

4 December 2020
EMBARGOED UNTIL THE 19TH DEC



STUNNING NEW SECTION OF ALPS 2 OCEAN CYCLE TRAIL OPEN FOR SUMMER

The Alps 2 Ocean Joint Committee is excited to announce that the newest section of the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail will open on 19 December 2020, just in time for the Christmas holidays.

The new section is 16km long and runs from Sailors Cutting to Benmore Dam in the heart of the Waitaki Valley. With some of the trail Grade 2 (easy), and 5 and a half kms of Grade 3 (intermediate), it is suitable for regular experienced cyclists over twelve with a good level of fitness and skill. Children should be accompanied by an adult. Riders should take plenty of water with high energy food and consider carrying a PLB as there is only intermittent mobile phone coverage. The section takes around 2–3 hours to ride and is also open to walkers.

Starting at the Sailors Cutting car park on the shores of Lake Benmore, the new trail combines DOC's Benmore Peninsula track with purpose-built gravel cycle trail. The section weaves through the high country of the Waitaki Lakes District following the Ahuriri arm of Lake Benmore with turquoise water and golden tussock providing stunning backdrops. Numerous viewpoints and resting spots with picnic tables offer a chance to pause and soak up the scenery.

The newly built section finishes at the car park above Benmore Dam, from where, riders can continue their Alps 2 Ocean adventure with a return trip in to Ōtemātātā or continue onwards across the dam to Kurow and Ōamaru.

The opening represents a major milestone for the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail as significantly, it takes the trail off State Highway 83. The long-term goal of Alps 2 Ocean is to take the whole trail off road within the next five years.

Chiefly built by M3 Contracting, the new section took five months to build and cost \$1.2 million, the primary funding coming from MBIE, which was matched by other contributors.

This investment will further cement the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail's status as the jewel in the crown of the 22 Great Rides and enhance the community benefits through local recreational use as well as increased tourism.

Chair of the Alps 2 Ocean Joint Committee, Sally Jones, is thrilled about the developments. 'Our trail just goes from strength to strength, and we know the opening of this section has been keenly anticipated. It's going to be another spectacular part of the trail—definitely my favourite section.'

ENDS

For more information, see <https://www.alps2ocean.com/>

ALPS 2 OCEAN CYCLE TRAIL KEY FACTS

- Situated in the South Island of New Zealand is the Alps2Ocean Cycle Trail, the jewel in the crown of the 22 Great Rides, the longest in New Zealand spanning 315km from the

Mackenzie District, which is recognised as a Dark Sky Reserve, to the Waitaki District, an aspiring UNESCO Geopark.

- An alternative route begins in the Lake Tekapo township and connects with the trail at Tekapo B power station.
- Initial construction of the trail began back in 2015.
- The significant economic, recreational and community-building benefits can be seen throughout Kurow, Ōtemātātā, Enfield and other towns the trail passes through with increased business development and investment a direct result of tourist flow.
- The trail is administered by the Alps 2 Ocean joint committee: a partnership of the Waitaki District Council and the Mackenzie District Council.

For more information please contact:

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