

Active a2b

Final Report

June 2010



An active transport programme from Greater Wellington Regional Council

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Executive Summary

Active a2b was a health and wellbeing initiative run from January to May 2010 by the Sustainable Transport Team at Greater Wellington Regional Council. The programme aimed to reduce congestion in major urban areas through increasing travel to work by active modes. It offered participants personalised support and resources to encourage them to walk and cycle to work.

Upon registration, all participants were given a number of resources, workshops and challenges they could request or participate in. Participants also received a weekly e-newsletter sharing success stories from the programme and providing information on upcoming events.

The main target group for Active a2b were those participants who drove to work in a vehicle at least twice a week. These participants were part of the '**Active a2b Plus**' group, and were given more personalised support than the standard participants, who did not drive to work more than once a week. The main point of difference for Active a2b Plus participants, were the two personal phone calls they received to discuss their situation, brainstorm active transport goals and provide follow up encouragement.

54 workplaces signed up for Active a2b and promoted the programme to a total of approximately 30,000 employees in the Wellington CBD. Eight hundred and ninety individuals registered for the programme, with 212 of these fulfilling the Active a2b Plus criteria.

Results from the registration form and evaluation survey showed that Active a2b achieved significant increases in walking (8.4 percentage points) and cycling (9.8 percentage points) to work for 'Plus' group participants, and increases in cycling (5.4 percentage points) to work for the standard group. Car trips to work also dropped dramatically from 82.2% to 60.5% for the Active a2b Plus group.

Evaluation data from the Active a2b Plus group indicated that the programme led to a reduction of 6402 kilometres of car travel a week. Using prices set by the New Zealand Transport Authority, the economic value of the increase in walking and cycling was \$124,140, producing a cost benefit ratio of 1:5.6 for the programme.

1. Background

Active a2b was developed by the Sustainable Transport Team at Greater Wellington Regional Council as part of their ongoing work to reach national and regional targets to increase numbers of walking and cycling trips and reduce congestion in major urban areas.

The programme was launched in January, 2010, timed to reinforce New Year's healthy lifestyle resolutions by promoting active transport as an easy and efficient way to make positive exercise changes sustainable. Active a2b was marketed as a health and wellbeing programme and encouraged employees in Wellington CBD workplaces to walk and cycle to work during the warmer months. It was extended beyond summer into late May, and later included road safety advice for continuing to walk and cycle through winter.

For journey to work and "other" trips, Active a2b aimed to:

- Increase active mode share/kilometres travelled
- Increase experience of active modes
- Increase confidence in using active modes
- Decrease car/passenger/drove with passenger mode share/kilometres travelled.

Active a2b also aimed to:

- Increase the awareness amongst Human Resource departments, and employees in Wellington CBD workplaces that Greater Wellington supports active transport
- Increase social support for active transport
- Increase participants' cycle skills
- Increase participants' awareness of existing active travel programmes
- Evaluate programme's outputs and short term outcomes

Active a2b was designed to be easily transferable from the Greater Wellington region, to any other regional or territorial authority. The programme branding and all the tools that were developed are freely available for other agencies to use in the future.

2. Programme description

Active a2b was a free of charge health and wellbeing programme that workplaces in the Wellington CBD could offer their staff. Workplaces were recruited at the end of 2009 and were provided with easy-to-use communication material ready to be sent to employees in January 2010.

From there, Greater Wellington took over full implementation, providing five months of personalised support. Individuals who registered for Active a2b received a programme built from their choice of a list of tools, detailed in Appendix 3. The tools were grouped into: **events and challenges** such as Bikewise and Walk2Work Day; **social support** such as ‘Nominate a Mate’ where participants had friends supporting them to win prizes, the bike buddy scheme and the family pack; **advice, information and training** including cycle workshops and email or phone support; and **encouragement and progress measurement** such as a desktop calendar and the online journey planner (see page 30 for more information).

A weekly e-newsletter was the main form of communication for most participants and was automatically sent to everyone registered for the programme. The newsletters were used to share inspiring stories by profiling participants’ walking and cycling efforts, alert people to upcoming events and workshops and allow people to update their nominated friends on their progress. After being emailed to participants, the newsletters were uploaded to www.gw.govt.nz/activea2b

2.1 Active a2b ‘Plus’ group

As a main objective of the programme was to decrease kilometres travelled by car, participants who indicated on their registration form that they drove to work at least twice a week became part of the ‘**Active a2b Plus**’ group.

In addition to the tools listed above, ‘**Active a2b Plus**’ participants received two phone calls. The initial phone call was to discuss their specific situation, offering them support and encouragement, and helping them to set walking or cycling goals. After two months of being in the programme, they received a second phone call as further support and an opportunity to record their progress.

Those people that did not drive more than once a week to work are referred to in this report as Active a2b standard participants.

2.2 Go Well through Winter e-flier

To promote road safety and encourage the continuation of walking and cycling through winter, a winter road safety e-flier was developed called ‘Go well through winter’. This included road safety advice for walking, cycling and driving through winter. In addition to road safety advice, the e-flier contained a walking safety quiz and a cycling safety quiz and significant discounts on outdoor gear.

The e-flier was not restricted to Active a2b participants and was distributed by workplace contacts to all staff in the Wellington region. The e-flier was also offered to the six territorial authorities within the Wellington region to post on their websites and was advertised in the Safeguard magazine.

3. Methodology

3.1 Recruiting workplaces and participants

The initial stage of recruitment involved contacting workplaces in November, 2009, to invite them to sign their organisation up to Active a2b. The main contact within a workplace was often someone within health and safety but some larger workplaces had a person specifically assigned to staff health and wellbeing. The most relevant person within a workplace was sent an email (or letter) of invitation (Appendix 1) and those who did not respond initially, were followed up with a phone call. The benefits to workplaces from promoting the programme were detailed in the initial letter:

Walking or cycling to work allows busy employees to fit exercise into their existing lifestyles. This results in a happier and more productive workforce with less absenteeism, turnover and health-care costs

By the end of December 2009, 39 workplaces had signed up for Active a2b, together representing around 23,000 employees in the Wellington CBD.

In the first month of programme delivery, further work was done to encourage more workplaces to sign up. In total, 54 workplaces registered with close to 30,000 CBD employees being offered the programme.

When Active a2b was officially launched on January 5, the first working day of the year, a template email (Appendix 2) was forwarded to the registered workplace contacts. They were asked to edit the email as they saw fit, making it specific to their workplace, and then distribute it via email to their Wellington CBD staff. They were also encouraged to post a notice about the programme on their intranet and ensure that the marketing posters, that were sent in late December, were in obvious places around the office.

The majority of participants were recruited through this process. Several reminder emails to workplace contacts, with updated information and template emails were sent in week five and week nine and resulted in small increases in registration numbers.

In addition to using workplace contacts to recruit participants, several other methods were employed. Active a2b media releases resulted in several features in Wellington newspapers, and small fliers were distributed to people along Lambton Quay during a lunch hour. These were significantly less effective than using the workplace contacts to distribute emails to their staff.

The largest number of registrants came from the two largest employers, Wellington Hospital and Victoria University. Several large employers were prohibited from sending out the initial email to staff and relied on promoting the programme via their intranet. This resulted in a significantly lower number of sign ups.

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Registration form

Participants registered for the programme by clicking on a link in the initial email sent out by workplace contacts. People could also find their way to the registration form (Appendix 4) via the Active a2b webpage which was advertised in newspapers, posters and fliers.

The registration form collected contact, demographic and travel to work information. Participants were also asked to answer where along a 'stages of change' spectrum they were for both walking/running and cycling to work. The options they were given were:

- **Almost always** walk/run or cycle to work
- Walk/run or cycle to work about **half the time**
- Walk/run or cycle to work on **some occasions**
- **Think seriously** about the pros and cons of walking/running or cycling to work but rarely do it
- **Sometimes think about** walking/running or cycling to work but never actually do it or
- **Not even consider** walking/running or cycling to work

3.2.2 Phone calls

Data was also collected during the phone calls to '**Active a2b Plus**' participants. The first phone call was used to record the participants' address, for kilometres travelled analysis, while the second phone call captured general comments on the programme and an update on whether participants' walking and cycling had increased.

172 of the 212 participants in the Active a2b Plus group received welcome phone calls. Of those, 142 also received a follow-up phone call around 6 weeks later.

3.2.3 Follow-up evaluation survey

The follow-up survey was a 2-3 minute survey that was distributed over three weeks in April and May (Appendix 5). It contained the same travel to work and stages of change questions found in the registration form but also gathered feedback on the effectiveness of the tools available throughout the programme and the overall impact of the programme in terms of increasing walking, cycling and individuals' health and wellbeing. 51% of all participants (453) completed the survey while the response rate for Active a2b Plus participants was just below 70%. The demographics of those who completed the survey matched closely with those who initially registered with only a slight under representation of females aged 20-29 for the Active a2b standard group (Appendix 6).

3.2.4 Emails from participants

Comments were also collected from emails and phone calls received by the Active a2b team. Each week, through the e-newsletter, at least one participant would share a story of how they had incorporated walking and cycling into their journey to work since starting Active a2b. This was a

rich source of feedback and provided a more detailed account of how behavioural changes had occurred.

3.3 Calculation of Kilometres Travelled (KT)

Workplaces addresses and the home addresses supplied by Active a2b Plus participants during phone conversations were geocoded and used in a Greater Wellington customised ArcGIS template to calculate KT values based on travel mode.

To calculate KT, the main dataset needed to be broken down into smaller datasets for individual workplaces, and then each workplace dataset is broken down further by usual travel to work mode.¹ The template is then used to run each analysis, with KT values based on the shortest route.²

3.4 Statistical Analysis

In this report all the comparisons that have been made were tested for statistical significance at the 95 percent confidence level (alpha level set at 0.05). The alpha level refers to the probability that a difference exists when in actuality it does not.

The confidence interval for a proportion, π , is:

$$p \pm z\sigma_p$$

where p is the proportion in the sample, z depends on the level of confidence desired ($z = 1.96$ for 95% confidence), and σ_p , the standard error of a proportion, is equal to:

$$\sigma_p = \sqrt{\frac{\pi(1-\pi)}{N}}$$

where π is the proportion in the population and N is the sample size.

The commentary in this report, unless otherwise stated, only includes findings/changes that are significant at the 95% confidence level. Whilst other trends may be apparent these are not significant at this level with the current sample sizes in the datasets.

A multiple regression was used to determine whether a number of survey and background variables could be used to predict the mode share of active mode trips to work per week after participating in the Active a2b programme. The background or explanatory variables used included demographic factors, travel mode and Active a2b tools requested.

¹ The usual modes used for KT calculations are: car (drive alone, drive with passenger and drive as passenger), active (walk or cycle), PTbus (bus), and PTOther (train, ferry and other).

² Some criticise this as unacceptable inaccurate because people often do not take the shortest or quickest route, however, recent analysis has shown that assuming direct routes is reasonably accurate (NZTA, 2009, *Kilometres Travelled and Vehicle Occupancy in Urban Areas: Improving evaluation and monitoring* Research Report 399 prepared by Sullivan, C and O'Fallon, C.).

4. Participant characteristics

4.1 Participant demographics

A total of 890 people registered for the programme and 212 of those met the ‘Active a2b Plus’ criteria, driving to work at least twice a week. Two thirds of standard participants were female while a larger proportion, 74%, of the Active a2b Plus group were female. For both the standard and the Active a2b Plus groups, there were more people aged between 30 and 39 than any other age group (Figure 1).

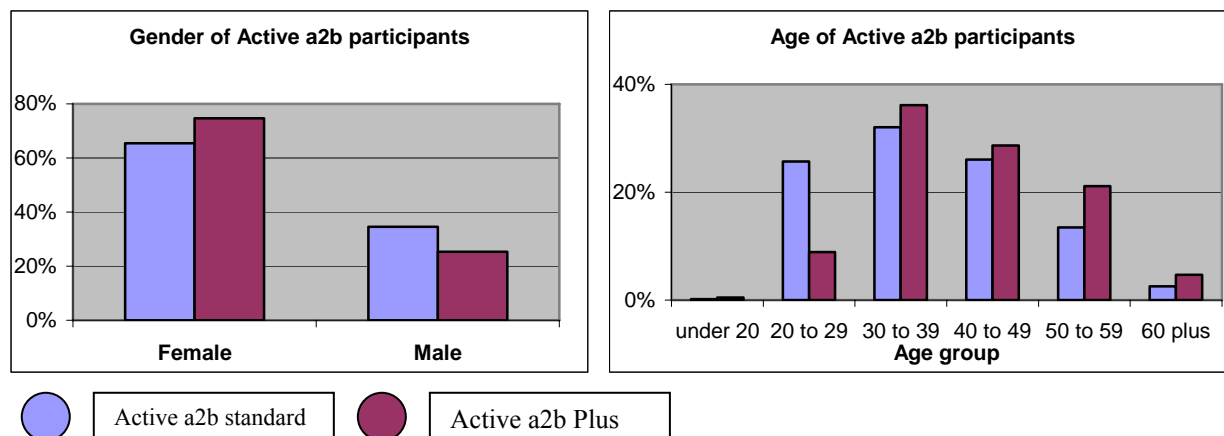


Figure 1 Demographics of Active a2b standard and Active a2b Plus participants.

4.2 Kilometres travelled by Active a2b Plus participants

Almost 40% of those that drove to work at least twice a week (Active a2b Plus participants), travelled between 5 and 10km to get to work (Figure 2). There were very few Active a2b Plus participants who drove to work from less than 2km away.

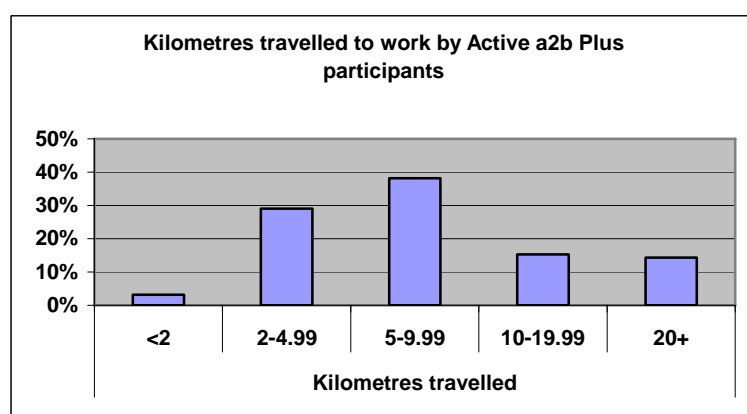


Figure 2 Kilometres travelled to work by Active a2b Plus participants

4.3 Stages of change

Table 1 displays the ‘stages of change’ for participants at the time they registered for the programme. As would be expected, a higher proportion can be seen in the ‘almost always’ category for standard participants compared with Active a2b Plus participants for both walking and cycling. A much higher number of Active a2b Plus participants did ‘not consider’ walking to work than standard participants, while for cycling to work, the ‘think seriously but rarely do it,’ category had the higher representation of Active a2b Plus participants.

Table 1 Walking/running and cycling to work “stages of change” for participants at the time of registration.

	Walk/run to work		Cycle to work	
	Standard participants	Active a2b Plus participants	Standard participants	Active a2b Plus participants
Almost always	31.1%	3.5%	15.2%	1.5%
Half the time	11.9%	9.4%	5.8%	5.1%
Some occasions	17.3%	23.2%	12.8%	14.1%
Think seriously but rarely do it	7.8%	14.3%	6.1%	18.2%
Sometimes think about but never do it	12.1%	18.7%	17.7%	17.2%
Not consider	19.9%	31.0%	42.4%	43.9%

5. Evaluation of Active a2b programme

5.1 Modal shift before and after Active a2b

Mode share for active modes increased for both Active a2b Plus and standard participants. For the Active a2b Plus group, active mode share increased from 11.3% to 29.5% of trips to work and for standard participants, active mode share increased from 48.1% to 56.6% of trips to work.

For Active a2b Plus participants, walking trips increased from 6.7% to 15.1% while cycling trips increased from 4.6% to 14.4%. Car trips for this group reduced from 82.2% to 60.5%. (Figure 3)

Active a2b standard participants increased their cycling trips from 16.3% to 20.8% (Figure 4). Public transport trips for this group reduced by 10.3 percentage points.

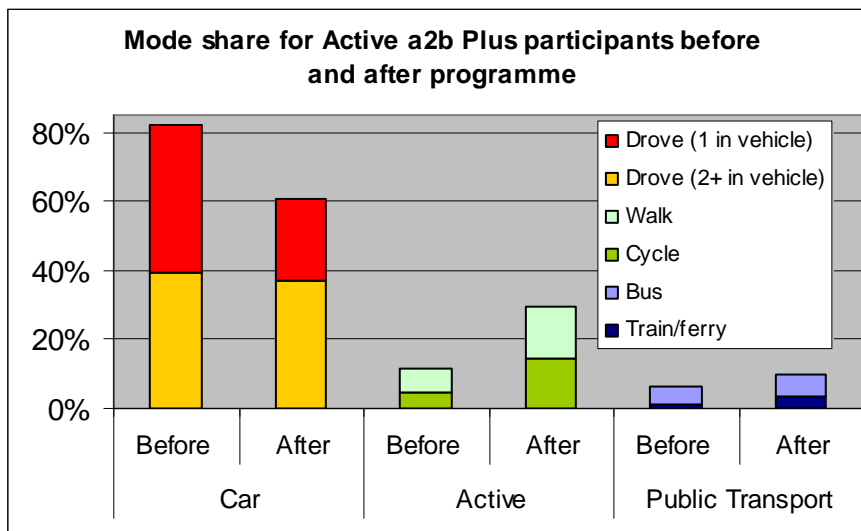


Figure 3 Mode share for Active a2b Plus participants before and after programme

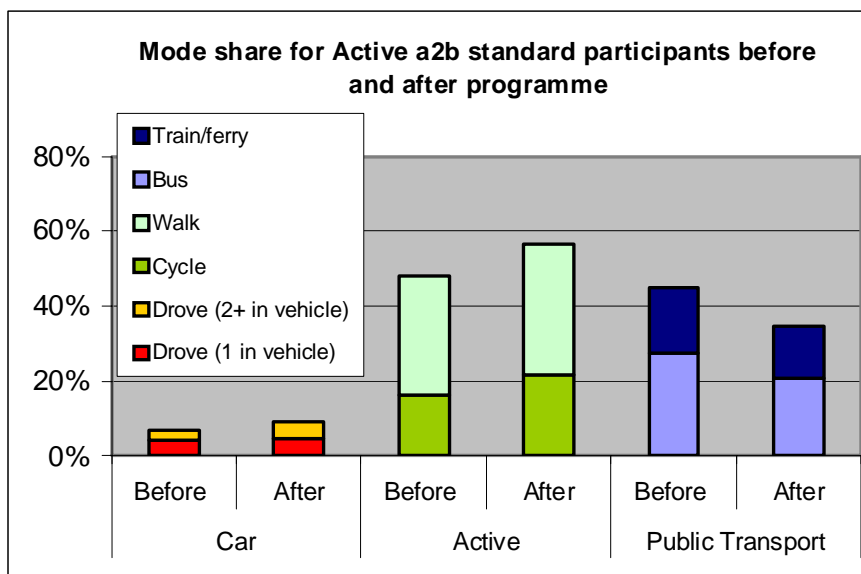


Figure 4 Mode share for Active a2b standard participants before and after programme

5.2 Modal shift by distance travelled to work

The distance people travel to work is likely to impact on their decision to walk or cycle. Short trips are of particular interest as they are considered the easiest to replace with active modes.

Figure 5 shows a comparison of how the Active a2b Plus participants travelled to work. Trips were grouped by distance for analysis. The KT by car decreased for every trip distance and active transport increased for every trip distance except those over 20km.

149 of the Active a2b Plus group had provided home addresses during phone conversations, and filled in both the registration and the evaluation forms. From this sample, it was estimated that the average Active a2b Plus participant reduced their vehicle kilometres travelled (KT) by 30.3kms per week. Based on these results, the Active a2b Plus group collectively decreased their weekly KT by 6402km.

An average increase of 2.4km per week in walking and 3.7km in cycling was calculated for each Active a2b Plus participant

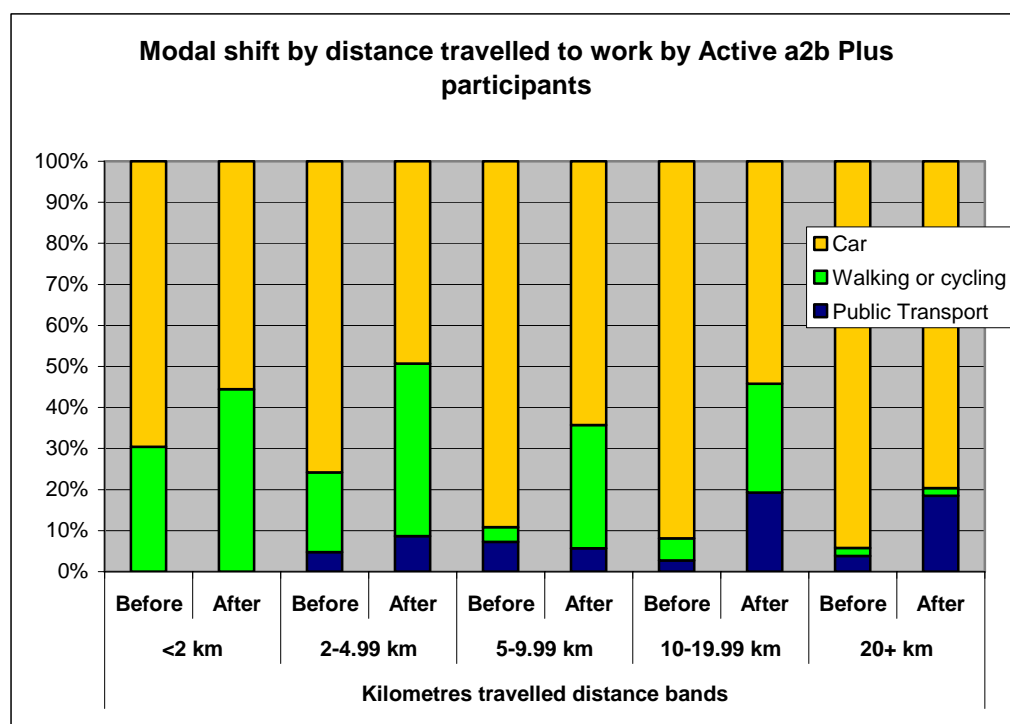


Figure 5 Before and after mode share by distance travelled to work for Active a2b Plus participants.

5.3 Cost benefit analysis of programme

Active a2b was funded as part of Greater Wellington’s Travel Demand Management Programme with a total budget of \$22,000. This included the development of tools, design of marketing materials, communications, project evaluation costs and a project coordinator.

The New Zealand Transport Agency value each additional kilometre walked at \$2.70 and each kilometre cycled at \$1.45³. Using these values alongside the active mode increases detailed in section 5.2, the estimated benefits of Active a2b were evaluated. The total benefits for all participants over the 20 week life of the programme were estimated at \$124,140 (see table below) – producing \$5.60 worth of benefits for every dollar spent (cost benefit ratio of 1:5.6)⁴

Table 2 Estimated benefits accrued from Active a2b programme

	All 'Plus' participants (212)	All standard participants (678)	All participants (890)
Weekly benefits from walking	\$1374	\$2020	\$3394
Weekly benefits from cycling	\$1138	\$1675	\$2813
Total weekly benefits	\$2512	\$3695	\$6207
Total benefits over 20 weeks	\$50,240	\$73,900	\$124,140

These calculations are based on the assumption that all participants started the programme on day one and that an increase in active travel only occurred during the life of the programme. Overall, this is likely to have resulted in an underestimation of the benefits, as many participants would continue with new active travel routines. The calculations also assume that standard participants have the same 'kilometres travelled to work' spread as Plus participants and exclude the benefits from active travel outside of journey to work trips, which 45% of participants reported to have increased.

5.4 Stages of change

Figures 6 and 7 show the shift that had occurred by the end of the programme in the 'stages of change' for both Active a2b Plus and standard participants. An increase was seen in the number of 'Plus' participants that reported to 'almost always' walk/run and cycle to work.

For the standard participants, there was an increase of 6 percentage points in those that 'almost always' cycled to work. A significant number of those that originally 'sometimes thought about but never actually' walked/ran or cycled had moved out of that category by the end of the programme. Figure 7 suggests that for walking/running, standard participants moved into the 'not consider' category while for cycling, standard participants moved towards the 'doing' end of the spectrum.

³ NZ Transport Agency, Effective from January 2010, *Economic Evaluation Manual – volume 2* – Page 8-11

⁴ An alternative source, (NZTA Research Report 359 by Genter *et al* (2008), *Valuing the health benefits of active modes*) values walking at \$4.27 per km and cycling at \$3.7 per km. Using these figures, the total benefits of the programme are valued at \$190,860.00, producing a cost benefit ratio of 1:8.7.

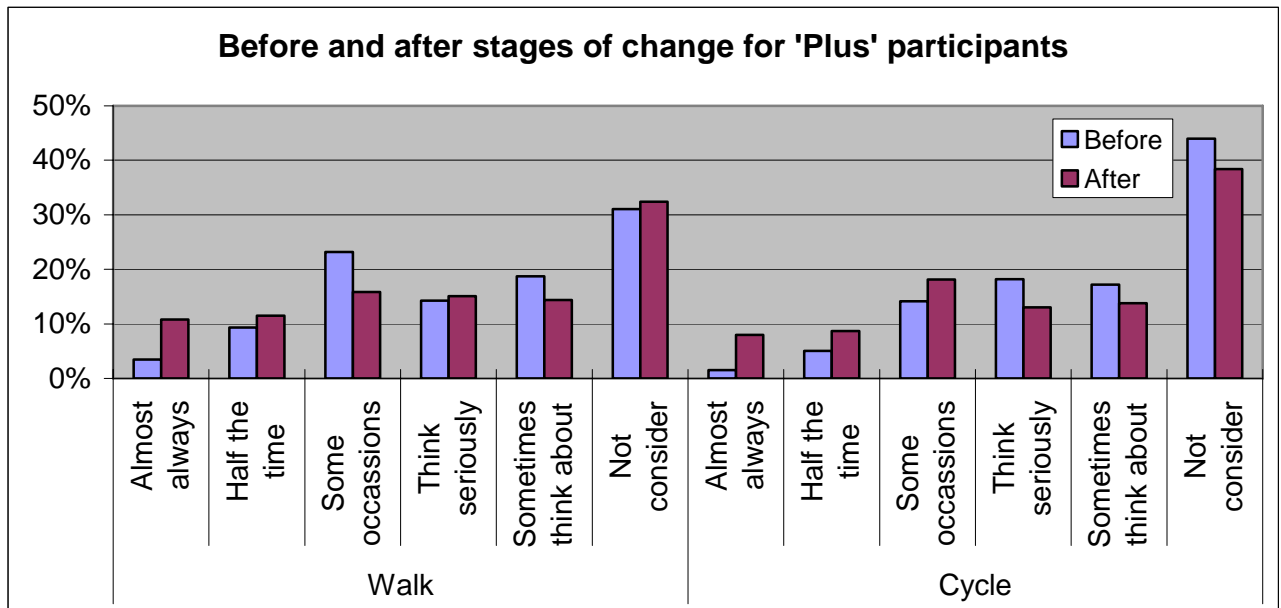


Figure 6 Shift in walking and cycling to work 'stages of change' for Active a2b Plus participants

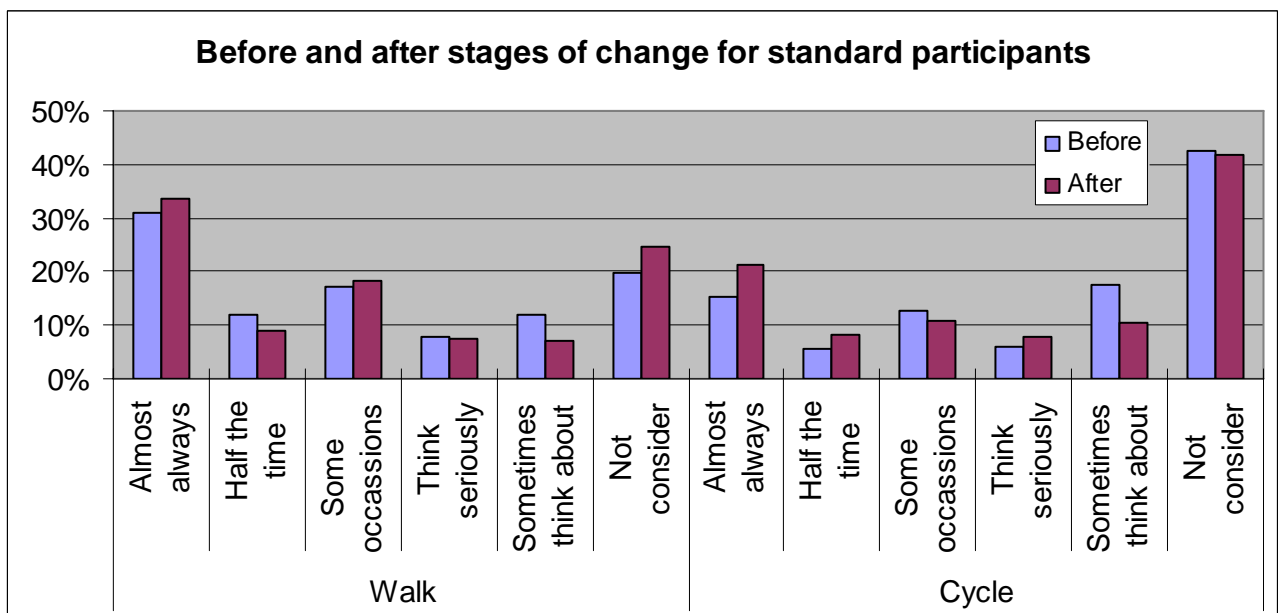


Figure 7 Shift in walking and cycling to work 'stages of change' for Active a2b standard participants

Results from a multiple regression model indicated that a participant's 'stage of change' was the key variable for predicting the proportion of travel to work by active modes after participating in Active a2b. For example, the more positive a person's stage of change before Active a2b, the more likely the person is to have a higher proportion of travel to work trips by active modes. If an Active a2b Plus participant was not at least at the 'think seriously' stage of change when they started, there was little chance of them increasing their walking and cycling to work.

The vast majority of those who initially ‘did not consider’ walking or cycling to work had not moved out of that stage of change by the end of the programme (Figure 8) while those that ‘sometimes thought about,’ showed more positive movement (Figure 9). Almost 22% of participants who ‘sometimes thought about’ walking to work when they registered, walked on some occasions by the end of the programme. The same was true for cycling.

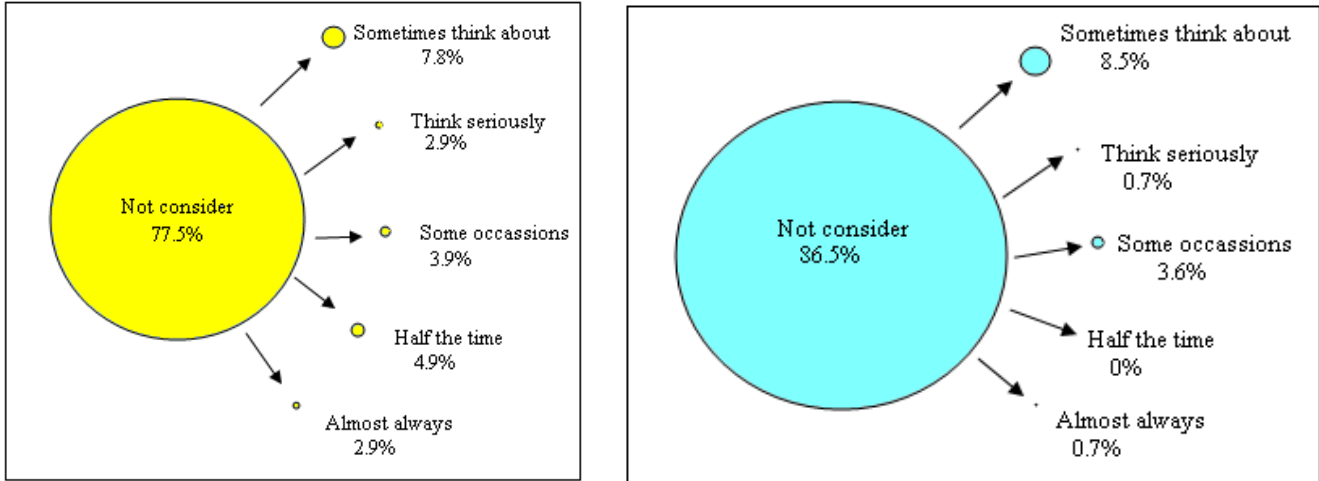


Figure 8 The final stage of change for all participants who ‘did not consider’ walking (yellow) or cycling (blue) at the time of registration

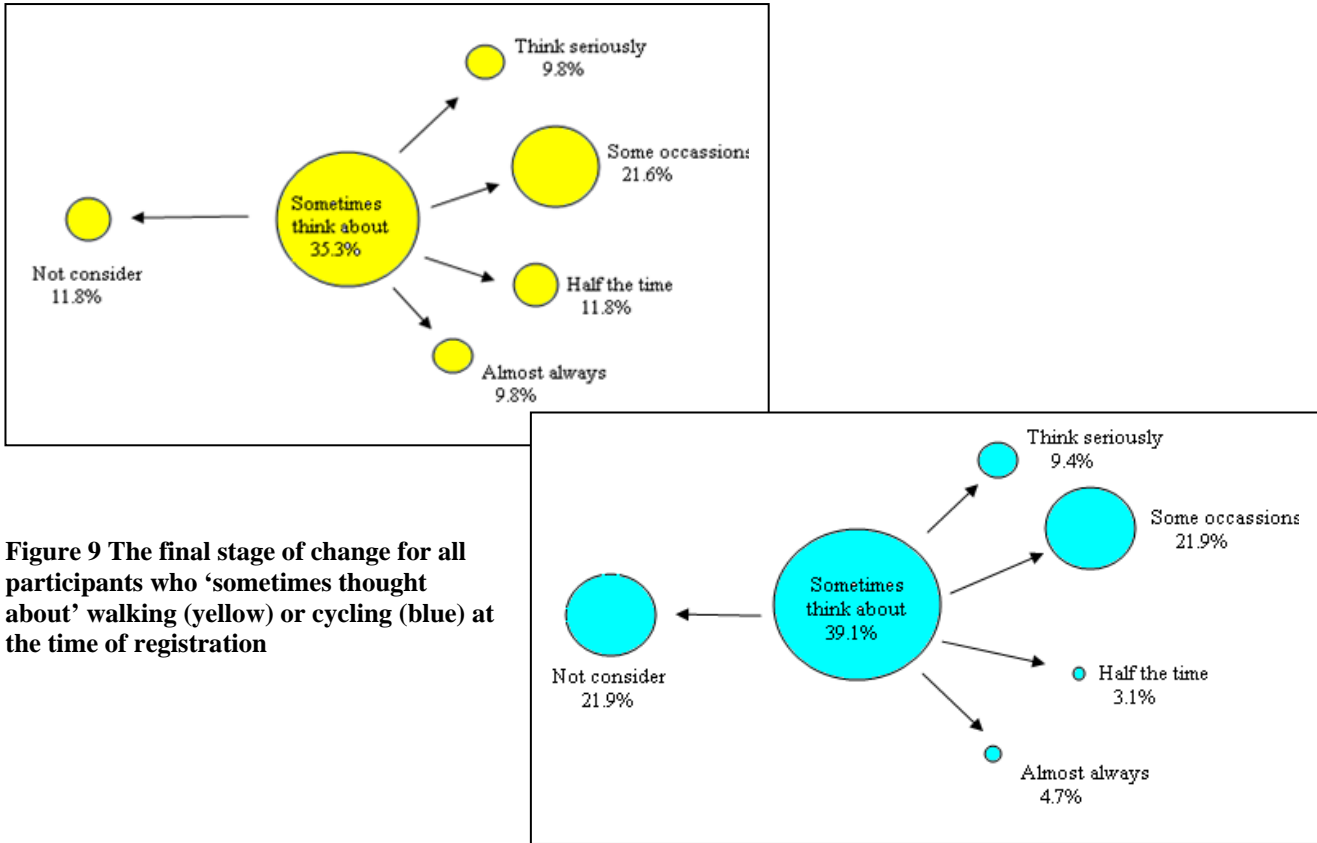


Figure 9 The final stage of change for all participants who ‘sometimes thought about’ walking (yellow) or cycling (blue) at the time of registration

5.5 Tools

5.5.1 Tools distributed

Of the tools available, the desktop calendar proved the most popular with 220 being requested (Table 2). 195 discount cards were also distributed while 56 people requested the family pack and 42 requested the ride to work brochure. 60 people requested to be taken off the e-newsletter list, leaving 830 people receiving the weekly online updates. Phone calls were only received by the Active a2b Plus group with 169 successfully reached.

5.5.2 Usefulness of tools

For the Active a2b Plus participants, the personal phone calls were rated as the most useful tool they received. Both groups found the weekly e-newsletter helpful, along with the desktop calendar and journey planner. The Active a2b standard group rated the February challenges and one-off events as the most useful tools (Table 2).

Table 3 Number of participants who received tools and the percentage of those who found them helpful

	Number distributed	Active a2b plus (% who rated the tool useful)	Active a2b standard (% who rated the tool useful)
Phone Call	169	86	n/a
E-newsletter	830	83	80
Desktop Calendar	220	80	78
Journey Planner	Not known	77	84
Walk2Work Day	Not known	73	87
Bikewise Challenge	254	72	83
Summer Steps Challenge	406	70	85
Go By Bike Day	Not known	67	85
Discount Card	195	64	62
Nominate a Mate	Not known	57	65
Ride to Work brochure	42	57	62
Family Pack	56	48	50

5.5.3 Summer Steps and Bikewise Challenges

At the time of registration, 406 participants signed up for the Summer Steps Challenge and 254 participants signed up for the Bikewise Challenge. Both events ran until the end of February, at which point the two options were removed from the Active a2b registration form. Both challenges were rated highly in the evaluation survey as useful tools, with Active a2b standard participants finding them the most useful, along with the Go By Bike and Walk2Work day events, of all the tools on offer.

The following comments regarding the challenges were received from participants in the evaluation survey:

“I think it’s a great idea and would sign up again next year! Especially the Bikewise challenge adds a competitive element which motivates you”

“I particularly cycled as much as possible in February, also as part of the bikewise challenge. I have decided from this to continue cycling as often as I can”

“Summer steps challenge was good to get our whole team involved, however the website was rather clunky and not user friendly”

“Doing more exercise - have taken up workplace challenge to walk to work - starting this week”

5.5.4 Bike buddy and cycling workshop outcomes

47 participants, mostly female, indicated they were interested in being a bike buddy and being matched with a mentor. These people each received an email with a list of potential mentors in their area. 49 participants registered as bike mentors, with an additional 18 mentors recruited from within the cycling community, outside of the Active a2b programme. The majority of the bike mentors were male.

The Active a2b team knew of ten buddy/mentor matches that resulted in rides together. From the few people who used the scheme, very positive feedback was received. The following comments came from four women who were not previously cycling:

“I was only really interested in the cycle programmes and found the buddy scheme invaluable. Thank you for making it so easy to contact a bike mentor and my bike mentor was excellent. Cheers”

“The bike buddy programme gave me the confidence to cycle to work for the first time. Without an experience cyclist showing the safest route to work and riding with me I would NEVER have attempted it.”

“Got a bike buddy and regularly cycle to work, timetable allowing”

“Have managed to add a cycle to work at least twice a week. Have also found partners to go cycling with on weekends”

12 people attended the Bikeability workshop while 19 attended the Fix a Flattie in 5 minutes workshop. The following comments were received regarding these workshops:

“The fix a flattie in 5 mins workshop was great and it would be nice to see other free workshops around bike maintenance and safety”

“I really found the bikewise workshop really helpful.”

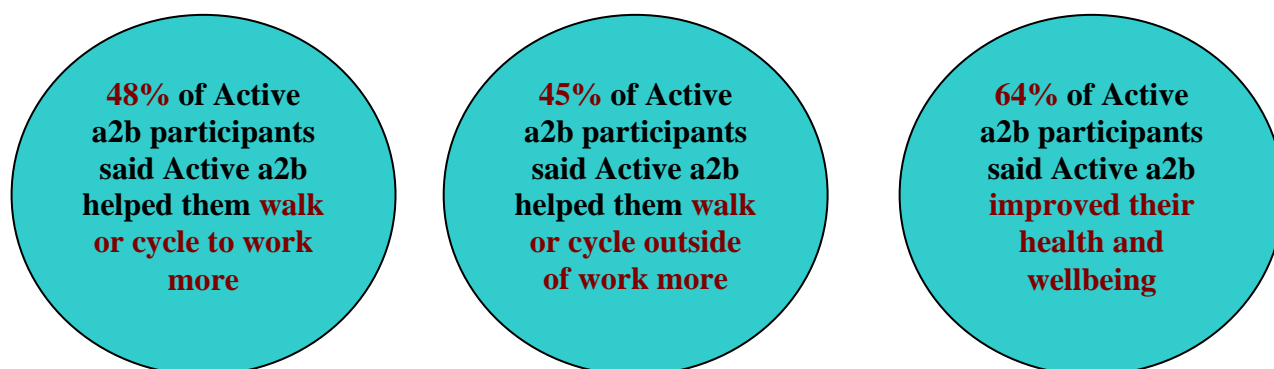
“I attended a how to repair a tyre puncture bike workshop which was really helpful, and got free useful stuff there too”

“The bike workshop was good; you gain more confidence on the road as the result of the workshop”

5.6 Reported influence of Active a2b programme

The follow-up survey contained three questions relating to how helpful participants felt the programme had been for them. These key questions showed very positive results and suggested that the increase of active modes may have been more than was captured by the typical week ‘travel to work’ questions.

48% of all participants reported that Active a2b had helped them walk and cycle to work more often while 45% reported it had helped them walk and cycle outside of work more often. 64% of participants also said that Active a2b had improved their health and wellbeing



6. Discussion

Both the Active a2b Plus and standard participants increased their active transport, while only the 'Plus' participants reduced their car trips. This was unsurprising given that the standard participants did not initially drive to work in a vehicle more than once a week, and therefore had few car trips to reduce. While the Plus participants increased both walking and cycling significantly, standard participants showed a significant increase in cycling but only a minor (non significant) increase in walking. Given the change in season, and the fact that standard participants already used active modes for 48.1% of their trips to work at the time they registered for the programme, the increases recorded in May were still noteworthy. Evaluation of a control group, not participating in Active a2b, would be needed to more accurately portray the change in mode share. This would take into account how participants *would have* travelled to work in May in the absence of the programme. Assuming cycling and walking rates decrease in late autumn compared with summer, the true increase in active modes for Active a2b participants is likely to be higher than shown in section 5.

The kilometres travelled information revealed that journey to work trips up to 20km have the potential to be replaced by active modes. This is contrary to the common belief that short trips, less than 5km, are the best to target as they are the easiest to replace with walking or cycling. A small sample size for the less than 2km group may have had an effect on the data but Figure 5 clearly shows the potential for moving mid distance trips up to 20km to active modes.

The 'stage of change' of an Active a2b Plus participant at the beginning of the programme was a strong indicator as to whether behaviour change could be encouraged. Those that 'did not consider' walking or cycling to work when they registered, showed little change. However, a longer term evaluation would be needed to determine whether, while no shift in 'stage of change' occurred over the 5 month programme, participating in Active a2b would stimulate changes for these participants in the future.

For both mode share and stages of change, more positive changes were seen for cycling than for walking. Increases in cycle to work trips were significant for both groups, while walking to work increases were only significant for the 'Plus' group. There were also higher increases in the 'almost always' and 'half the time' and a larger reduction in 'not consider' stages of change for cycling compared with walking. This could suggest that negative perceptions or a lack of social support for cycling are what prohibit people from getting on a bike, but that these can be overcome with a programme such as Active a2b. Walking is a common activity that most people have personal experience doing everyday. The reasons people do not walk to work may be less related to negative perceptions and more related to logistical problems such as distance and time. The positive cycling changes may have also been a result of a stronger focus on cycling, reported in section 6.2.2.

The success of the challenges and events including Summer Steps, Bikewise, Walk2Work Day and Go By Bike Day for the standard group participants suggests that these events are useful for acknowledging and celebrating people who already walk and cycle to work. With levels of active transport declining over the last decade, these may be important to encourage those who walk and cycle to continue doing so.

6.1 Key successes

6.1.1 Health and wellbeing

Branding Active a2b as a ‘health and wellbeing’ programme made it broadly appealing and encouraged a large number of people, many who may not have had an interest in purely transport related goals such as reducing congestion, to register. It was especially attractive to women between 30 and 50, who could see the advantages in getting external motivation to help increase their physical activity. The health and wellbeing results from walking or cycling more were tangible and almost immediate for participants. This appeared to strengthen their resolve to continue and may have led to more long-term and sustainable changes than those based on altruistic motivation.

Active a2b attempted to improve participant wellbeing by encouraging more active transport. Despite the limited wellbeing focus, participants reported a positive effect and were still proud to report on the programme’s success in increasing their levels of exercise, regardless of whether or not it had involved active transport. While the health and wellbeing outcomes were undeniably positive, they did not always correlate with a reduction in private vehicle use.

6.1.2 Spill over of behaviour changes

Active a2b participants reported changes in their behaviour beyond travel to work journeys. For some, active transport was not an option for their work commute but the programme encouraged them to use their car less in the weekend.

I occasionally walk into town and to the supermarket during the weekend rather than drive (and I ALWAYS drove everywhere during weekends)

We are now actively using our bikes at the weekend to travel to the beach or into town and so reduce the use of the car and get more exercise.

Despite Active a2b focussing on active transport, the programme also saw some people reduce their car use by moving into public transport. The second phone call to core group participants revealed that a number of people that had previously driven to work between 2-5 times a week, were now using public transport for the days that they weren’t walking or cycling, instead of driving. This also spilled into non-journey to work trips.

I consciously use public transport instead of driving a car. Even coming into Wellington at weekends and evenings I have used trains and buses rather than driving.

One participant reported that Active a2b had encouraged her to get her family active and many participants reported an increase in their general level of health and fitness, including several who had reached their targets of losing a significant amount of weight.

6.1.3 Active a2b News

The weekly newsletters were the main form of communication for most participants, and proved to be highly successful. They were initially sent to everyone that registered for the programme but over

the five months, 60 people unsubscribed. The newsletters received very positive feedback in the evaluation surveys, with a significant number of people reporting that they were inspired and interested to read about the active transport efforts of other participants.

6.1.4 Signing up large workplaces

Targeting the main employers in Wellington CBD was an effective way of recruiting participants. The large organisations, such as the Wellington hospital, Victoria University of Wellington and the Ministry of Health made up a substantial percentage of all participants. These large workplaces were also more likely to have a staff member dedicated to promoting programmes such as Active a2b, and played a crucial part in recruiting participants.

6.2 Challenges

6.2.1 Multiple programme overlap

Active a2b was one of several programmes that were on offer at the time promoting physical activity and active transport. Feedback from participants suggested that there was some confusion about how the different programmes were related to each other. In particular, The Summer Steps and Bikewise Challenges, that were run in February and advertised as part of Active a2b, caused confusion. Some people did not understand that Active a2b was a larger programme with a number of different tools and resources, and that these challenges were simply promoted through Active a2b communication, but did not comprise the programme alone.

6.2.2 Cycling focus

Overall, participants commented that there was too strong a focus on cycling and not sufficient coverage of walking stories or initiatives. This was partly due to the exposure cycling received during Bikewise month in February and partly due to the higher number of cycle related resources such as puncture and skills workshops, safety brochures and the bike buddy scheme.

6.3 Recommendations

From comments received in the evaluation survey and from phone conversations with participants, the following recommendations have been made to improve similar programmes in the future:

6.3.1 Workplace buy-in and best contact

Some participants expressed that they would have been better supported if there had been wider recognition of the programme within their workplace. Active a2b was a low maintenance programme for a workplace and did not require a level of commitment beyond forwarding initial communication to staff. While this aspect was highly attractive to many organisations, outcomes of the programme may have been even greater had there been a higher level of buy-in from workplace contacts. In the future, recommending organisations take on more responsibility for promoting Active a2b and holding events internally may improve participation rates and behaviour change outcomes – especially with the 54 workplaces that signed up in 2010.

6.3.2 Recording secondary mode and mode FROM work

For both the registration form and the follow-up survey, only the primary mode TO work was collected. This was done for ease of evaluation but a number of participants were disappointed they could not record their secondary mode or their mode FROM work, which for those people had been the areas where active transport was integrated into their commute. Regardless of whether these factors are included in evaluation in the future, it is recommended that they are included in the questionnaires that participants complete, in order to acknowledge active transport achievements outside of the primary mode TO work.

6.3.3 Branded equipment

Several participants commented that giving away branded equipment such as high visibility bag covers as part of Active a2b would be both useful, and a way to identify others participating in the programme. Branded equipment could act as an **incentive** to increase active transport, a **visual prompt** to remind participants of their commitment and a way to build **norms**, when many people are seen to use them. These are all behaviour change tools recommended for community based social marketing and, depending on costs, may therefore make including branded equipment an effective addition to the programme.

6.3.4 Nominate a Mate feedback process

Each week that a participant sent a friend feedback through Nominate a Mate, they were required to retype each supporter's email address. This discouraged at least one person from using the tool and should be addressed for future use.

6.3.5 Benefits for those already active

Several participants commented that while they were initially interested in the programme, they felt it was targeted at people who were not already active, so had little to offer for them as they already walked and cycled. In the future, it would be helpful to consider what could be offered to people who are already active, to acknowledge the efforts they already make, or to encourage them to increase their active transport even further.

7. Conclusion

Active a2b was a behaviour change programme that resulted in significant increases in active travel. Quantitative data, supported by participant comments, confirmed that the programme had been successful in achieving its aims of increasing kilometres travelled (KT) by active modes and decreasing KT for car trips.

48% of participants reported that Active a2b helped them walk and cycle to work more often while 45% reported that it had helped them walk and cycle outside of work more often. This is evidence that the programme also achieved its goal of increasing experience of active modes.

Positive outcomes from the cycle workshops and the bike buddy scheme confirm that participant's increased their cycle skills and their confidence in using active modes and the high number of participants that received the weekly e-newsletter contributed to an increase in social support for active travel.

Finally, through Active a2b, Greater Wellington was able to engage 54 workplaces, increasing its profile and ensuring that most major Wellington workplaces, and their CBD employees, are aware of the work Greater Wellington does to support active travel.

Appendix 1. Letter to Human Resources contacts – sent December 2009

Human resources contact name

Job position

Workplace

Workplace address

Wellington

Dear **Firstname**,

Active a2b – An easy way to improve wellbeing

Are you looking for an easy, cost effective way to improve the wellbeing and productivity of your staff? Active a2b is a health and wellness programme that can give your workplace a real point of difference.

Active a2b is free of charge to businesses in the Wellington CBD and runs from January to March 2010. It fits in with your employees' lifestyles by helping them get active on their way to and from work. The programme is very easy to administer and run by Greater Wellington regional council.

What's in this for **workplace name**?

Walking or cycling to work allows busy employees to fit physical activity into their existing lifestyles. This results in a happier and more productive workforce with less absenteeism, turnover and health-care costs.⁵

What does the workplace receive?

- Easy-to-use communications materials ready to be sent out in January 2010
- Then we take over the full implementation of the programme and report back to you on the number of staff participating and the results achieved

What do individual participants receive?

Active a2b provides three months of personalised support. Participants receive a programme built from the following groups of tools:

- **Competitions and challenges:** Team work and challenges for walkers and cyclists
- **Social support:** Prize packs for participants and their supporters
- **Advice information and training:** One on one support from our personal travel planner, free cycling skills workshops

⁵ http://www.centre4activeliving.ca/workplace/beforestart/benefits_bottomline.html

- **Encouragement and progress measurement:** Tools to record progress against goals, quantify benefits and a regular e-newsletter

What does **workplace name have to do to secure a place on this programme?**

Contact us with the number of employees at your Wellington CBD workplace(s). You can email us on active@gw.govt.nz or call (04) 381 7983.

We'll then send you the pre-prepared communications materials for you to send out to your staff in January. Staff register online directly with us and we look after the programme from there and send you the results.

For more information please contact us or visit www.gw.govt.nz/a2b

Yours sincerely

Susan Hutchinson-Daniel
Sustainable Transport Projects Coordinator
Transport Strategy Implementation

DD: 04 801 1081
susan.hutchinson-daniel@gw.govt.nz



Appendix 2. Email sent by Human Resources contacts to employees – sent January 5 for pre-registered workplaces.



Do you want to get fit and healthy this summer?

Register for Active a2b today!

[Workplace name] has signed up for Greater Wellington's Active a2b programme because we recognise the benefits of having active and healthy employees. Now you can participate in an initiative that provides you with tools and support to get fit and healthy this summer – at zero cost!

What is Active a2b?

Active a2b is a health and wellbeing programme run by Greater Wellington to encourage employees in Wellington workplaces to walk or cycle to work. It runs from January to March 2010 and aims to transform your trip to work into something valuable.

Why would you want to walk or cycle to work?

- You'll get fitter. Even 10-15 minutes of walking or cycling twice a day is enough to give you significant health benefits. The more and further you walk or cycle, the fitter you get.
- You'll arrive at work energised, alert and ready to face the day.
- For people who live within 5km of their CBD workplace, cycling is the fastest way to get to work. Trips of 8 to 12 km in urban areas may take the same time or less on a bike than by car. For both cycling and walking, you can go from door to door without congestion or parking problems.
- You'll save money on transport. Once you have a bike or a pair of comfortable shoes, walking and cycling are free. You might save money on a gym membership too.

- When you're on the streets on your bike or on your feet, it can be a social event. You'll also be amazed at all the things going on around you that you never noticed from your car.

Our three month programme is designed to be personalised to every individual. Each participant receives a programme that effectively motivates and supports them to meet their own goals. Each programme is built from the following groups of tools:

- **Competitions and challenges:** Team work and challenges for walkers and cyclists with Living Street's [Summer Steps Challenge](#) and the [Bikewise Challenge](#).
- **Social support:** Prize packs can be won by participants and their supporters. Family packs are available with tailored information for school and household journeys.
- **Advice information and training:** One on one phone and email support from our personal travel planner and an invitation to attend free cycling workshops.
- **Encouragement and progress measurement:** A desktop calendar to record progress against goals, regular e-newsletters and an online calculator to quantify benefits gained
- **Events:** Celebrate at [Walk2Work Day](#) on 10 March and [Go by Bike Day](#) 17 February

You can read more about the tools available at: www.gw.govt.nz/active/tools

Registering for the programme is easy and only takes a few minutes. Choose the type of tools and support which suit you and get active!

[Register here](#) from January 5!

Appendix 3. Active a2b tools and resources available

Desktop calendar

This tool is a way to keep track of how you're getting on with your walking and cycling goals. Every day on the calendar has room for you to record how you have travelled to work and each month has an inspirational quote and a space for notes about your goals.

Nominate a mate – and win!

This tool has been designed so that friends and family can support and encourage you to meet your active transport goals. Once you have registered for the Active a2b programme, you can designate up to three people who you want to keep up-to-date with your progress. If they accept your invitation, they receive weekly updates on how you're going. By sending your mates an update every week, both you and all your mates go into the weekly draw to win vouchers from New World, Paper Plus, the CD and DVD store and the Embassy theatre.

Lunchtime cycling workshops

Fix a Flattie in 5 mins and Bikeability workshops are both available on demand. Puncture clinic workshops equip you with skills to fix a puncture if you get caught out. The bikeability workshop is an indoor presentation covering everything you wanted to know about commuting to work on a bike. Both presentations run for around 30 minutes. Date and venue confirmed according to demand.

Active travel discount card

The discounts available when you present this card will make it easier for you to get what you need to walk, cycle or run more often. Just pop it in your wallet and present it at participating footwear, apparel or cycle shops and you can receive discounts and special offers. For details on participating stores and their discounts visit:

<http://www.gw.govt.nz/discountcard>

Bike buddies

The bike buddy tool is used to match experienced riders (mentors) with new people who are eager to ride but not yet confident on the road (buddies). Once you register for the Active a2b programme you can request the bike buddy tool. We will match mentors and buddies in your area.

Family Pack

If you are interested in walking and cycling more with your children, you can request one of these packs. The pack includes tips for helping your children develop good road sense, a worksheet for safety checking your child's bike, fun stickers, and more!

Active Transport calculator:

As an extension of the walking and cycling online journey planner, you can now calculate the benefits accrued from using active transport to get to work. To calculate the benefits for your personal route, enter your trip details at:

www.journeyplanner.org.nz

Bike wise

February is BikeWise month and there are lots of biking events going on around the country. To check out what's happening in the Wellington region or to register a Bike wise event go to:

<http://www.bikewise.co.nz>

Summer Steps Challenge

Living Streets Aotearoa are trialling a new health and transport challenge aimed at getting workers out and about and walking for their everyday journeys.

Workers in Wellington are invited to take part in The Summer Steps pilot challenge, where teams of colleagues work together to compete against other teams around the region to see who can do the most walking.

Points will be scored for the length of time people spend walking (so no worries if you are a slow walker or not very fit) and there will be bonus points available if you also reduce your car journeys. The challenge will run through February 2010 and the team with the most points at the end will be the winner.

Commuting to work by bike brochure

Everything you wanted to know about riding to work...but were afraid to ask. Answers to the ten most frequently asked questions about riding to work.

[Ride to work brochure.pdf](#)

Appendix 4. Registration Form

Page 1

First Name
Last Name
Email Address
Phone number
Alternate phone number (optional)

Best contact time

Page 2

Thinking of your last full week of work, please show how you travelled TO work each day and how long it took by selecting from the dropdown list.

If your last full week of work was unusual, complete for a typical week of work.

If you use more than one method of travel, such as bus then walk, select the method you use for the longest distance. For example: for a 5 km bus trip followed by a 1 km walk you would pick 'Bus'.

Page 3

Do you

Almost always walk or run to work
Walk or run to work about half the time
Walk or run to work on some occasions
Think seriously about the pros and cons of walking or running to work but rarely do it
Sometimes think about walking or running to work but never actually do it
Not even consider walking or running to work

Do you

Almost always cycle to work
Cycle to work about half the time
Cycle to work on some occasions
Think seriously about the pros and cons of cycling to work but rarely do it
Sometimes think about cycling to work but never actually do it
Not even consider cycling to work

Page 4

Is your main place of work in the Wellington CBD?
Please select your workplace from the list below
What is your age group?

Page 5

Are you interested in the bike buddy scheme? If so, select either buddy or mentor and you will see further information on the following pages.

Bike buddies and mentors are matched up to encourage new cyclists and support.

Appendix 5 - Evaluation Survey

Page 1

Thinking of your last full week of work, please show how you travelled TO work each day and how long it took by selecting from the dropdown list.

If your last full week of work was unusual, complete for a typical week of work.

Page 2

Do you

Almost always walk or run to work

Walk or run to work about half the time

Walk or run to work on some occasions

Think seriously about the pros and cons of walking or running to work but rarely do it

Sometimes think about walking or running to work but never actually do it

Not even consider walking or running to work

Do you

Almost always cycle to work

Cycle to work about half the time

Cycle to work on some occasions

Think seriously about the pros and cons of cycling to work but rarely do it

Sometimes think about cycling to work but never actually do it]

Not even consider cycling to work

Page 3

Has Active a2b helped you...

Walk or cycle to and/or from work more often?

Walk or cycle outside of work more often?

Improve your health and wellbeing?

We're interested in what changes you've made. Please tell us more:

Page 4

How useful were the following tools?

Desktop Calendar

Active Travel Discount Card

Family Pack

Ride to Work brochure

Weekly e-newsletter

Personal phone call(s)

How useful were the following activities, events and services?

Summer Steps Challenge
Bikewise Challenge
Go By Bike Day
Walk 2 Work Day
Nominate a Mate
Bike buddy scheme
Online journey planner with benefits calculator

If you have comments about any of the above, please write them here:

Page 5

Were you a...(only showed if participant indicated they participated in above question)

Buddy
Mentor

**Did you contact a buddy/mentor?
Did you ride with a buddy/mentor?**

Page 6

We'd love to hear your general feedback on the programme. Do you have any suggestions for improving Active a2b? Were there aspects you particularly liked or found useful?

Page 6

Please send me the Active a2b summary report in July

I am happy for the Active a2b team to contact me if they would like to know more about my Active a2b experience

Appendix 6 - Demographics of participants who registered compared with those who completed evaluation forms

Active a2b plus		Registration	Evaluation	Active a2b Standard		Registration	Evaluation
under 20	Female	0%	1%	under 20	Female	0%	0%
	Male	0%	0%		Male	0%	0%
20 to 29	Female	7%	7%	20 to 29	Female	20%	15%
	Male	2%	1%		Male	6%	7%
30 to 39	Female	27%	26%	30 to 39	Female	20%	21%
	Male	9%	10%		Male	12%	9%
40 to 49	Female	21%	20%	40 to 49	Female	15%	16%
	Male	8%	8%		Male	11%	13%
50 to 59	Female	16%	18%	50 to 59	Female	9%	9%
	Male	5%	6%		Male	5%	4%
60 plus	Female	4%	2%	60 plus	Female	1%	2%
	Male	1%	1%		Male	1%	1%