

Household travel time by mode of transport

HIGHLIGHTS:

- About 79% of total travel time by New Zealanders was spent in motor vehicles in 2011–14. There has been very little change in use of different modes of transport since 2003–2006.
- Younger and older people spend a greater proportion of their travel time using active and public transport.
- There were large regional differences in travel modes used, with people living in the Wellington region having one of the highest uses of active and public transport.



Relevance of transport modes to health

A variety of transport modes can be used for household travel, including motorised transport (such as cars, vans and motorcycles), active transport (such as walking and cycling), and public transport.

Walking and cycling are beneficial forms of transport for health and the environment, as they increase physical activity, and reduce traffic injuries, and also reduce air pollution, noise pollution and greenhouse gases, which all have health impacts (WHO 2011). In particular, physical activity can help prevent a range of diseases including cardiovascular disease, some cancers, and type 2 diabetes. Active commuting (such as walking or cycling to work) has also been shown to reduce people’s cardiovascular risk (Hamer and Chida, 2008).

Public transport also increases physical activity, reduces air pollution (by not taking a private vehicle), is safer than travelling by private vehicle, and can improve mental health (British Medical Association 2012).

Data for this indicator

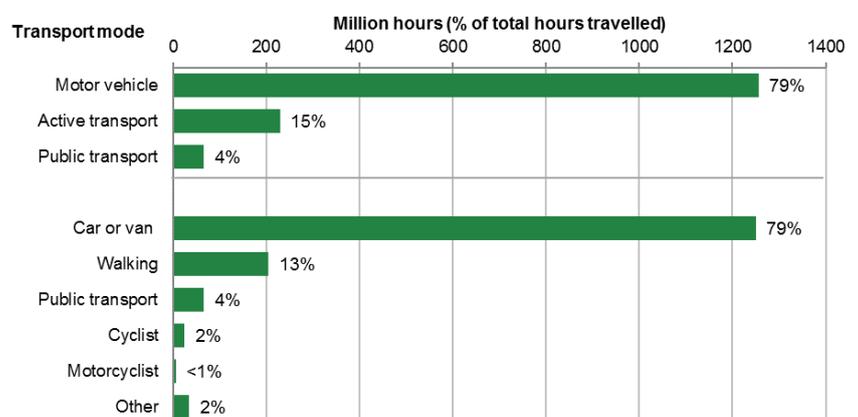
This indicator presents the percentage of household travel time by mode of transport, from the New Zealand Household Travel Survey, published by the Ministry of Transport. For this indicator, household travel excludes professional driver trips, that is, those trips done to transport goods or people as a professional (Ministry of Transport 2014). In this factsheet, ‘motor vehicles’ include driving or being a passenger in a car, van or motorbike, ‘active transport’ includes walking and cycling, and ‘public transport’ includes travel by bus, train or ferry.

The majority of travel time is spent in motor vehicles

In 2011–14, New Zealanders spent 1,257 million hours travelling in motor vehicles (cars, vans or motorcycles) – about 79% of the total hours spent travelling in this time period (Figure 1).

About 15% of total travel time was spent using an active form of transport (walking or cycling), and a further 4% using public transport (public bus, train or ferry).

Figure 1 : Hours spent travelling by transport mode each year, total New Zealand population, 2011–14 (million hours; % of total hours travelled)



Notes: ‘Motor vehicles’ include driving or being a passenger in a car, van or motorbike. ‘Active transport’ includes walking and cycling. ‘Public transport’ includes travel by bus, train or ferry.

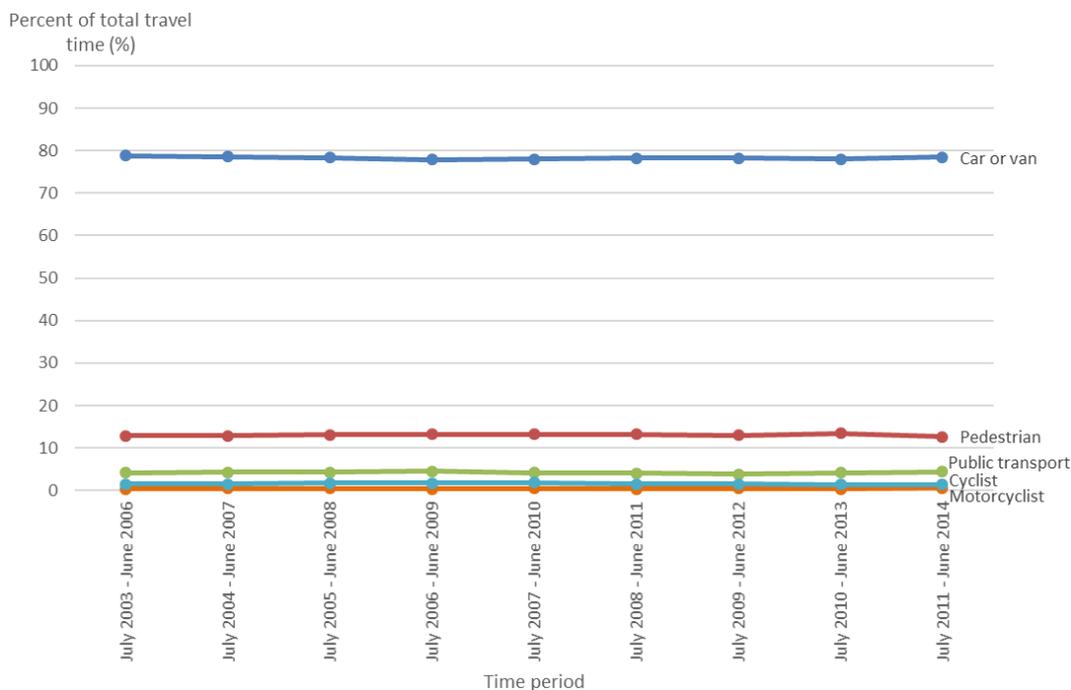
Source: 2011–2014 New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport

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Little change in travel time by mode of transport over time

There has been little change in travel time by mode of transport for household travel between 2003–2006 and 2011–2014 (Figure 2).

Figure 2 : Percentage of total household travel time spent travelling by mode of transport, 2003–2006 to 2011–14 (% of total hours travelled)

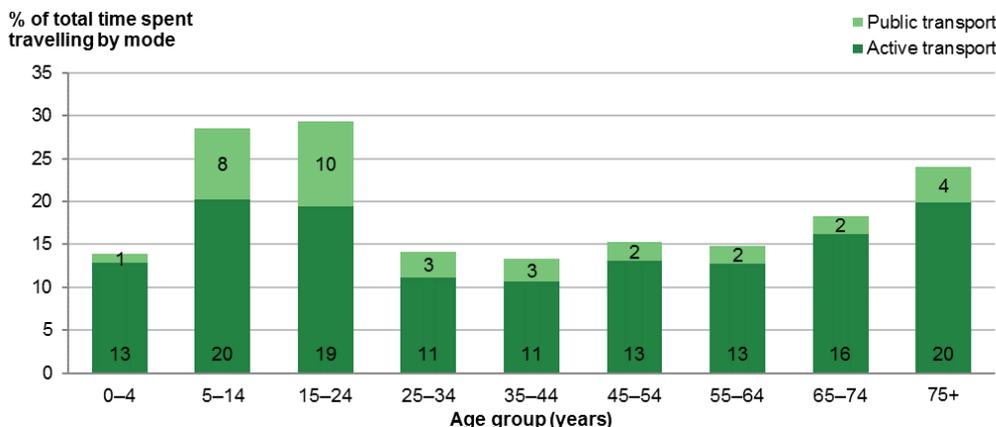


Source: New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport

Younger and older people spend more of their travel time using active and/or public transport

In 2011–14, people aged 5–24 years and 75+ years spent the highest proportion of their travel time using active transport, at about 20% (Figure 3). Additionally, young people aged 5–24 years spent about 8–10% of their travel time on public transport. By contrast, adults aged 25–64 years spent the smallest proportion of total travel time using active transport (11–13%) and public transport (2–3%).

Figure 3: Use of active transport and public transport, as a percentage of total travel time, by age group, 2011–14 (% of total hours travelled)



Notes: 'Active transport' includes walking and cycling. 'Public transport' includes travel by bus, train or ferry.

Source: 2011–2014 New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport

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Large regional differences in travel modes used

Active transport (walking or cycling) made up a larger proportion (18–19%) of total travel time for people living in the regions of Otago, Gisborne, Wellington and Nelson/Marlborough/Tasman (Figure 4). By contrast, people living in Waikato, Southland, Northland and Bay of Plenty used active transport the least (10–11% of total travel time).

Public transport had the highest use in Wellington (7% of total travel time), Auckland (5%) and Southland (5%).

Figure 4: Use of active transport (walking and cycling) and public transport, by regional council, 2011–14 (% of total hours travelled)



Notes: 'Public transport' includes travel by bus, train or ferry.

Source: 2011–2014 New Zealand Household Travel Survey, Ministry of Transport

DATA SOURCES

Data come from the New Zealand Household Travel Survey, published by the Ministry of Transport, and available on the NZ.Stat website. The household travel data excludes professional driver trips (those trips done to transport goods or people as a profession, such as courier trips, taxi drivers trips, bus driver trips, paper route delivery trips). For more information about this indicator, see the metadata sheet.

RELATED INDICATORS

Related environmental health indicators for transport, available from the EHINZ website (www.ehinz.ac.nz), include:

- Number of motor vehicles
- Main mode of transport to work on Census day
- Active transport to and from school
- Unmet need for GP services due to lack of transport
- Transport injury hospitalisations and deaths
- About transport and health (information factsheet).

REFERENCES

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- WHO. (2011). *Health in the green economy: health co-benefits of climate change mitigation*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

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