

# Household travel time by mode of transport

This factsheet presents information about the time New Zealanders spend travelling using different forms of transport.

## Key facts



Between 2015–18, 82.8% of all annual travel time was spent in private motor vehicles. A further 11.6% was spent using active transport, while 4.2% was spent on public transport.



Those aged under 15 and over 76 years old spent the largest share of their travel time each year using active transport.



The Wellington region had the highest proportion of time spent using active and public transport (27.6% of all travel time), while Gisborne had the lowest (3.3%) share of time spent using these modes.

## The relevance of transport modes to health

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

Using active transport has beneficial effects for both health and the environment. These modes of travel increase physical activity and reduce traffic injuries, while also reducing air and noise pollution, as well as greenhouse gas emissions (WHO 2011). In particular, regular physical activity can help prevent a range of diseases including cardiovascular disease, some cancers, and type two 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 to a small degree, produces less air pollution (by reducing the number of vehicles on the road), is safer than travelling by private vehicle, and can improve mental health (British Medical Association 2012).

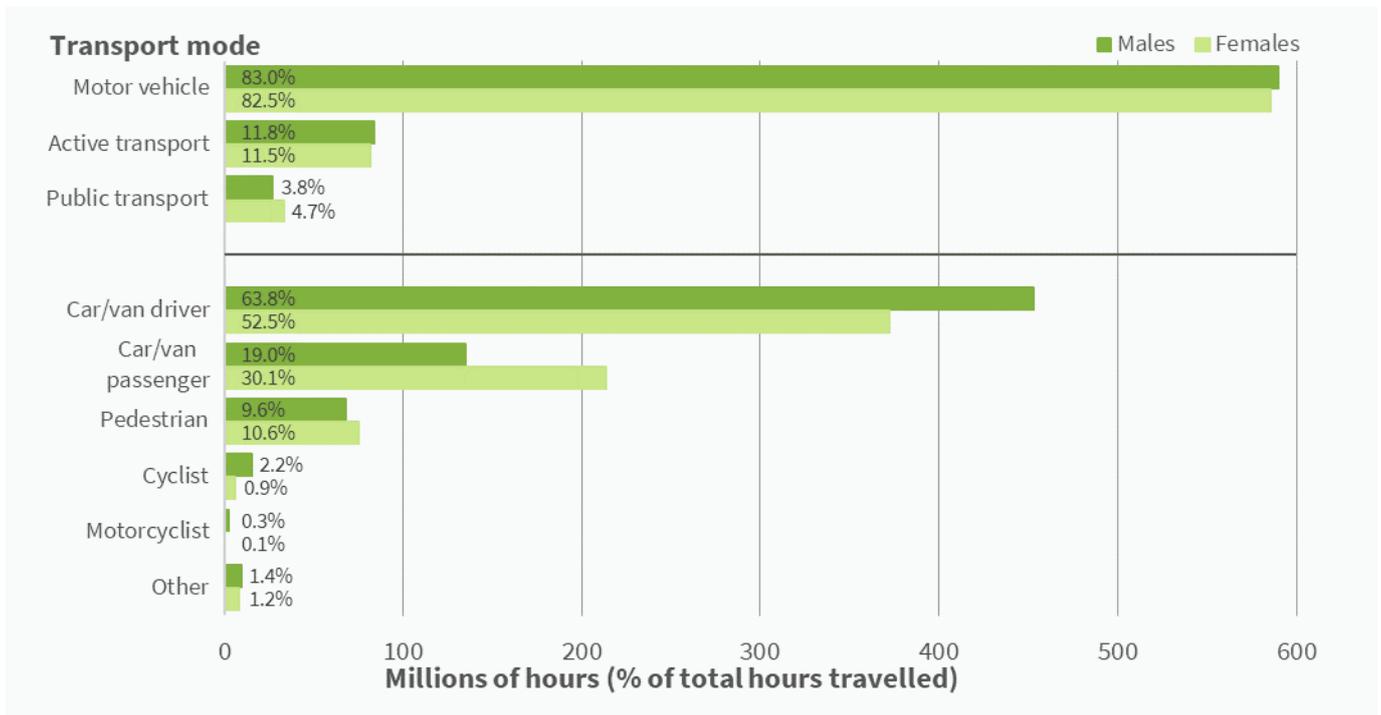
## Private motor vehicles were the dominant form of transport

Between 2015–18, New Zealanders spent an average of 1,175 million hours each year travelling by private motor vehicles. This represents 82.8% of the total time spent travelling by any means – 1,419 million hours annually (Figure 1).

Overall, 11.6% of all travelling time was spent using an active form of transport (walking or cycling) and a further 4.2% was spent on public transport (public bus, train or ferry).

The remaining 1.3% of travel time was spent using ‘other’ transport modes includes travel by aircraft and boat, as well as less conventional forms like horse-riding. Skateboarders, joggers and other ‘on-foot’ forms of transport are counted as walkers, as are mobility scooters (Ministry of Transport, 2019).

**Figure 1: Hours spent travelling by transport mode each year, 2015–18**



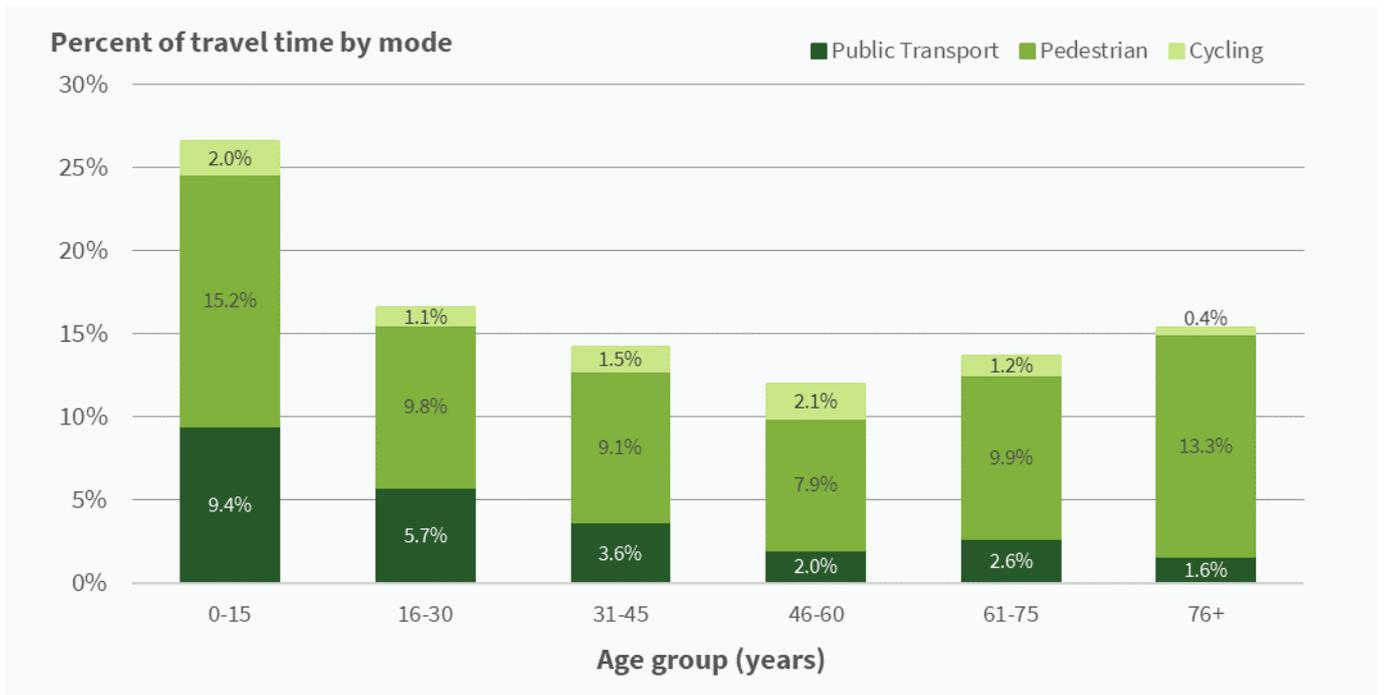
**Note:** ‘Motor vehicle’ includes car/van drivers and motorcycle riders. ‘Active transport’ includes pedestrian travel and cycling. ‘Public transport’ includes travel by bus, train or ferry.

**Source:** Household Travel Survey (Ministry of Transport 2019)

## Both young and old people spent more time travelling by active or public transport

Between 2015–18, people aged under 15 years old spent the largest proportion of their annual journey time travelling via public and active transport (Figure 2). While the time spent using active and public transport decreases marginally up to the age of 60, people aged 61 years and older showed increasing rates of active transport use compared to those aged 31–60. This is largely due to a rise in the proportion of time that older adults spent walking, though this may be a function of mobility scooters being counted as ‘walking’ by the survey.

**Figure 2: Use of active and public transport as a percentage of total travel time, by age group, 2015–18**

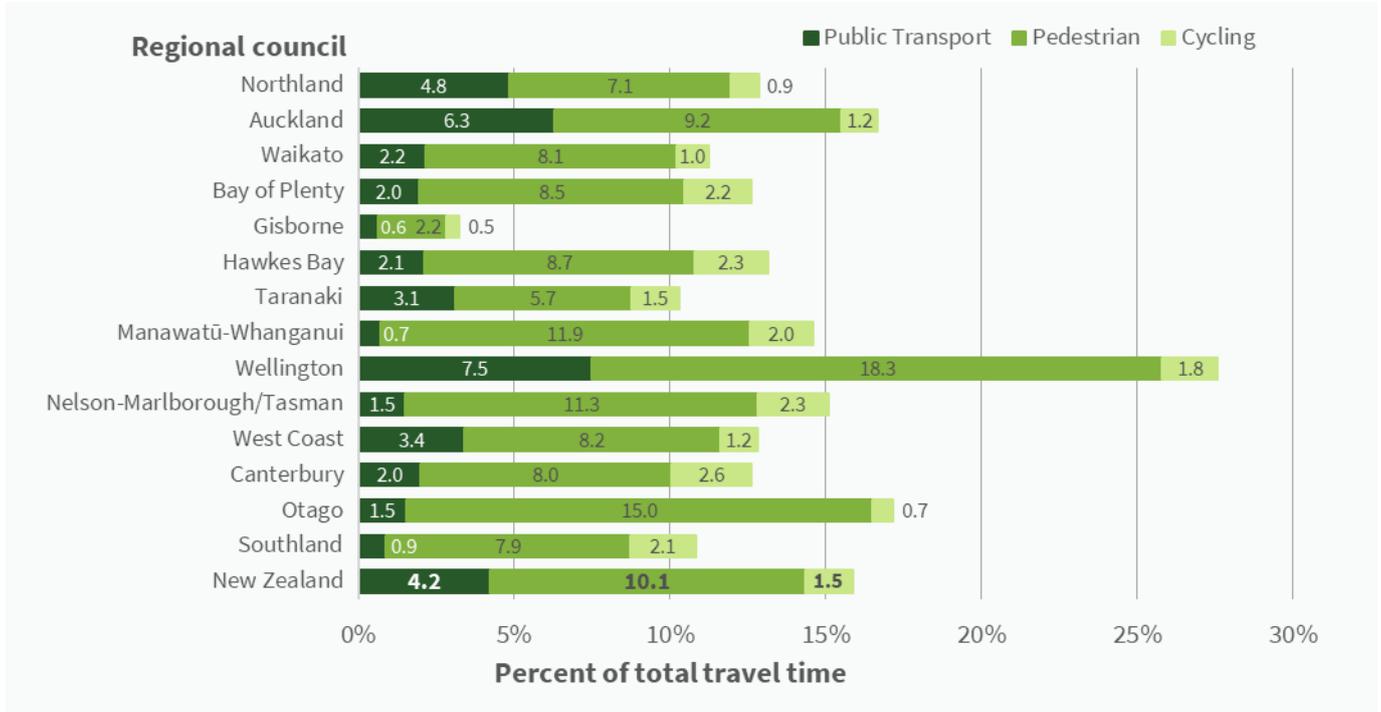


Source: Household Travel Survey (Ministry of Transport 2019)

## There were large regional differences in active and public transport use

Public and active transport made up a particularly high proportion of travel time for people in the Wellington region, representing 27.6% of all travel time. Much of this is due to the amount of time residents of the region spent walking. Meanwhile, people in Gisborne spent only 3.3% of their travel time across both active and public transport.

**Figure 3: Use of active and public transport, by regional council area, 2015–18**



Source: Household Travel Survey (Ministry of Transport 2019)

### Data for this indicator

This indicator presents the share of household travel time by mode of transport, from the New Zealand Household Travel Survey for the years 2015–18. ‘Household travel’ excludes professional driver trips - journeys to transport goods or people for commercial purposes. In this factsheet, ‘motor vehicles’ includes 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.

Due to a change in the survey methodology, the results for the 2015–18 period are not comparable to releases prior to 2015. For this reason, the data presented in this factsheet cannot be compared to the contents of previous editions. Confidence intervals are not available for this data, so care should be taken in assessing differences between values or changes over time. For additional information, see the metadata link below.

## References

British Medical Association. 2012. *Healthy transport = healthy lives*. <http://bma.org.uk/transport/>

Hamer, M., Chida, Y. 2008. Active commuting and cardiovascular risk: A meta-analytic review. *Preventive Medicine* 46:9–13.

Ministry of Transport. 2019. *New results from Household Travel Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Transport. URL: <https://www.transport.govt.nz/mot-resources/household-travel-survey/new-results/> (accessed 10/07/20)

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

## Other transport topics include:

[Road traffic injury hospitalisations and deaths](#)

[Main mode of transport to work](#)

[Unmet need for GP services due to lack of transport](#)

[Number of motor vehicles](#)

[Active transport to and from school](#)

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## Citation

Environmental Health Indicators. 2020. *Household travel time by mode of transport*. [Factsheet]. Wellington: Environmental Health Indicators Programme, Massey University.

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For descriptive information about the data [🔍 Metadata Sheet](#)

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