

Making an electric and active commute more affordable

Workride

The way we move around the city has a big influence on carbon emissions. Workride's bike benefit programme helps employees in Pōneke | Wellington switch to a sustainable commute by buying an e-bike at a reduced cost with no up-front payment.



"We're engineers, and something we really love is efficiency. We see massive inefficiency in the way we use our streets and also in the way we use energy." *- Connor Read, Workride*

Bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters are a popular choice for people who commute to work. Riding an e-bike or e-scooter can offer extra assistance making Wellington's hills easier to manage, while traditional bikes provide a low-cost, healthy way to travel. All three options help to reduce emissions and avoid parking costs. However, the initial purchase cost can be unmanageable for some people wanting a better way to get to work. To help more people enjoy their commute and reduce emissions, Workride created a programme to connect retailers, employers and employees.

In August 2023, Workride received a grant through the Climate and Sustainability Fund to launch their innovative ride-to-work scheme in Wellington. The programme leverages Fringe Benefit Tax exemptions to make biking or scootering to work more affordable, reducing the cost of a ride by up to 48%. The launch included onboarding local bike stores, engaging employers, and assessing impact over the first 12 months.

A web-based app makes it easy for employers to offer a benefit scheme to employees, who can pay off the cost of an e-bike over time through a deduction in their salary. Workride's Connor Read says he and co-founder Aidan Smith want to make commuting more economical in every sense.

Through Workride, someone employed by a participating workplace can go to a shop and choose their new mode of transport. The retailer submits a request to the employer. When the request is approved, the employer pays for the bike, e-bike or scooter. The employee pays back the cost out of their pre-tax pay over the course of a year. An offset means the bike or scooter is cheaper than the retailer's quoted price by between 32-63%.

Since launching, Workride has onboarded 62 employers, providing access to over 4,000 employees in Wellington. This uptake is helping shift commuting habits and reduce transport-related emissions across the city.

"The employee is saving money. Not just from a tax perspective, but also through the transport mode shift – not needing to pay for parking." *– Connor Read, Workride*

Commuting by bike not only eliminates carbon emissions - it also helps reduce the cost of living, says Connor Read, by cutting down on travel expenses. More than 150 Wellington employers now offer Workride, a programme that enables staff to purchase bikes, e-bikes, or e-scooters from participating local retailers. It's a practical and climate-friendly way to get to work.

Supporting society and the economy in the transition to more sustainable transport is important to the Workride team. They hope to add public transport to the list of rides available through their programme. Employers could pay for bus or train credits to be paid back over time through an employee's pre-tax income.

Two-wheeled transport will continue to be a priority. Connor Read sees biking to work as a great way to get moving at the start and end of the day, with a string of benefits for mental and physical health. He says Workride is here to make cities easier to live in while improving outcomes for people and the climate.

With support from Wellington City Council, Workride was successfully launched in Wellington. This has also opened the door for other ride-to-work programmes, giving workplaces a growing range of options to help their staff commute by bike.

> "We see that getting more people on bikes and scooters has got nothing but upsides from an environmental, societal and health perspective. That's what drives us." *– Connor Read, Workride*



Make cycling a part of your everyday commute. By using salary-based schemes and workplace benefits, more people can access clean, affordable transport - reducing emissions and making daily travel more enjoyable.

To learn more or sign up, visit **workride.co.nz**