



Lakes District Health Board is committed to improving and protecting the health of the communities in the Bay of Plenty district.

Position Statement – Active Transport

Lakes District Health Board supports strategies and initiatives that increase the provision and use of active transport in our communities.

Active transport results in a broad range of everyday convenience, health and environmental benefits for individuals and the population.

Active transport is any self-propelled mode of transport (such as walking, jogging, cycling, using a scooter or skateboard). Public transport is closely aligned as some form of active transport is needed to get to and from any journey on public transport.

People and communities who successfully build active transport into everyday life have better health outcomesⁱ. A New Zealand study found that shifting 5% of short car trips (less than seven kilometres) to cycling would prevent 116 deaths annually. Using the Ministry of Transport's Value of a Life, the health benefits of a 5% shift in transport mode represent annual savings to the country of about \$200 millionⁱⁱ.

Physical inactivity contributes to conditions such as obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, some forms of cancer, depression, cognitive decline, and osteoporosis. Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality and accounts for 6% of deaths worldwideⁱⁱⁱ. New Zealanders are becoming less physically active with less than half of New Zealand adults meeting the recommended minimum level of daily physical activity^{iv}. The total cost of physical inactivity was \$1.3 billion in 2010, representing 0.7% of New Zealand's Gross Domestic Product^v.

Good urban design including mixed land use, and medium to high density residential areas, supports active transport and strengthens the vitality and economic viability of an area^{vi}. Active transport supports equitable access to social interactions, services and facilities, particularly for children and the elderly. Social interaction supports a sense of belonging and participation in a community and is linked with better individual and population health outcomes^{vii}.

Shifting some car journeys to active transport modes reduces congestion, improves air quality and road safety and reduces the burning of fossil fuels^{viii}. Premature mortality from vehicle exhaust fumes represents a 'hidden annual road toll' of approximately 256 New Zealanders, with thousands more having compromised quality of life due to the health effects of vehicle emissions^{ix}.



Key strategies to increase the uptake of active transport include:

- Creating urban environments that incorporate mixed land use and medium to high density residential living.
- Ensuring equitable access to safe and attractive active transport options along with effective connections between these eg. common ticketing for different types of public transport, bike racks on buses, park and ride facilities.
- Designing active transport networks that cater for a broad range of users including people of all ages. Incentives, regulations, and policies that support people to change their mode of everyday transport.

Lakes DHB advocates for, and supports:

- Working with central and local government to provide public transport, walking, and cycling infrastructure.
- The promotion and provision of active transport choices for its staff, patients and visitors.
- Active transport being incorporated into the design of urban, commercial and industrial areas, roads, and building developments.
- Travel planning initiatives and activities in workplaces, schools, and community organisations.

Adopted by: the Lakes District Health Board at its 13 September 2019 meeting.
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References and further information

ⁱ World Health Organization. (2010). Global recommendations on physical activity for health. Switzerland: World Health Organization

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ⁱⁱⁱ World Health Organisation (2002). A physically active life through everyday transport. Italy: World Health Organisation.

^{iv} Ministry of Health. 2016. Annual Update of Key Results 2015/16: New Zealand Health Survey. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

^v Market Economics Limited for Auckland, Waikato and Wellington Councils. (2013). The Costs of Physical Inactivity: Towards a Regional Full-Cost Accounting Perspective

^{vi} Public Health Association of New Zealand (2015). Policy Position: Transport and Health.

^{vii} Healthy Christchurch (2010). Wider Health & Wellbeing Impacts of Transport Planning. Christchurch, New Zealand.

^{viii} Shaw, C., Randal, E., Keall, M., & Woodward, A. (2018). Health consequences of transport patterns in New Zealand's largest cities. New Zealand Medical Journal, 131(1472), 64-72.

^{ix} Kuschel G, Metcalfe J, Wilton E, Guria J, Hales S, Rolfe K, Woodward A (2012) Updated health and air pollution in New Zealand Study: Summary Report. Prepared for: Health Research Council, Ministry of Transport, Ministry for the Environment, New Zealand Transport Agency.

