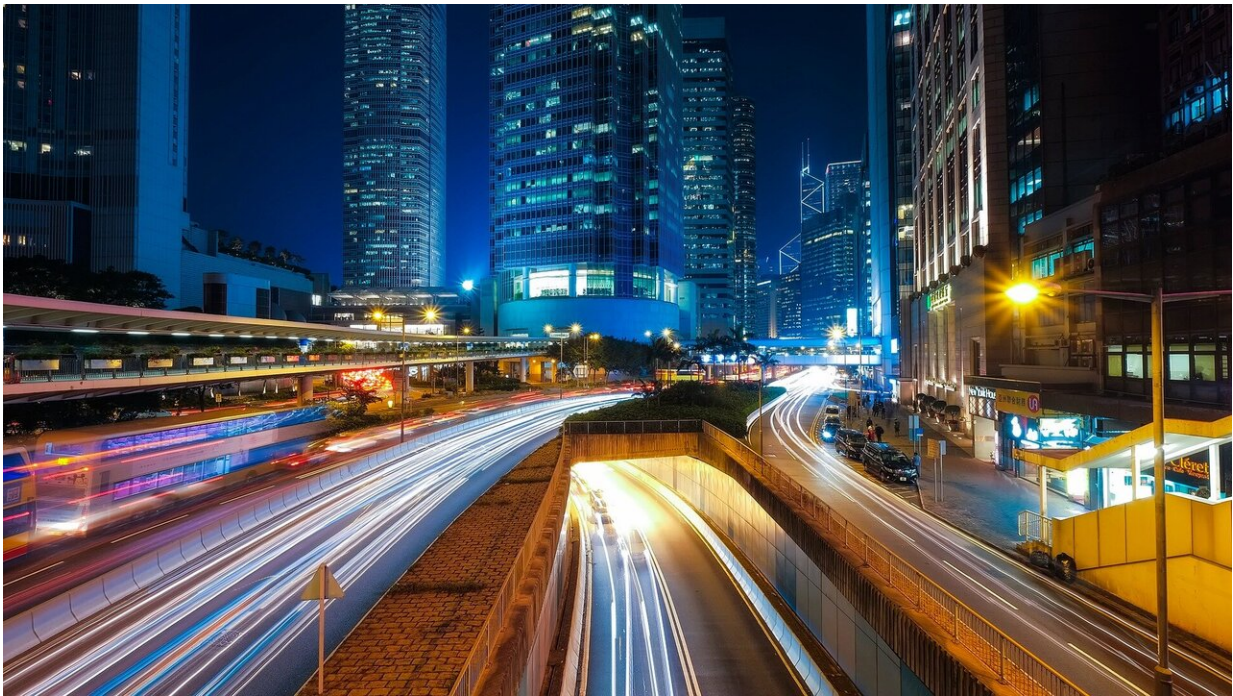


# Urgent action needed to end our love affair with cars, report finds

April 29 2019

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The authors of a University of Otago report on active transport say urgent steps must be taken to encourage New Zealanders to walk, cycle or take public transport, with our use of cars harming both our health and our environment.

The report, "Turning the Tide – from Cars to Active Transport," was

launched in Wellington today by Associate Minister for Transport, the Hon Julie Anne Genter.

One of the lead authors, University of Otago Associate Professor Sandra Mandic, says: "The report brings out the stark reality that the choices we are making in how we get from 'A' to 'B' are harming us and our environment.

"The World Health Organization recommends that adults engage in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity each week. This reduces our risk of [premature death](#) by 30 per cent and reduces the risk of development of cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes."

Mr Andrew Jackson says while we have seen progress in some [urban areas](#), the Ministry of Transport's household travel survey found that nationally the only mode of transport that increased its share between 1988 and 2014 was car use. Recent Ministry of Transport surveys show no abatement of this trend.

"This natural pressure to use our cars over other means of transport continues, with rapid growth in the number of kilometres driven by New Zealanders since 2013."

At the same time, the average time New Zealanders walk for transport has dropped from 10 minutes to eight minutes per day.

Mr Jackson says transport contributes 20 per cent of the nation's [greenhouse gas emissions](#), with walking and cycling being the only zero-carbon forms of land-based transport.

The authors are calling on national and [local governments](#) to set targets for the proportion of trips made on foot, by bicycle and by [public transport](#), including national targets of:

- Doubling the proportion of trips walked to 25 per cent by 2050.
- Doubling the proportion of cycling trips in each of the next decades, with the ultimate goal of 15 per cent of all trips being on bicycles by 2050.
- Increasing the proportion of all trips by public transport to 15 per cent by 2050.

The report's authors further recommend:

- The government develop a national promotion and education campaign to persuade people to walk or cycle to schools and work-places
- That investment is made in liveable cities and creating urban environments designed for people, rather than cars
- That new regulations are introduced to make walking and cycling safer

The report was developed as part of multi-disciplinary and cross-sector research efforts undertaken by the Active Living Laboratory at the University of Otago. The second Active Living and Environment Symposium (TALES) held in Dunedin in February 2019 brought together experts from multiple sectors to discuss links between [transport](#), health and sustainability.

**More information:** Turning the tide on active transport:  
[www.otago.ac.nz/active-living/otago710135.pdf](http://www.otago.ac.nz/active-living/otago710135.pdf)

Turning the tide on active transport—key recommendations:  
[www.otago.ac.nz/active-living/otago710121.pdf](http://www.otago.ac.nz/active-living/otago710121.pdf)

Provided by University of Otago

Citation: Urgent action needed to end our love affair with cars, report finds (2019, April 29)  
retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-04-urgent-action-affair-cars.html>

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