

Average age of motor vehicles

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The New Zealand vehicle fleet is getting increasingly older.
- In 2014, the average age of the light passenger vehicle fleet was 14.3 years. The oldest types of vehicles were trucks and buses, with an average age of over 17 years.
- New Zealand has an older light vehicle fleet than Australia, Canada and the United States.



Why the average age of vehicles is important for environmental health

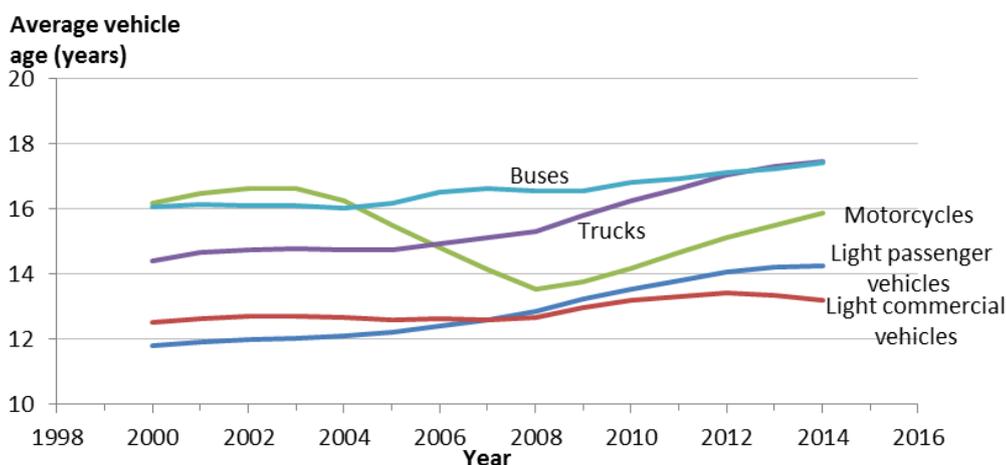
The average age of a country’s vehicle fleet is an indicator of the efficiency of the vehicles on the road. Older cars tend to be less efficient, and have more emissions. These emissions include carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and particles (PM₁₀), particularly from diesel vehicles – all of which can affect human health (Kjellström 2004). Vehicle age is also often related to vehicle safety, with newer cars having better safety features.

An ageing vehicle fleet

In 2014, the oldest average ages were seen in the truck fleet (17.5 years) and bus fleet (17.4 years). The motorcycle fleet had an average age of 15.9 years, followed by light passenger vehicles (14.3 years) and light commercial vehicles (13.2 years).

The New Zealand vehicle fleet has grown increasingly older over the past decade. From 2013 to 2014, increasing average ages were seen for every vehicle fleet type, except for light commercial vehicles (from 13.4 years in 2013, to 13.2 years in 2014) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Average age of vehicle fleet in New Zealand, by vehicle type, 2000–2014

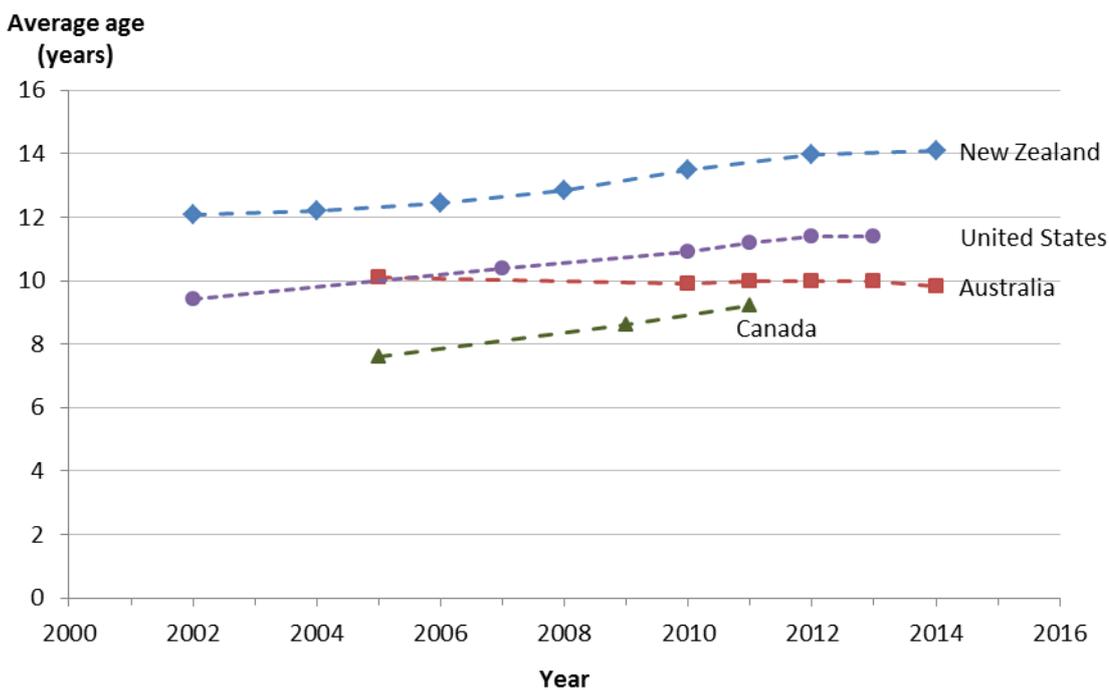


Source: Ministry of Transport (2015)

New Zealand’s light vehicle fleet is old by international standards

The New Zealand light vehicle fleet is older than those in Australia, United States and Canada (Figure 2). In particular, in 2014 the New Zealand fleet was about four years older on average (14 years) than Australia’s vehicle fleet (10 years). The comparisons in Figure 2 are limited to countries with high levels of motorisation and similar patterns of development as New Zealand (Ministry of Transport 2015).

Figure 2: Average age of light vehicle fleets, international comparisons, 2002–2014



Source: Ministry of Transport (2015)

Note: Light vehicle fleet included light passenger cars and light commercial cars.

Notes on vehicle categories

- ‘Light passenger vehicles’ include passenger cars and vans.
- ‘Light commercial vehicles’ include the following, if under 3500kg: goods vans, trucks, utilities, buses, motor caravans.
- ‘Trucks’ include the following, if over 3500kg: goods vans, trucks, utilities, motor caravans.
- ‘Motorcycles’ include motorcycles and mopeds.
- ‘Buses’ include buses over 3500kg.

References

Kjellström T. (2004). Air Quality and Health. In Cromar N, Cameron S, Fallowfield H. (eds.). *Environmental Health in Australia and New Zealand* (pp.274–92). Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Ministry of Transport. (2015). *The New Zealand Vehicle Fleet 2014: Annual fleet statistics 2014*. Wellington: Ministry of Transport.

For more information, please contact Fei Xu on f.xu@massey.ac.nz, or Kylie Mason on k.mason@massey.ac.nz.