

World Naked Bike Ride supports national 1.5-metre safety campaign

All cyclists are called again to assemble at Tarakohe on Saturday 13 March for the seventh annual Naked Bike Ride, which gives vulnerable road users a chance to raise their visibility.

Victoria Davis, spokesperson for Bike Lanes in Paradise (BLIP), said that this year's bike ride supports the national campaign for a new law that would make the road safer for cyclists. One out of three road fatalities is a cyclist or pedestrian, and with several incidents last year, New Zealand is not perceived as a cyclist-friendly country.

The law would replace the existing voluntary code of road conduct, with legislation requiring drivers to allow more than just "elbow space" when passing a cyclist, Victoria continued.

"Our main message this year is that BLIP supports the 1.5-metre campaign. It is a national campaign to make it law that all motorists must pass cyclists at a 1.5 metre distance. This is a huge improvement. We will never afford to build cycle ways everywhere, and everybody cycling on Golden Bay roads will tell you that this can be an extremely terrifying experience. This new law will put a lot of people who had their bike stored in the garage back on the road.

"If everyone passed a cyclist like they were loved one we would not have to worry so much, but people don't care enough about other people and the new legislation will protect cyclists from people with a bad attitude."

Naked Bike Ride organisers in Wellington and nationally have had cause for celebration. A High Court judge recently ruled that riding naked on a public road did not constitute offensive behaviour, and cancelled a fine against a cyclist whose nudity had upset a female motorist.

"Nick Lowe (a builder from Johnsonville) was served papers to appear in court, but he wasn't acting in an indecent

way and riding naked is not a crime. I researched the law before the first Naked Bike Ride, and I was pleased the court upheld the law," said Victoria.

The Naked Bike Ride, however, is about more than any cyclist's preference to ride without clothes. As always, riders are welcome to make their statements fully dressed, in fancy dress or body-painted.

Cyclists in all stages of undress leave Tarakohe at 3pm to ride to Totally Roasted in Pohara. Meet earlier for body-painting.

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A new national campaign wants to make it law that all motorists must pass cyclists at a 1.5-metre distance.