

Erin Criglington – 2021 Annual Report - RTX

2021 started out with the Covid shadow still hovering in the background, both in NZ and around the world.

In January, NZ played hosted two UCI Category races – the UCI 2.2 New Zealand Cycle Classic in and around the Wairarapa, followed by the UCI 1.2 Gravel and Tar in the Manawatu. With boarder restrictions still in place there was limited overseas riders however, it was still great to see the events go ahead.

The Vantage Elite & U19 Road National Championships took place in February in conjunction with the Ride Festival. Based in Cambridge, it was the first year the U19 championship races were held in conjunction with the Elite & U23 racing.

The SIT velodrome in Invercargill hosted the Vantage Elite and U19 Track Cycling National Championships later in the month. The racing was fast paced and gave the Tokyo bound athletes a chance to stretch their legs as part of their build up for later in the year.

Unfortunately, the Age Group Track National Championships were another victim of Covid with the Championships being cancelled due to the government-imposed restrictions.

The Vantage National Age Group Road Championships took place around the streets of Rotorua in April 2021. With over 550 athletes taking part in the event, it was a chance for Olympic / Paralympic athletes to stretch their legs along with riders from both ends of the age spectrum.

The inaugural National Road Series wound up at the Age Group Road Championships. The series incorporated 10 events around the country including an initial Zwift e-race along with regular Tour events in the Manawatu, Hawkes Bay, Tasman and Central Hawkes Bay along with the Nicholas Brown Challenge at the iconic K2 event in the Coromandel.

The 2021 National Track Series, was again shortened to two competitions. The series, in its third year, was established to provide young riders with the opportunity to develop increased tactical and technical awareness as well as educational, coaching and race-craft workshops. The series is also designed to provide a platform for coaches to share experience and knowledge and provide opportunities to grow understanding on the skills specific to guiding, coaching and supporting their young riders.

After a year delay, the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics finally took place. Special mention goes to our medallists - Ellesse Andrews - silver Keirin and Campbell Stewart - silver Omnium.

In August, we were all saddened by the sudden loss of Oliva Podmore - a much loved and respected rider in our Cycling New Zealand squad and the wider cycling community.

The 2022 Cyclocross National Championships were held in Upper Hutt, and were attended by over 150 athletes.

The Road World Championships were held in Belgium in September.

The Track World Championships held in Roubaix, resulted in Aaron Gate bouncing back from his crash at the Olympics to claim a silver medal in the Omnium.

The inaugural UCI Track Champions League saw Corbin Strong take out Round 1 in spectacular style. Strong ended the Covid impacted series in third place with Aaron Gate in 4th place in the Men's Endurance field, with Jordan Castle finishing 12th in the Men's Sprint competition.

The Criterium National Championships that were scheduled to take place in Christchurch in November was another victim of Covid. The event was postponed until January 2022.

In December last year, the Omnium & Madison National Championships were held in conjunction with the Cambridge 3-Day event. This was the second year the event was held separately.

The continued progress of New Zealand road riders racing overseas is a credit to their tenacity and talent.

A special thanks go to the events team at Cycling New Zealand. During another very challenging year due to Covid, they continue to deliver professional and high-quality events that provide a positive experience for participants and spectators whether in person or via various forms of media interaction.

On behalf of the Council, I would also like to say thank you to all the unsung heroes of our sport – the volunteers who put in countless hours for the sport we love. This enables our riders to race at whatever level they aspire to. You all make our sport happen - from encouraging and supporting young riders starting out, to the age group riders racing against their mates and pushing themselves to achieve a PB, or to the increasing number of New Zealand riders making the grade in professional teams across the world. A huge thank you to you all!

Over the course of 2020/2021, and following over a year of consultation with our centres, clubs and members, RTX confirmed the updated format for the two key national track championships. From 2022, U15 and U17 riders would now be competing at the Track National Championships with the U19 and Elite riders while Masters riders will now have their own competition. Both of these events are to be annually rotated between the two indoor velodromes in Cambridge and Invercargill. The change will take place in 2022.

The Council has continued to work away in the background reviewing its function and structural form. The changes will provide a platform to help create a member structure that caters for everyone who wants to connect, support, participate or compete in the sport of cycling in New Zealand. As our immediate past president noted: 'Clubs of all sorts are at the heart of communities and to sustain our sport, we need strong grass roots membership throughout New Zealand. What members want from their Club, if they join one, and what is 'membership' has changed over the years. We need to better understand and communicate how we and our affiliated Clubs deliver value to our members else we risk becoming irrelevant.'

In 2022 we will look to continue with the progress we have made towards providing a membership structure that will help cater for everyone who wants to connect.

I wish to acknowledge the huge amount of support I have received from my fellow Council members and the Cycling New Zealand staff over the last year. Together we will be able to keep moving RTX forward.