

TOP CYCLISTS IN INVERCARGILL PREPARING FOR ELITE CHAMPS

New Zealand's top track cyclists are already training in Invercargill in the lead up to the New Zealand Elite Track championships in February.

Cycling Southland chairman Steve Canny said prior to Christmas the country's top sprint and endurance riders had made use of the great facilities at the ILT Velodrome.

"From now until the championships it will be a very, very busy time."

The championships which run from February 11 to 13 will attract the country's finest, and will be an opportunity for those talented Southlanders who have already benefited from Cycling Southland's development programme to impress selectors.

The development programme has now been running for 14 years and has proven to be a successful pathway for many of the region's talented cyclists who are now holding their own on the world stage.

Since the opening of the ILT Velodrome in May 2006, numbers involved in the programme have increased dramatically.

"It involves all the young people who come down to the velodrome.

"We introduce them to the sport and see if they have an ongoing interest and drive," Canny said.

The Invercargill Licensing Trust and ILT Foundation were recently pleased to announce continued funding to support Cycling Southland with not only the development programme but also with track events, including the New Zealand Elite Track championships, and operational costs.

The ILT Foundation has generously pledged \$165,000 and the Invercargill Licensing Trust \$30,000.

ILT Foundation and Invercargill Licensing Trust chairman Alan Dennis said since the opening of the ILT velodrome the number of cyclists had quadrupled.

"We want to support Cycling Southland as we can see how the work they are doing and the vision they had to build the velodrome is impacting on the whole community.

"Southland is now the top region for cycling participation in New Zealand – this is a great sign that the organisation is making all the right moves to create a positive influence."

The championships will be the beginning of a full programme for Cycling Southland with the Trans-Tasman championships, Tour de Lakes and the junior and senior Tour of Southland also scheduled for this year.

PRESS RELEASE ENDS