

The 2025 Evaluation of the Ngā Haerenga Great Rides of New Zealand show just how much impact the 23 trails have had economically, environmentally and socially.

Nationally, more than 2.5 million trips were taken on Great Rides across the country, up 18 percent on 2021 figures. And that equates to more than \$1.28b worth of expenditure in those areas, a 35 percent increase on 2021 data.

The facts and figures speak for themselves in the key findings outlined in the press release. But here's the human interest perspective that tells the real stories. Feel free to use them as you wish. [Images are here](#). Please ensure you use photo credits where possible.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

There are more than 2900 businesses that service the Great Rides, up from 1600 recorded in 2021. And about 20 percent of those businesses opened because of the Great Rides. On average, figures show visitors spend \$964 each, eight percent more than 2021 figures.

Here's some examples of just how businesses are thriving, largely because of the Great Rides:

COMMUNITY GETS BEHIND BUSINESS VENTURE

A collaboration between organisations has helped bring to life one Northland woman's vision of a place that creates jobs, connections and community.

The Far North is home to the Pou Herenga Tai - Twin Coast Cycle Trail Great Ride and, most recently, the new Te Patiki Cafe just past the Hōreke township.

[READ RAWINIA'S STORY](#)

CURD IS THE WORD

The rising number of cyclists on the Great Rides network is giving his award-winning Wairarapa cheese business on the Remutaka Cycle Trail Great Ride route a welcome boost.

[READ HIS STORY HERE](#)

GREAT RIDES GIVE TOWN NEW LEASE ON LIFE

Central Otago ex-policeman Colin Stevenson and his wife Mandy have set up boutique high-end accommodation to cater for demand on the Otago Central Rail Trail Great Ride.

[READ THEIR STORY HERE](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL/CONSERVATION

Across the Ngā Haerenga Great Rides of New Zealand network, our latest evaluation report shows almost 450,000 native trees, flaxes and shrubs or rushes have been planted, almost 120km of waterways have been fenced, and more than 2700 traps laid for pests.

And those numbers are growing year on year as trail managers, staff and volunteers work to protect and enhance the natural environment in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Here's some examples of the impact this valuable work is having on our environment:

TRAPPER OF THE TIMBER TRAIL

When Russell Malone isn't managing the central North Island's Timber Trail Lodge and Transport, he can be found out on the Timber Trail Great Ride helping to keep predator numbers down.

Russell's passion for nature and the trails extends beyond the lodge. He spends many voluntary hours helping to enhance the natural environment – and that involves monitoring and setting traps in the area.

[READ HIS STORY HERE](#)

TRAP MASTER OF THE MOTU TRAILS GREAT RIDE

Head out on the Motu Trails in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and you're more than likely to come across local e-biker Peter Cavanagh and his beloved pooch Benji.

The pair venture on to the 9km-long Dunes Trail for fresh air and exercise daily, but importantly they also check and clear 50-plus predator traps along the way.

[READ PETER'S STORY HERE](#)

RANGATAHI CONNECT WITH NATURE – AND WHENUA

Connecting rangatahi with their whenua is just one of many benefits of an annual tree planting project on the Waikato River Trails Great Ride.

Over the past 14 years the riparian enhancement project has seen hundreds of volunteers from local schools, villages, businesses and iwi come together to plant more than 170,000 native trees along the Waikato River Trails.

[READ MORE](#)

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY

The Great Rides are significant community assets, reflected in the amazing volunteer contribution across the network. From tree planting, to trapping, creating artworks or to keep riders safe on our trails, volunteers contribute more than \$600,000 worth of time to our Great Rides.

Here's some great examples:

COMMUNITY RALLIES TO KEEP RIDERS SAFE ON TRAILS

[Teenage rider Ellena Graves](#) is one of almost 100 volunteers who help cyclists in difficulty on the central Otago trails.

The year 9 Dunstan High School student is part of the Community of Bike Ambassadors (COBA) programme, which trains passionate local riders on all cycle-related topics, including outdoor first aid.

Focusing on non-urgent help, the ambassadors from all walks of life wear their blue shirts whenever they're out riding on the trails and are on hand to help at any time.

[READ MORE](#)

MĀORI ARTWORKS ENHANCE TRAIL

From interpretation panels to whakairo (Māori carvings), Rotorua's Whakarewarewa Forest Loop Great Ride has worked alongside those that are mana whenua of the lands the trail passes through.

The five artists behind the works on the trail have created them to educate riders on the history and ancestors of the land they are riding through.

[READ MORE](#)

POU CELEBRATES PLACE HAPŪ CALLS HOME

A new pou whenua on Northland's Pou Herenga Tai - Twin Coast Cycle Trail Great Ride represents the epitome of whānau. Tu Mai Moerewa Pou Whenua stands 2.7m tall on a section of trail between Kawakawa and the Tuhipa truss bridges behind the community of Moerewa.

It's a hapū and community-led initiative which shares the legacy of Moerewa residents and marks territorial boundaries for mana whenua – Ngati Kopaki and Ngati Te Ara.

[READ MORE](#)

RANGATAHI THRIVE ON GREAT RIDE

The Waikato River Trails Great Ride is supporting rangatahi from two Waikato secondary schools to learn lifelong bike skills.

It's an initiative between [Waikato River Trails](#) Trust and tour operator Riverside Adventures with funding from Sport New Zealand's Tū Manawa fund through Sport Waikato.

[READ MORE](#)

HEALTH/WELLBEING

Almost 60 percent of trail users report that their physical fitness had improved as a result of their trail experience, and the same proportion reported a positive mental health benefit.

Some of our trail users share how our Great Rides contribute to their health and wellbeing.

RURAL RIDERS GAIN TRACTION

A rural initiative taking hold nationwide is all about connecting. Called Rural Riders, it's an idea founder and rural professional Hamish Clausen, who has had his own mental health struggles, came up with to get the rural community off the farm and on bikes together for some fun and time out.

From the start of November until the end of Daylight Saving each year, Rural Riders encourages anyone keen and free to turn up with their bike for a ride on a local trail, or section of a Great Ride, at a designated time each week.

[READ MORE](#)

CHALLENGES RESULT IN SILVER LINING

Despite facing life-changing challenges, keen cyclist Miriam Ellis is the happiest she's ever been.

For decades the Waikato woman has suffered from depression. Her condition deteriorated after suffering two traumatic brain injuries while doing what she loves most, cycling. But Miriam isn't one to wallow.

[READ MIRIAM'S STORY](#)

CYCLING GIVES JOHN BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Wellington professor John Randal has found cycling has ignited an “unusual quest” and contributes to his wellbeing at the same time.

The complete calm and freedom Wellingtonian John Randal feels when he's on his bike has sparked an unusual mission - to ride down every street in New Zealand.

[READ JOHN'S STORY](#)

THE “WHY” BEHIND TRAIL USE

Latest figures show trail usage totals more than 2.5 million trips per year (cyclists and pedestrians). Users' motivation varies, but most say it's about exercise, relaxation, and social connection.

Check out what the why for these regular trail users:

GREAT RIDES FOSTER FRIENDSHIP AND FUN

Adaptive rider Tiffiney Perry loves being outdoors among nature on the Ngā Haerenga Great Rides network. What she loves even more is exploring the stunning scenery, remote wilderness, culture and heritage and off-trail experiences with her friends.

Tiff is part of a group that call themselves “The Bike Bitches” and it has become a tradition for the group to escape into the outdoors on adventures both on and off-trail.

[READ TIFF'S STORY](#)

CAPTAIN COPPERMINE

He's fondly known by his cycling friends as "Sir Coppermine" and for good reason. Duncan Cunningham, 76, has clocked up more than 200 rides on the Coppermine Trail Great Ride in Nelson.

"On the Coppermine I get the best of all the worlds – I get the biology, I get the mountain biking, I get this open beautiful place, plus a whole lot of fitness and health."

[READ DUNCAN'S STORY](#)

19 GREAT RIDES DOWN, FOUR TO GO

Chris Cameron is a collector of sorts. With a huge passion for all things outdoors, the tour guide has ridden 19 of the 23 Ngā Haerenga Great Rides of New Zealand over the past 12 years. And she's motivated to tick off the last four.

[READ CHRIS' STORY](#)

ENDS