

## Hawea Flat School

Shelley Barrett wanted to set up a regular cycle train from the Lakefront to Hawea Flat School after the school's *Go By Bike Day* in February this year. Shelley has three children, 2yrs, 6yrs and 8 yrs and believes strongly in encouraging her children to be active. Like many parents she's concerned about high rates of child obesity in NZ, and thinks biking to school should be the 'norm' and not something unusual. "Our girls have always wanted to bike to school and I think it's important to encourage them, it's great for their self-esteem. Other children want to ride too when they see them and it's much better for children to encourage each other than it coming from the parents all the time. I was concerned about their safety on the road, so having a couple of adults ride with a small group of children is a fantastic way for all of us to get active". Although Shelley has a 2 year old as well, and it's nearly a 9km journey, she made the decision for this not to be an obstacle. "I see no reason why the older girls have to miss out because I have a 2 year old. Our other cycle train 'driver' takes her 2 year old as well and it works really well." Hawea Flat School started 3 cycle trains in term 1 this year, one from Windmill corner at Hawea Flat, and two from the Lake front. Cycle trains will be running in terms 1 and 4 this year.

Since then initiatives such as these and improvements to the roads around the schools have been underway to encourage children (and parents) to cycle to school. Other activities such as a cycle skills event was held in term 4 last year, while *Go By Bike Day* in February saw Hawea Flat gain the highest participation rate out of all the schools involved in Bikewise events in the Queenstown Lakes area with around 72% biking. This event sparked further interest from parents and children that led to more cycle trains operating – one from Windmill Corner, and two from the lake front.

Cycle trains are just one part of Hawea Flat School's travel plan initiative. The school undertook a travel survey in 2008, which identified the potential for cycling as a travel option for children. The travel plan aims to improve road safety and reduce car trips to school with additional benefits including increased health, fitness, independence and road sense for students.

A combination of these initiatives meet the key goals of the school's travel plan such as; increasing the number of children catching a bus, cycling or walking to school, increasing road safety initiatives at the school and raising awareness of the impacts of travel modes on the environment.



This cycle train from Windmill corner to Hawea Flat School goes twice a week during term 1 this year.



Hawea Flat School children LOVE to bike!