

Triobike allows older residents to feel the wind in their hair

By [Brenda Vowden](#) 19 May, 2023 03:02 PM 3 mins to read

There may not be too many jobs in the world where the training doesn't take long and the work is a breeze. Volunteering for the Napier branch of international organisation Cycling Without Age (CWA) ticks those boxes.

CWA trustee Alan White says their electric triobike arrived from Denmark a year ago and the scheme has been up and running in Napier since then, with planning for first birthday celebrations under way.



Pilot Barbara and Anne from Mission View meet for a weekly ride to Anderson Park followed by a coffee.

Trained pilots pick up passengers and take them out for a spin "to feel the wind in their hair" and connect with their community. Pilots log a report with the time taken and any interesting snippets of note along the way.

"We build bridges between generations, and we reinforce trust, respect and the social glue in our society."

Alan says although there are now three fully qualified pilots on the books, the journey so far hasn't been without its share of bumps and potholes. "We had two weeks off with the cyclone. The weather has been challenging as this is a fair-weather activity. It's also been a long road to get everyone on board."

Mission View Village, Roseanne Retirement Home, Masonic Trust and Greendale Residential Care rest homes are now all signed up. Alan says the care of passengers is critical. "Pilots undergo around four training sessions to make sure it's done right." Pilots are asked to volunteer at least one dedicated ride per month.

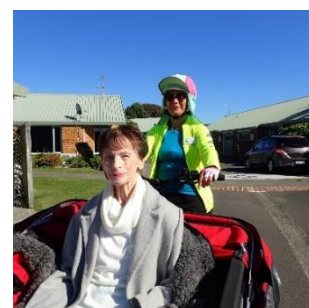
"Our present pilots are doing two rides a week because of the enjoyment they get from it."



The trio bike is picked up from the depot and ridden to each village, where a different route is mapped out for each area. "It's about connecting your passengers with their community. We cut the cloth to meet people's interest."

Barbara from Greendale Residential Care enjoying the very friendly Patch on a recent outing.

Dawn and Enid from Mission View on a blue sky Napier morning.



Passenger Ann, who goes out most weeks, says it's like having a new friend and Enid described CWA people as "so special". One pilot said she wanted to do something different at this time of her life. "Pilots talk with their passengers about anything and everything. Conversation is a big thing for them," Alan says.

If rest homes or retirement villages are interested, Alan takes the bike over for an open day where residents try the bike out for size and then give feedback. "People are attracted to the bike because it elicits conversation between passengers and their community. And it's done at a slow speed - it can be done at walking pace."

Alan says a year on, he feels the trust is where they thought it would be.

"We're being accepted and have a profile in the Taradale community. We're ready to roll again."

If you are interested in participating contact Alan on 0274 302 702 or email cwa.napiernz@gmail.com.