

Welcome to Trail Talk - A monthly newsletter all about the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail. This newsletter contains information and updates about construction and work on the trail, as well as other aspects including work being carried out with businesses and tourism interests.

December 2014

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## Hearing for second stage of cycle trail confirmed

The resource consent hearing for a section of the second stage of the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail has been confirmed for early February.

The hearing is expected to run for three days. Further details are below:

**Date:** 2 - 4 February 2015 (5 February is a reserve day)

**Start time:** 9am

**Venue:** Southland District Council Chambers

A section of the proposed trail near the Upper Oreti River and Centre Hill Road needs resource consents from Environment Southland and the Southland District Council.

Consent for the whole of Stage 2 was sought in 2012 but a commissioner declined a portion of the application, due to concerns around river works and their impact on the ecology, river and amenities of the area.

The new resource consent application includes two significant changes: a new lower and longer bridge over a section of the Oreti River, designed to have a lesser impact visually and on the river and surroundings; and a change to the proposed path the trail would take. Proposed groyves have also been removed from the consent application.

The first stage of the cycle trail was officially opened on November 1 this year.

To view the documents relating to Stage Two of the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail, visit the Southland District Council website [here](#).

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# First group of cyclists give the Around the Mountains trail a glowing review



The first cyclists to have booked a ride along the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail were overwhelmingly positive about their experience.

Mike Barnett, of Around the Mountains Ltd, says five cyclists - all from Auckland - had just completed a three-day trip on the trail. They were the first cyclists to have booked their journey through Around the Mountains Ltd.

"While they experienced some pretty unpleasant weather during their ride, they didn't seem too bothered - they said they had come for an adventure, and they got exactly that," he says.

Four of the cyclists were travelling together, while the fifth rode the trail solo.

It was heartening to hear the group's review of the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail, with the riders fitting a key demographic profile the ride targeted, Mr Barnett says.

"They were enormously positive. They spoke glowingly of the people they met in Northern Southland, they thought the surface of the trail was fantastic to ride on, and they all said they would be going back to the North Island and encouraging everybody they knew to give it a go soon."

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## Youth Councillors make the most of cycle trail during Christmas celebrations

Members of the 2014 Southland District Youth Council have been vocal in their support of the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail, so planning their end-of-year Christmas function was a no-brainer.



The youth councillors made a submission on this year's Draft Annual Plan in May, which centred around the development of the cycle trail. In it, youth councillors said they had already seen tangible benefits to the District because of the cycle trail.

While the trail was based in Northern Southland, having an asset like the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail would introduce many tourists to other parts of the region as well. The development of the cycle trail would also lead on to other benefits, including encouraging people to get active and spurring on other initiatives such as heritage projects, their submission said.

Earlier this month, this year's youth councillors - as well as new members for 2015 - had the chance to experience the cycle trail themselves, with their Christmas break-up a scavenger hunt on the trail.

One of the youth council coordinators, Communications Officer Alana Dixon, says the scavenger hunt included questions that encouraged the youth councillors to learn more about the area and meet some of its locals.

They had to complete tasks such as learning a joke from a member of the community named Gary - although "Gary Tongs" may not have been his real name; taking a selfie with some local wildlife; and figuring out how much onions cost in the township.

"The youth councillors really impressed Council when they spoke to their submission - it has been obvious from the outset that the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail has been a project the young people of Southland see as incredibly positive for our communities. The youth councillors were incredibly excited to have the chance to ride it themselves, and experience first-hand what visitors to our District will see and do while they are here," she says.





As much of the District begins to wind down in the lead-up to Christmas, work on the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail continues.

Assets and Services Group Manager Ian Marshall says the Council was now evaluating the tenders it received for Section 6 and 7 of the second stage of the trail, which are situated just north of Mossburn.

Tenders for the trail construction there closed last Friday, and the Council was now evaluating those before it would release a decision early in the New Year.

While those two sections of the trail included the construction of bridges, tenders for that work would go out in early 2015, he says.

In other news, the development of public facilities in Northern Southland to keep up with increased demand due to the Around the Mountains Cycle Trail is ongoing.

Area Engineer Bruce Miller had been hard at work, and had recently finished an upgrade of the block of public toilets at Mossburn.

"The facilities there have always been important as they are regularly used by tourists travelling either to or from Te Anau. While that's a project that's been in the pipeline for some time, with the numbers of tourists in the area growing as a direct result of the cycle trail, it was important we had that work completed sooner rather than later. As always, the area engineer has done a tremendous job in ensuring we are providing adequate facilities throughout the District," Mr Marshall says.

Mr Miller will soon be working on reconfiguring the toilets at the Athol Hall, so that public facilities are available for cyclists and others, Mr Marshall says.

"There currently are no public toilets in the township there, but there was an agreement in place with one of the cafes. However, because the Southland District Council is anticipating a steady growth in the tourist numbers visiting Athol, our area engineer will be working to reconfigure the toilets at the local hall so that we can provide some public facilities in Athol. That will likely start happening in the New Year as well," he says.

"It's simply a matter of rejigging things a bit, so that visitors can access the toilets from the outside, but the hall can remain secure as well."

Work to develop information signs, similar to the kiosk at the newly-revamped Lumsden Railway Station, for the other towns along Stage One will also begin in early 2015.

The signs will provide clear information for cyclists, including where they need to go to start the trail in that particular township.



*Wishing you a very Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year, from all of us  
here at Trail Talk!*