



14 February 2013

Mr David Burgess

Via Email: fyi-request-719-3b6c4de8@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Mr Burgess

I refer to your request dated 7 January 2013, pursuant to the Official Information Act 1982, in which, following a quote in the Christchurch Press of 2 December 2012 on cycle helmets, you seek from the Ministry of Transport the following information:

1. *What is the source of the data [on cycle helmet usage and benefits] given that it is so much at odds with other studies?*
2. *Is it an overseas study? If so why was an overseas study used when excellent work has been done in Australia and New Zealand by Sage, Robinison et al.*
3. *If helmets are intended to improve public health, why is the ministry (in light of the NZMA findings) not working on removal of the cycle helmet regulations for an average of 54 person per year life saving?*

The source of the data the Ministry of Transport provided on cycle helmets is:

- Macpherson, A. and Spinks, A. (2007) Bicycle helmet legislation for the uptake of helmet use and prevention of head injuries (Review), The Cochrane Collaboration.

The statistic of 88% can be found in the following statement at page 2:

Bicycle helmets have been shown to be effective in preventing head, brain, and facial injuries to cyclists (Rivara 1998, Thompson 1996). A Cochrane systematic review reports that helmets reduce the risk of head injury by up to 88%, and reduce the risk of facial injury by 65% for cyclists of all ages (Thompson 2001).

You can access the paper online via the link below:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD005401.pub3/pdf>

The Ministry of Transport considered this study to be appropriate at the time the cycle crash facts were first published on the Ministry's website. This study focuses on injuries to cyclists when crashes occur and is therefore suitable for use in a crash fact sheet.

Safe cycling is a priority area in the government's road safety strategy, Safer Journeys. The cycle helmet law plays an important part in that strategy because cycle helmets reduce the risk of serious injuries, such as skull fractures and concussions. The Ministry of Transport is currently not undertaking any reviews of the cycle helmet regulations.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike James". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mike James
General Manager Road and Rail
for **Chief Executive**