

Cycling will be 'better off' with second velodrome

BY PETRINA WRIGHT

CYCLING bosses in Southland are confident the new multi-million dollar velodrome being built in Cambridge will not have a negative impact on the Southland velodrome.

"There was room for two facilities in New Zealand," Cycling Southland events manager Bruce Ross said.

"If the Cambridge velodrome does as much for cycling in the North Island as the Southland one has done for New Zealand over the past seven years, then the sport nationally will be far better off," he said.

Cycling Southland would proactively work with Cambridge to promote cycling in New Zealand, he said.

This year, Invercargill is hosting the age group categories of the New Zealand Track Championships and Cambridge is hosting the elite riders. Next year it will be alternated, he said.

"We are confident it can work."

Cycling Southland president Lindsay Jordan said two velodromes in New Zealand were justified given the increasing participation levels of cycling at the elite level.

The level of elite track cycling had been lifted significantly since the Southland velodrome was built, so having two velodromes should further improve the level of elite cycling in New Zealand, he said.

Before the Southland velodrome was built, events were alternated between the North and South



On course: Southland track cyclist and 2013 New Zealand junior world track cycling championships team member Josh Haggerty in training at the SIT Zero Fees Velodrome on Tuesday.

Islands, and the understanding was this would be the case again once the second velodrome had been built, he said.

Hosting the track nationals in Southland for the past seven years in a row had been a burden on Cycling Southland and a commitment on volunteers, he said.

Mr Jordan did not think Cycling Southland would be affected financially as a result of sharing events with Cambridge.

"Events don't tend to be profitable, particularly as sponsorship is tighter than it used to be," he said.

If the Southland velodrome had become the Cycling Centre of Excellence, significant changes would have had to be made to the

building, he said.

In 2010, Sport New Zealand (formerly SPARC) sought tenders for developing a national cycling centre of excellence. Seven tenders were submitted and Cambridge was selected. No tender was submitted from Southland.

Construction of the Avantidrome National Cycling Centre of Excellence in Cambridge is nearing completion. The track had been installed and was now being commissioned by BikeNZ riders.

The velodrome is expected to be open to the public on March 3.

Southland Indoor Leisure Centre Charitable Trust (SILCCT) chairman Acton Smith said the trust would have loved to have been the

home of the cycling centre of excellence, but the terms and conditions for alterations to the velodrome requested by BikeNZ were unaffordable.

As the trust could not see any economic return of hosting the centre, it could not fund or justify the changes needed to the velodrome, Mr Smith said.

BikeNZ provided the *Southland Express* with a statement saying it was in the process of developing a policy for allocation of national track events into the future.

The statement said any international events (Oceania Championships staged biennially and the new UCI Tier 1 event) would be offered to Southland to run, but the financial risk would rest with the hosts.

Two velodromes would help develop more international opportunities with the potential to share costs between the two venues, the statement said.

The Southland velodrome had only been the training facility for BikeNZ high performance teams for a few weeks each year prior to international competition and was never the home base for riders and BikeNZ staff, the statement said.

All track squad members were required to be in Cambridge to participate in the centralised programme.

Southland riders Eddie Dawkins, Matt Archibald and Pieter Bulling had already relocated to Cambridge, a BikeNZ representative said.