40 of those staff usually drove a car to work, but now use their e-bike as often as practical. Giving staff a chance to ride an e-bike during the demonstration day was very likely a key to the initiative's success. Many of those who rode an e-bike on that day ended up buying one. Council employs about 700 staff and approximately 20% now regularly cycle to work. The e-bike initiative has certainly helped boost the number of cyclists in the organisation, and the fleet e-bikes are a huge hit with staff who use them for business trips around the city as part of their day-to-day activities.

A recent study from ESR has demonstrated that drug-affected drivers involved in serious crashes now out-numbers drunk drivers. Associated with this have been calls for increased road-side drug testing. This presentation will review the current illicit drugs used in New Zealand, what can be detected and what affects they may have on driving. There will be a focus on how we need to look to the future where personal use of drugs may be decriminalised, using cannabis as an example and how we will need to adapt driving legislation to encompass these changes. The dangers of prescription based medicine will also emphasised and how these numbers are growing. The relationship between "drug-levels" and the poor correlation with impairment and physical effect will be explained. The presentation will conclude emphasising that we need to focus more on establishing accurate, repeatable road-side impairment tests rather than the current focus on specific drugs and drug-levels.



Martin Parkes, Tauranga City Council

Martin is the Transportation Manager at Tauranga City Council. He has 32 years' experience working in the transportation field with various local authorities both here in New Zealand and the UK. Starting his working career with the London Borough of Barnet (UK), he dealt with the investigation and design of traffic and parking management schemes. He then spent 18 years on the south coast of the UK at East Sussex County Council in a variety of transport related roles including Crash Investigator and Highway Maintenance Manager. He also spent 18 years in the UK Fire Service dealing with the aftermath of road crashes, so is passionate about creating a safer transport network. 13

years ago he moved to New Zealand and now heads up a team delivering a full suite of transportation activities, including safety projects and a significant walking and cycling programme.

Outside of work Martin is a keen cyclist and dog walker, and an armchair sports enthusiast.