

Active a2b

Final report for 2014

A health and well-being programme from Greater Wellington
Regional Council and partners



Table of contents

Table of contents.....	2
List of figures.....	2
List of tables.....	3
Executive summary.....	4
1. Introduction.....	5
2. Programme description.....	6
3. Participation and Demographics.....	8
3.1 Participant characteristics and demographics.....	8
3.2 Kilometres travelled by Active a2b participants.....	11
3.3 Stages of change.....	12
4. Evaluation.....	12
4.1 Mode shift before and after Active a2b.....	12
4.2 Reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled to work.....	15
4.3 Cost benefit analysis of programme.....	15
4.4 Shifts in the stages of change.....	16
4.5 Tools.....	17
4.5.1 Tools distributed.....	17
4.5.2 E-newsletter.....	18
4.5.3 Phone calls.....	18
4.5.4 Usefulness of tools.....	18
4.5.5 Bike buddies.....	20
4.5.6 Fix a Flattie and cycle maintenance workshops.....	20
4.5.7 Cycle skills sessions.....	21
4.5.8 a2b GO Walk/Bike Challenge.....	21
4.6 Wider self-reported influence of Active a2b.....	21
5. Discussion.....	22
5.1 Key successes.....	23
5.1.1 Newsletter.....	23
5.1.2 Healthy lifestyle changes.....	23
5.1.3 A good balance between walking and cycling.....	24
5.1.4 A focus on peer support and extending the reach.....	24
5.1.5 Participants want and expect the programme to continue.....	25
5.2 Recommendations.....	25
5.2.1 Highlight the distinction between Active a2b and a2b GO.....	25
5.2.2 Ensure staff resourcing can cover follow-up phone calls.....	26
5.2.3 Continue to improve on the use of social media.....	26
6. Conclusion.....	27

List of figures

Figure 1 Previous participation in Active a2b.....	8
Figure 2 Gender of Active a2b Plus and Standard participants.....	9
Figure 3 Age groups of Active a2b Plus and Standard participants.....	9
Figure 4 Ethnicity of Active a2b participants.....	10
Figure 5 Kilometres travelled to work by Active a2b Standard and Plus participants.....	11
Figure 6 Mode share of all Active a2b participants before and after the programme.....	13

Figure 7 Mode share of Active a2b Plus participants before and after the programme..... 14

Figure 8 Mode share of Active a2b Standard participants before and after the programme 14

Figure 9 Shift in walking and cycling stages of change for Active a2b Plus participants..... 16

Figure 10 Shift in walking and cycling stages of change for Active a2b Standard participants..... 17

Figure 11 Reported influence of Active a2b programme on walking and cycling levels and well-being..... 22

List of tables

Table 1 Workplace destination for Active a2b participants..... 10

Table 2 Walking/running and cycling to work ‘stages of change’ for participants at the time of registration..... 12

Table 3 Estimated benefits accrued from Active a2b programme 16

Table 4 Number of participants who requested tools or expressed interest and the share who found them useful 19

Executive summary

Active a2b is a health and well-being initiative that was delivered in 2014 for the fifth consecutive summer by the Sustainable Transport team at Greater Wellington Regional Council (GWRC). The programme aims to reduce congestion in urban areas by increasing travel to work by active modes. It also offers participants personalised support and resources to encourage them to walk and cycle to work.

Participants are recruited from large workplaces in the region. Upon registration in January and February, they are able to request resources and choose from a range of workshops, tools and challenges. Participants also receive a weekly e-newsletter, sharing success stories from the programme and providing information on upcoming events.

The main target group for Active a2b are those participants who drove (or were a passenger) to work in a vehicle three times or more a week at the time of registration. This 'Active a2b Plus' group receives a higher level of personalised support than other participants. All other participants are part of the 'Standard Group' who receive the same tools and resources, but do not receive phone call support.

Active a2b was once again delivered with support from three health partners: the Cancer Society, Compass Health (a primary health organisation representing 57 general practice teams) and Regional Public Health. These partnerships affirm the health benefits of active transport and also offer participants information for improved nutrition and smoking cessation.

In 2014, 1,132 individuals from 75 workplaces participated in the programme, with 301 people being part of the 'Active a2b Plus' group. A total of 65 workplaces actively promoted it amongst their staff, with coverage of around 37,000 employees.

Results from participants who completed both the registration and evaluation survey showed that the programme achieved increases in the use of active trips to work. The Plus group delivered increases for active modes; from 4% to 10% for walking and from 2% to 9% for cycling. Car trips for the Active a2b Plus group decreased significantly from 91% to 69%, slightly more than the reduction in car trips observed in 2013. For the Standard group, there was a small increase (3%) in active trips (from 51% to 54%); however there was unfortunately also an increase in car trips and a drop in public transport use.

Evaluation data indicated that the programme led to a reduction of 3,492km of vehicle travel per week. Using prices set by the New Zealand Transport Agency, the economic value of the increase in walking and cycling for the whole programme was \$92,560, producing an estimated cost benefit ratio for the programme of 1:11.6.

Participants' subjective views towards the programme were positive. Around 68% of participants reported that the programme had helped improve their health and wellbeing. Examples from comments included losing or managing weight issues, reduced stress, better mental health, more confidence with cycling on the roads, and even better nutrition due to a wider focus on health.

1. Introduction

Active a2b was first delivered in 2010 by the Sustainable Transport team at Greater Wellington Regional Council. It was part of its ongoing work to reach regional targets to increase the number of walking and cycling trips and reduce congestion in urban areas.

The programme is now in its fifth year, and continues to receive strong support from employers across the region. Three health partners, Cancer Society, Regional Public Health and Compass Health, have continued to support the programme since 2012. Their support enables more personalised support and phone conversations with participants.

The goals of the programme have always been transport-related but the programme is promoted and packaged as 'health and wellbeing' to workplaces, because a 'sustainable transport' programme does not have the same appeal. Many of the health and safety staff within organisations that it was promoted through would not have taken an interest if it had had a sustainable transport focus.

This year 65 workplaces formally signed up to the programme and promoted it amongst their staff, while ten further workplaces were represented among registrants, without the employer officially signing up. Through these channels, the programme has been promoted to a total of about 37,000 employees across the region.

The programme began on 6 January and ran until the first week of April (end of Daylight Saving). This timing capitalises on New Year resolutions, warmer weather and longer days – all of which are helpful to encourage people to reassess their car driving habits and consider taking up walking and cycling for their commute to work.

Active a2b has several aims:

- 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 aims to:

- Increase the awareness amongst Human Resource departments, and employees in Wellington region 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 the programme's outputs and short term outcomes
- Deliver key road safety messages through regular communication and resources
- Improve the health and wellbeing of participants.

2. Programme description

Active a2b is a health and wellbeing programme available to workplaces in the Wellington region. Workplaces are encouraged to promote the programme to their staff as a free health and wellbeing initiative. Workplaces were contacted at the end of 2013, and for those interested in participating in the programme, were provided with easy-to-use communication material ready to be sent to employees from 6 January 2014.

Individuals choose whether to sign up for the programme and at registration, select the tools, events, workshops and social support mechanisms that they think will be most useful.

The **tools** on offer were chosen for their practicality and capacity to motivate participants to actively commute. This year they included a desktop calendar for recording active commutes; a goal magnet and photo frame with the participant's goal written inside; promotion of an online walking and cycling journey planner enabling participants to find their best active commuting route; reflective slap bands; a discounted pedometer and a membership card giving them discounts at bike and outdoors stores.

The **events and challenges** were designed to be both motivating and celebratory. The a2b GO Challenge is a four-week team competition through February and March. The challenge encourages people to draw support from colleagues or friends, and actively commute as many days as possible over the month. Points are awarded for each trip with various prizes available. Go By Bike Day (12 February) and Walk 2 Work Day (12 March) are one-off events that celebrate the growing culture of active commuting in Wellington. This year discounts were also arranged for additional events in the region, including the Capital Classic, Kapiti Women's Triathlon and the fortnightly Splash n Dash.

Advice, resources, and training were offered in a variety of ways to participants. These included cycle skills training, Fix a Flattie and bike maintenance workshops, the bike buddy scheme, and phone support. A weekly e-newsletter was the main form of communication during the programme and all participants were automatically subscribed to the newsletters. The newsletters shared inspiring stories profiling participants' walking and cycling efforts, alerted people to upcoming events and workshops and described a weekly benefit of active commuting.

Phone support was offered to the Active a2b Plus group – people who predominantly drove to work (or were passengers) three or more times a week at the time of registration. There were 301 people in the Plus Group. A total of 259 'welcome' phone calls were made to this group in the initial weeks. Due to time constraints, only 53 follow-up calls were made to these members later in the programme.

At the conclusion of the programme, a health and safety quiz called Go Well Through Winter was emailed out to participants (and also through other networks external to the programme). The goal of this is to encourage safety and give confidence to people to continue commuting through the darker months once Active a2b has finished.

2.1 New Features for 2014

There were minor changes to Active a2b for 2014. These are described below.

2.1.1 Event promotion, entries and discounts

This year Active a2b included more focus on local events, in particular the shorter distance events that were achievable for people with an average level of fitness. There were a number of free entries to various events and discounts were offered to participants through the Active a2b membership card. The intention was to use these events as a goal to work towards, while pushing the morning commute as an opportunity for 'training'. Events included Splash n Dash, the Kapiti Women's Triathlon, the Capital Classic and Round the Bays.

2.1.2 Discounted pedometers on offer

In 2013 participant feedback indicated it was focused too much towards cyclists, without much for pedestrians. Therefore pedometers were included this year to address this concern. A partnership with Fitness Gear 4U offered heavily discounted pedometers through a discount code. At least 62 pedometers were purchased by Active a2b participants, and a further 15 given away at Walk 2 Work day. Discount vouchers (of up to 10%) were also given for the Shoe Clinic and sent out in welcome packs.

2.1.3 E-Newsletters

Minor changes were made to the newsletter including making it weekly (previously it was less regular, approximately fortnightly). A section was added on the multiple benefits of active transport, acting as a reminder for sticking to the goals.

2.1.4 a2b GO Walk/Bike Challenge

This year the Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge was rebranded as the a2b GO Walk/Bike Challenge. This change was prompted by confusion with Spring to the Street (the spring active commute challenge) and the fact that it was for both walkers and cyclists. Overall the challenge remained similar. It was promoted as an optional part of Active a2b but was open to others outside of Active a2b as well.

2.1.5 No 'offline' workplace focus

In 2013 workplaces without internet access were approached and offered a tailored version of Active a2b. Due to a large demand on staff resources and limited uptake, this initiative was not included this year.

3. Participation and Demographics

Recruitment of workplaces started in December 2013. By the end of December, 65 workplaces had ‘registered’, which simply meant that they provided contact details and agreed to promote the programme to their staff.

On 6 January registration opened and workplace contacts were requested to invite their staff to sign up. Participants selected the tools and resources of their choice, which were then sent out in a welcome pack. Generally this was done within a week of registration.

Workplaces had no further role beyond this point. Communication was between the Active a2b team and individual participants via email, newsletters, phone and occasionally in person.

In 2014, 1,132 participants from 75 workplaces in the Wellington region registered for Active a2b.

3.1 Participant characteristics and demographics

Of all participants, 27% (301) drove to work (or were passengers) at least three times a week at the time of registration, which classified them in the Active a2b Plus group. The other group are referred to as the Active a2b Standard group. Note that the term ‘drove to work’ includes all solo drivers, carpoolers and motorbike users, but does not include public transport users.

As with previous years, most registrants were new to the programme. Of those who answered the question, 773 (70%) were new to the programme with the rest having participated in one or several of the previous years (Figure 1). The proportion of new registrants was only slightly lower than in 2013 when it was 72%, which shows that Active a2b continues to reach new audiences.

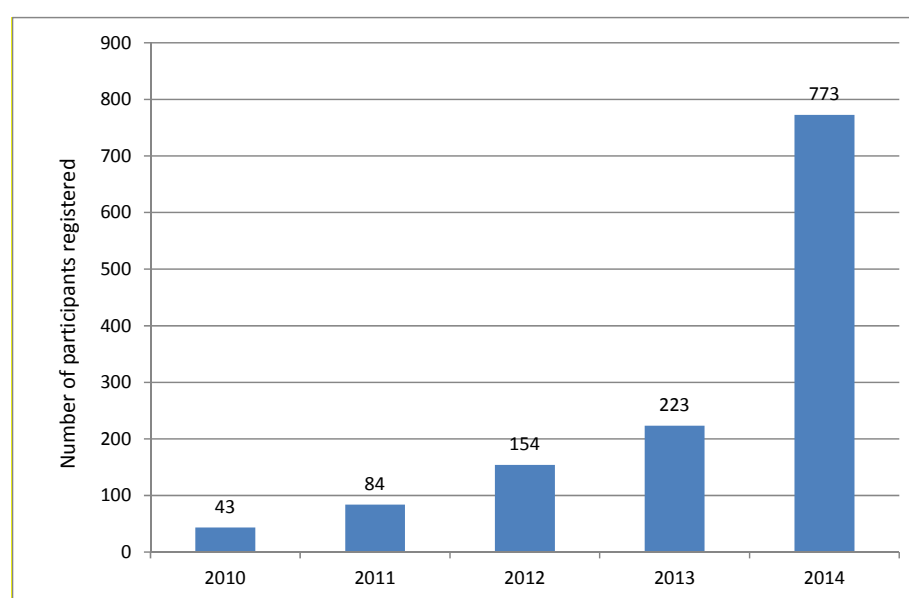


Figure 1 Previous participation in Active a2b

The majority of participants were female (67%). This was more pronounced in the Active a2b Plus group where 73% were female compared to 65% in the Active a2b Standard group (Figure 2). This shows that a ‘health and wellness’ programme appeals more to women than to men, who seem less likely to register themselves in the programme.

The Plus group participants were also older on average (Figure 3). The majority (59%) were aged between 35 and 54, compared to 49% in this age range in the Standard group.

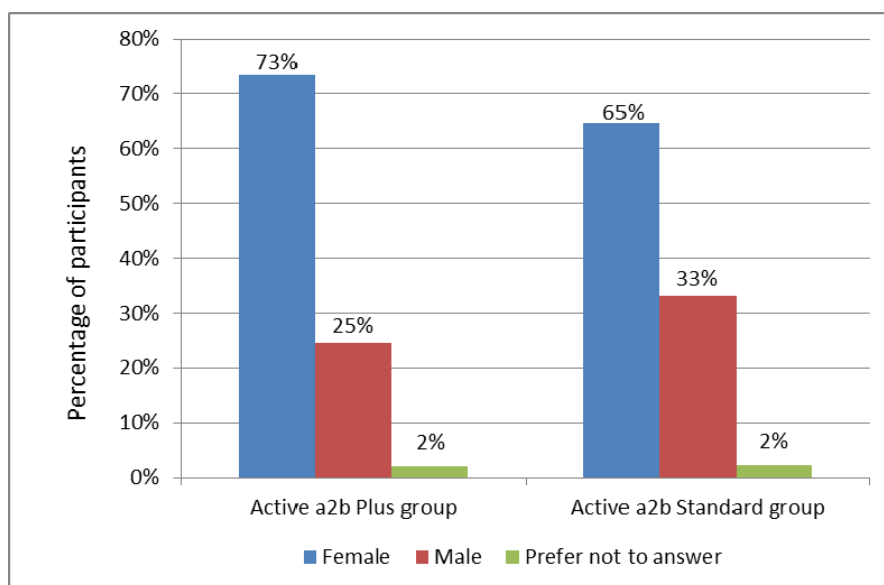


Figure 2 Gender of Active a2b Plus and Standard participants

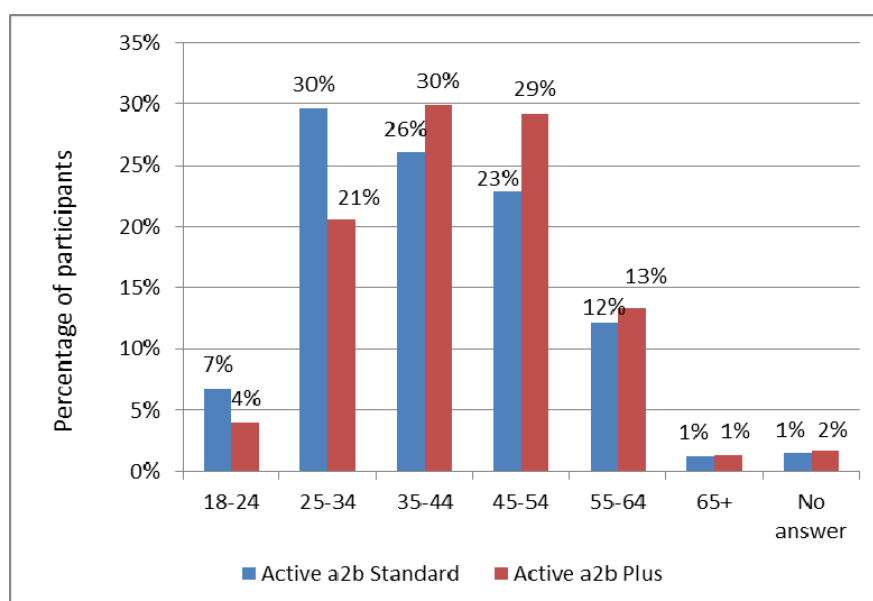


Figure 3 Age groups of Active a2b Plus and Standard participants

Participants were asked their ethnicity at registration (Figure 4). Just over 68% reported they were NZ European, 8.4% of participants were Māori, 3.5% were Pacific Islanders and 3.0% each were Chinese or Indian. Compared to 2013 there was an increase in the proportion of participants of Māori descent and a decrease in the proportion with Pacific Island descent. Note that the figures collected for ethnicity gave totals higher than the number of respondents as some respondents identified with more than one ethnicity.

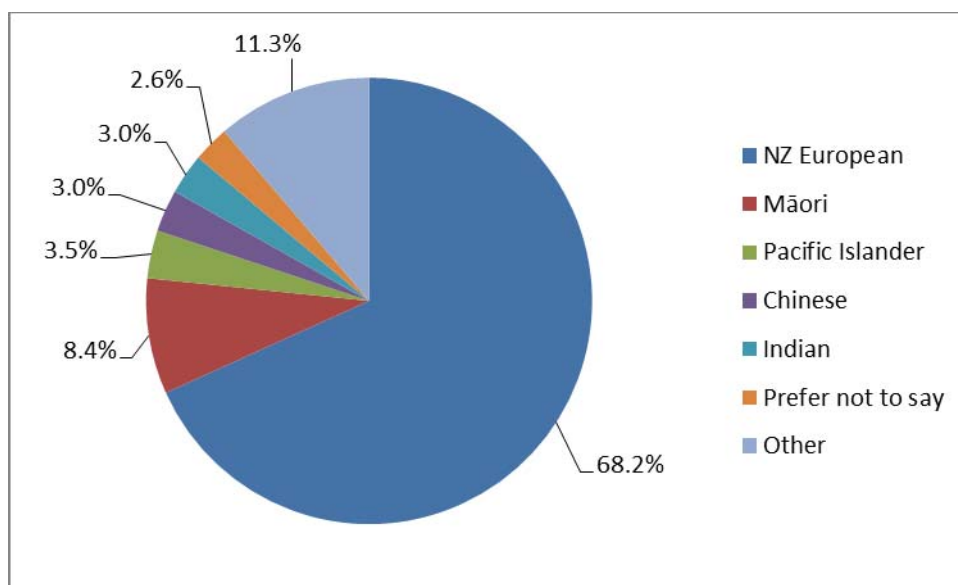


Figure 4 Ethnicity of Active a2b participants

The majority of Active a2b participants worked in Wellington City (80%) as shown in Table 1. The proportion of Active a2b Plus participants working in Wellington City was much lower at 56%, with 21% in Lower Hutt and a further 23% in the other four council areas. This is likely to be related to the reduced congestion and cost of parking outside of the CBD, which makes driving to work in these areas more attractive. For the Active a2b Standard participants, the sample was largely city-based with 88% working in the CBD.

Table 1 Workplace destination for Active a2b participants

	Total	Active a2b Plus	Active a2b Standard
Wellington City	80%	56%	88%
Lower Hutt	11%	21%	7%
Upper Hutt	3%	7%	1%
Porirua	3%	7%	1%
Kapiti	2%	5%	1%
Wairarapa	2%	5%	2%

3.2 Kilometres travelled by Active a2b participants

The kilometres travelled to work by the two groups of participants are shown in Figure 5, with each group displaying a distinctly different pattern. Higher distances were travelled by the Plus group compared to the Standard group.

The highest proportion of Active a2b Plus group participants travelled 5 - 9.99km (29%), followed by 25% travelling 20km or more, 23% travelled 10 - 19.99km and 17% of participants had a commute of 2 - 4.99km. This spread of journey to work distances is very different to the 2013 results, which showed 70% of the participants travelling distances of 5km or more, compared to a total of 77% in 2014. With such a high proportion of Plus participants travelling long distances to work, integrating active and public transport may be seen as particularly important for these commuters.

A small proportion (6%) of Active a2b Plus participants travelled less than 2km to work, although this was significantly higher than in 2013 with only 1%.

The average distances travelled by the Active a2b Standard group were lower, with 54% travelling 5km or more to work, 35% travelling 2-4.99km and 11% travelling less than 2km.

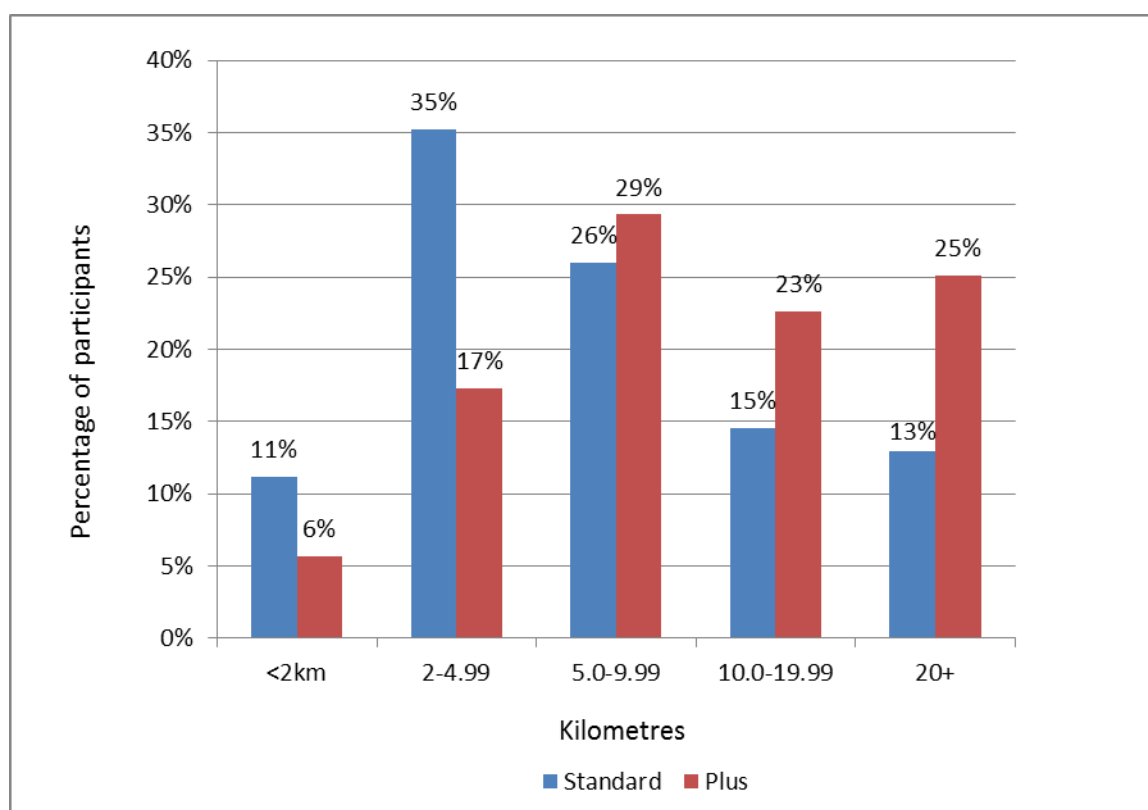


Figure 5 Kilometres travelled to work by Active a2b Standard and Plus participants

3.3 Stages of change

Information about participants' readiness for changing their commuting behaviour was collected at registration to allow comparison of walking or cycling habits post participation in Active a2b. Known collectively as 'stages of change' the five response categories provide a progression of behavioural change in relation to the feasibility of walking/running or cycling as a mode of travel to work.

On registering for Active a2b, it was found that a large proportion of the Active a2b Plus group indicated little interest at all (selecting *not consider*) in walking/running (43%) or cycling (55%) for their trips to work. At the other extreme, very small percentages placed themselves in the 'doing' end of the stages of change continuum (selecting *regular*) for walking/running (6%) or cycling (2%) to work. A further 2% selected the *recently started* option for both modes. The remaining 49% for walking/running and 41% for cycling were in the potential for change groups, selecting the *occasional* or *sometimes think about* options. This pattern of behaviour change is not unexpected considering the criteria for inclusion in the Active a2b Plus group which was that people drove to work three or more times per week.

As would be expected, a larger proportion of Active a2b Standard participants (35%) said they were *regular* walkers or runners to work, and 18% were *regular* cyclists to work. Interestingly, the majority of both groups did *not consider* cycling to work (52% for the Standard, 55% for the Plus group) (Table 2). Some of these however will be a cyclist who does not consider walking, or a walker who does not consider cycling, because they are satisfied with their current mode choice.

Table 2 Walking/running and cycling to work 'stages of change' for participants at the time of registration

Stages of change	Walk/run to work		Cycle to work	
	Active a2b Standard	Active a2b Plus	Active a2b Standard	Active a2b Plus
Regular	35%	6%	18%	2%
Occasional	17%	18%	7%	10%
Recently started	8%	2%	4%	2%
Sometimes think about	15%	31%	18%	31%
Not consider	25%	43%	52%	55%

4. Evaluation

4.1 Mode shift before and after Active a2b

Figure 6 shows the mode share of travel to work trips for all participants (Standard and Plus combined) before and after participating in Active a2b. Overall, the share of active modes increased from 39% to 46%, with significant increases in both walking and cycling. Travel to work by car was

reduced from 28% to 26% of trips. Public transport trips as a share of total trips also fell from 33% to 29%, primarily due to a reduction in bus trips.

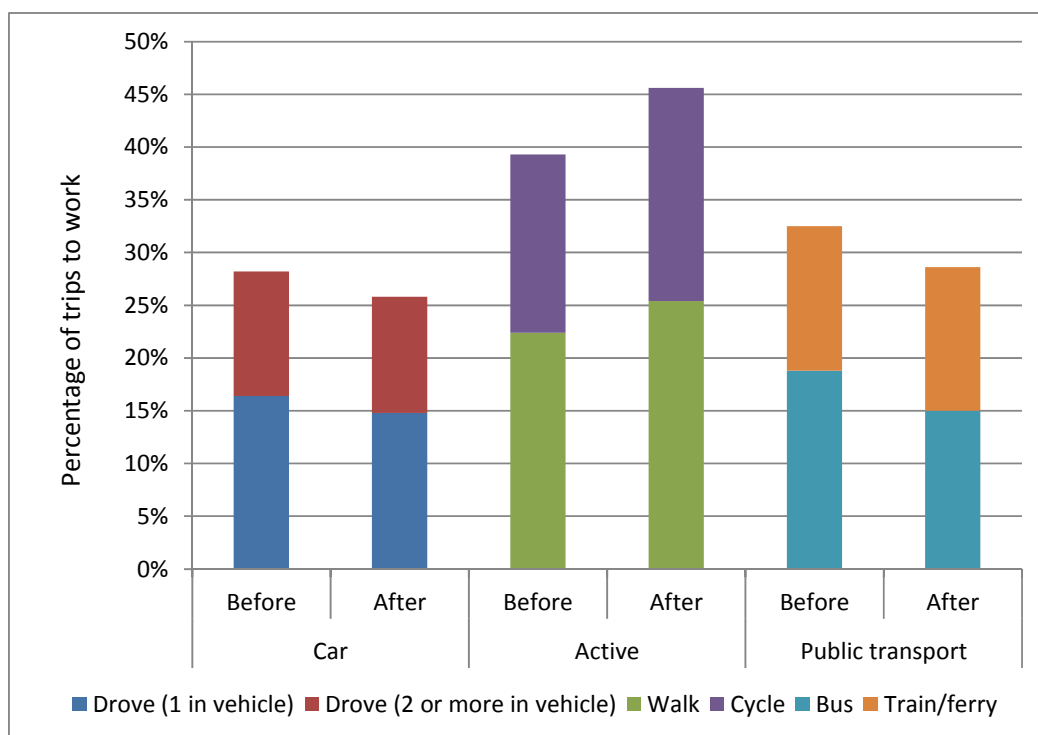


Figure 6 Mode share of all Active a2b participants before and after the programme

There is a significant difference between the Plus and Standard participants. Figure 7 shows the mode share of travel to work trips for Active a2b Plus participants before and after participating in the 2014 programme. There was a substantial reduction in travel by motor vehicle, with the combined share (single occupancy and carpoolers) falling from 91% to 69%. The decrease was seen both in carpooling (37% to 30%) and in people driving alone (54% to 39%).

Correspondingly, Active a2b Plus participants significantly increased their travel to work trips by active mode and by public transport. Travel by walking and cycling both increased strongly, from 4% to 10% for walking and 2% to 9% for cycling. The combined increase in reported trips by active modes was from 6% to 19%, indicating a significant change in patterns of travel behaviour, with an increase of over 300% of Plus participants engaging in active modes.

The share of public transport trips started from a low base, with a combined 3% for train, bus and ferry. However, following participation in the Active a2b programme, Plus participants reported a fourfold increase in public transport use to a combined 12%.

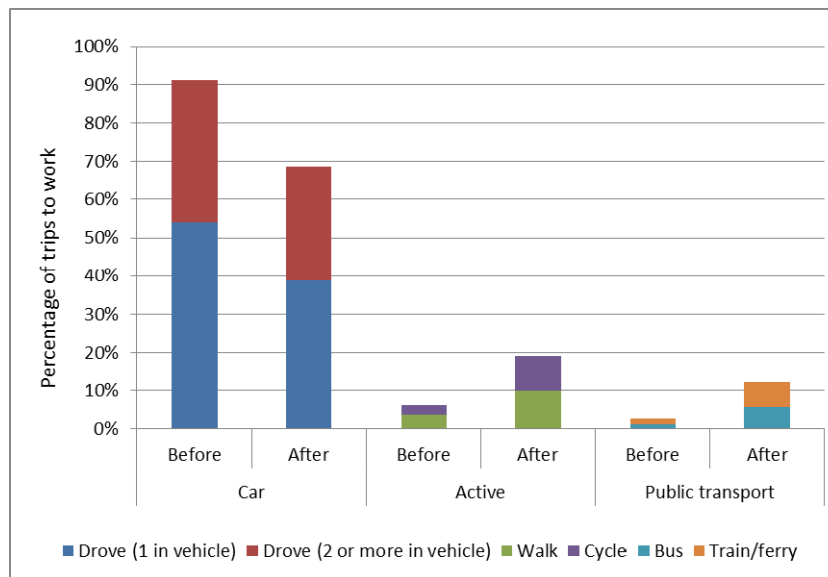


Figure 7 Mode share of Active a2b Plus participants before and after the programme

The mode share of journey to work trips for the Active a2b Standard group is shown in Figure 8. The changes in behaviour were less dramatic than for the Plus group, and not all in the same directions. There were small increases in active mode use for both walking and cycling at between 1% and 1.5% for each mode, albeit from a much larger base than for the Plus group, taking the total from 51% to 54%.

It is interesting to note that public transport use for the Standard group fell by a combined 10% from 44% to 34%. Both bus and train/ferry choices were affected, but buses most strongly, accounting for 7% of the 10% total. A surprising result was the increase in car use from 5% to 12%, with two-thirds of this increase being due to driving alone and one-third from increased carpooling.

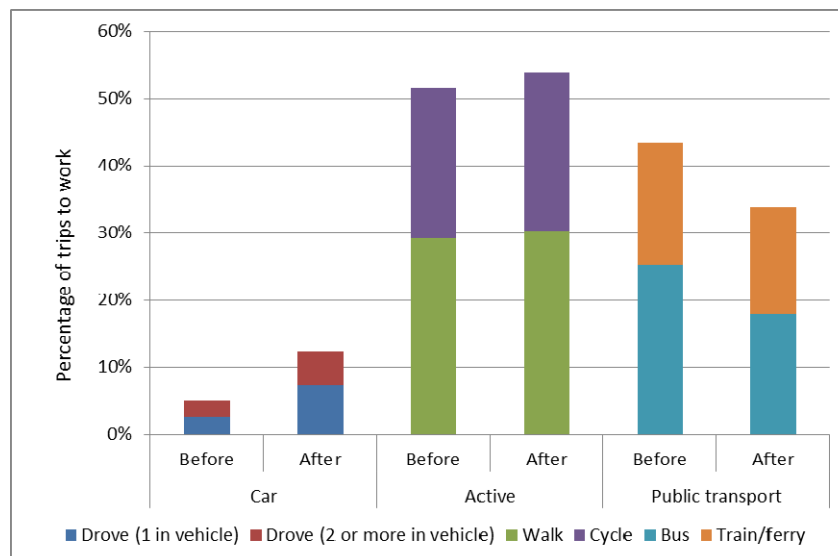


Figure 8 Mode share of Active a2b Standard participants before and after the programme

4.2 Reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled to work

A total of 86 of the Active a2b Plus group provided kilometres travelled (KT) to work information during registration and completed the follow-up evaluation survey. From this sample it was estimated that the average Active a2b Plus participant reduced their vehicle KT (i.e. drove alone or shared a vehicle) to work by 19.9km per week, of which 12.9km was accounted for by single occupancy vehicle trips. With regard to the active modes, participants increased their walking KT by 3.6km and increased their cycling KT by 3.9km. Public transport use also increased by an average of 5.7km per person per week.

The average reduction in vehicle KT is higher than that observed for Active a2b Plus participants in 2013, when the reduction was 12.3km. The average increases in active modes is also significantly higher, with walking KT up by 3.6km compared to 0.95km last year, and cycling up by 3.6km compared to 2.5km last year.

Differences in findings year-on-year will be partially due to there being differences between the groups across the years in terms of the spread of distances to work, as well as the spread of travel behaviours at the time of registration. Nevertheless, these results for 2014 are encouraging.

Following the same calculations for the standard group and assuming the evaluation samples are representative of the full list of participants, the programme led to a weekly reduction in car trips (VKT) of 3,492km, a weekly increase in walking of 1,647km, an increase of cycling of 1,844km and a reduction in public transport journeys of 1,653 (primarily bus trips).

4.3 Cost benefit analysis of programme

Active a2b was funded as part of Greater Wellington's Travel Demand Management Programme with a total budget of \$8,000. This included the cost of physical resources (e.g. membership card, desktop calendar, goal magnets), workshops (cycle skills sessions), e-newsletters and prizes. It did not include the cost of the Active a2b phone staff, which was funded by health partners, or the cost of Greater Wellington Regional Council staff time.

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) values each additional kilometre walked at \$2.70 and each kilometre cycled at \$1.45. Using these values alongside the active mode increases detailed in section 4.2, the estimated benefits of Active a2b were evaluated. Some assumptions were needed for these calculations. The below figures are based on average trip lengths for each group, and the number of trips where the mode has changed as full information for distance for each trip and mode change is not available. This may overestimate the benefits, as those with shorter trips may be more likely to switch to active modes. On the other hand, the figures are calculated only for the duration of the programme and do not account for longer term behaviour change or increases of active travel outside the daily commute, both of which would underestimate the benefits. Research is currently being done to determine the long-term effectiveness of the programme.

The total benefits for all participants over the 13 week life of the programme was estimated at \$92,560, with significant benefits from increased walking and cycling activity in both the Active a2b Plus and Standard groups (Table 3). This produces \$11.57 worth of benefits for every dollar spent, giving a cost benefit ratio of 1:11.6.

This is a big improvement on the value of benefits in 2013 when there was estimated to be a cost benefit ratio of 1:4.3. The key difference from last year is that in 2014 there was an increase in each of the active modes for both groups of participants. In 2013 there was a reduction in cycling activity among the Standard participants.

Table 3 Estimated benefits accrued from Active a2b programme

	All participants (n=1,132)	Standard participants (n=831)	Plus participants (n=301)
Weekly benefits from walking	\$4,447	\$2,523	\$1,924
Weekly benefits from cycling	\$2,674	\$1,445	\$1,228
Total weekly benefits	\$7,120	\$3,969	\$3,152
Total benefits over 13 weeks	\$92,560	\$51,597	\$40,976

4.4 Shifts in the stages of change

Figures 9 and 10 show the attitudes towards walking and cycling. The chart shows the Active a2b Plus group and Active a2b Standard group, respectively.

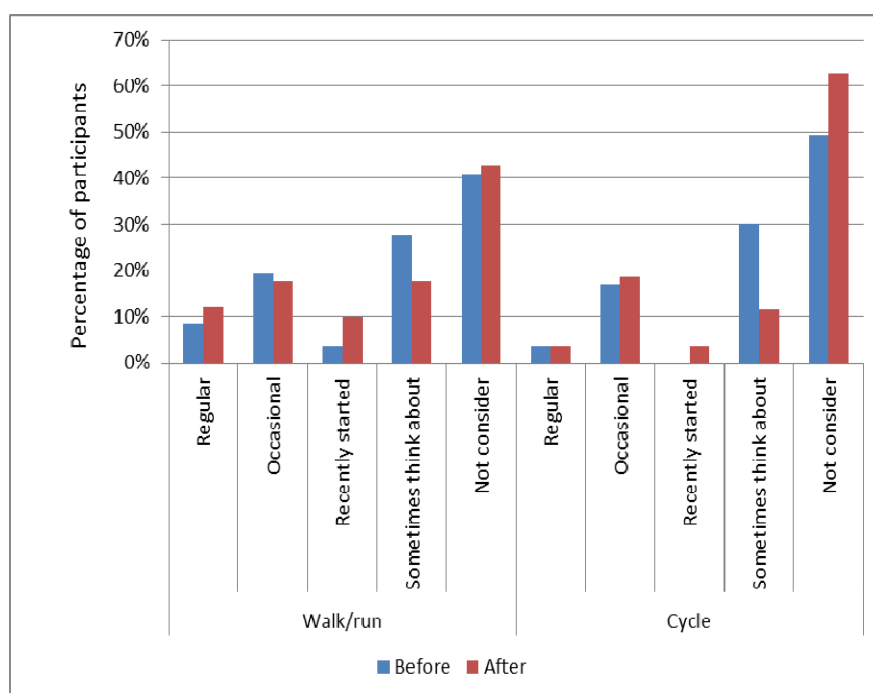


Figure 9 Shift in walking and cycling stages of change for Active a2b Plus participants

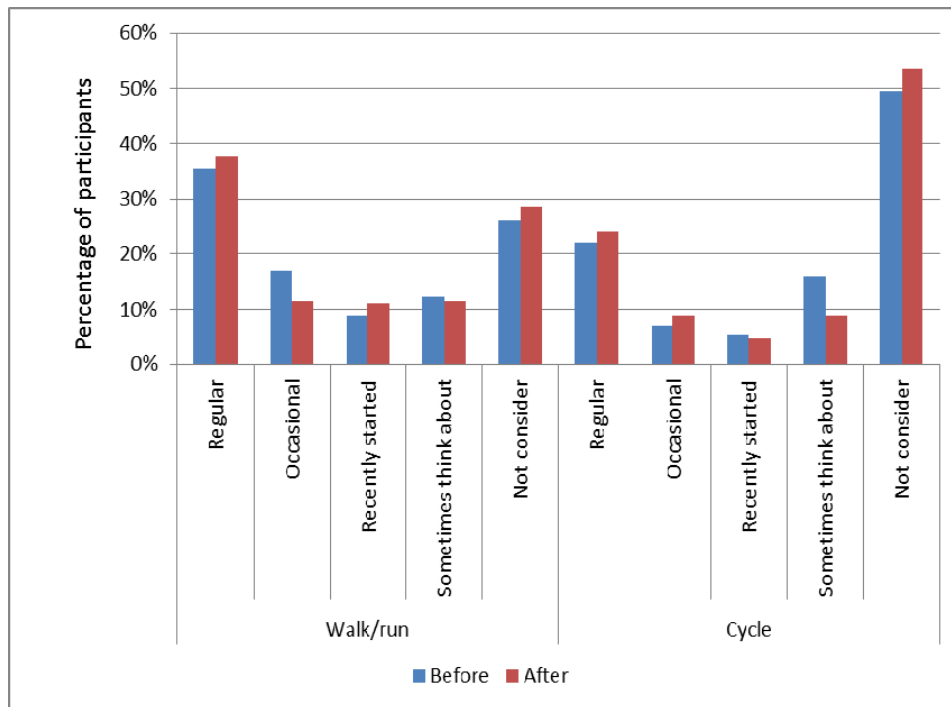


Figure 10 Shift in walking and cycling stages of change for Active a2b Standard participants

For both groups, there is a noticeable reduction in the ‘thinking about’ groups for both walking and cycling. After Active a2b there have generally been increases in the ‘doing’ end of the scale, as well as an increase in ‘not consider’. This would indicate that people have at least tried it out, and either developed the habit of an active commute, or decided it was impractical. There were normally gains in the ‘recently started’ category, which would have begun during the three months of Active a2b.

Although the numbers ‘not considering’ have risen, this is generally only from those thinking about it, and, while disappointing to see, it is an outcome that can be expected when encouraging people to try out a new mode of commute. While it cannot work out for everyone, the gains in the ‘regular’, ‘occasional’ or ‘recently started’ areas are very encouraging.

4.5 Tools

4.5.1 Tools distributed

A range of tools, including a calendar, a pedometer discount code, and information about walking, cycling, nutrition and smoking cessation were requested and distributed during registration. The branded desktop calendar was the most popular tool with 796 distributed. The second most popular tool was the goal magnet on which participants could write their activity goals and put them on a metal surface such as a fridge door – 747 were distributed. Following these were the reflective slap bands (682), pedometer discount code (649) and nutrition information (618). Fifty-seven smoking cessation booklets were also requested.

Additional reflective gear was distributed through the 'Go Well Through Winter' campaign to about 100 people.

4.5.2 E-newsletter

The weekly newsletter proved very popular and rated useful by most participants. Ninety four per cent of participants remained on the distribution list for e-newsletters, with an average of 40% opening the emails. These results are comparable to last year, (93% and 37%), despite there being five more emails sent out this year. Note that the 40% opening rate is likely to be underestimated, as people can read the emails in the viewing pane without 'opening them'.

Comments support the view that the e-newsletters were well received. The comments below are typical of the many received:

I really liked the inspiring stories via email! They really helped me see how I can add a bit more to my day.

I liked getting the regular newsletters and hearing other people's success stories

I thought the newsletter was great - short, lots of good examples

4.5.3 Phone calls

Of the participants who drove to work three or more times a week, 249 were called at the start of the programme and 53 participants were given a follow up phone call. The phone calls were appreciated by some. Some said they would have appreciated more than one phone call. Others expressed disappointment at not receiving a follow-up phone call as they had been expecting one.

Loved the personal phone calls

I had a phone call at the beginning, but then no more, despite saying I'd like them. That could have helped me get back into the programme after my annual leave.

Personal calls are great. I missed the calls as I get home late but just the fact someone rang motivated me!!

4.5.4 Usefulness of tools

The tools and activities associated with the programme were rated by participants with regard to their usefulness. Table 4 shows the number who expressed an interest and the share who found the tools/activities useful – defined as *somewhat* or *very* useful in the evaluation survey (those who did not receive or participate in each item in the list are excluded from the calculations).

The e-newsletter was reported to be the most useful tool, with 87% of respondents rating it as somewhat or very useful. The nutrition information, reflective slap band and desktop calendar all got 80% approval, closely followed by the goal magnet with 76%.

Some feedback about the tools is included below:

My favourite thing is the desk top calendar, love it, and use it every day, thanks very much for it... It's an essential tool for me and the pics are nice too, well done.

Enjoyed the stories and newsletters - I used the calendar to keep track of the days I walked, cycled drove or bussed and reduced driving to work by 50%.

keep up the discount card - love it!

The goal magnet helped me keep a promise I'd made to myself irrespective of whether this was undertaken to or from work.

Of the activities, events and services, the journey planner and the a2b GO programme were both rated highly, with 93% and 92% of respondents rating them as somewhat or very useful. Walk2Work Day and Go By Bike Day were equally popular, each with 87% of respondents saying they were useful. The other four, which were specifically related to cycling, were rated as useful by between 70% and 83% of the respondents.

The smoking cessation information was requested by 57 participants, of whom 15 (26%) said they found it useful. This share is higher than shown in the table as more people commented on its usefulness than received the information. The low number probably indicates the difficulty in giving up smoking, and that more than an information booklet is usually required. However, this is only a secondary part of active a2b.

The bike buddies scheme was rated as being useful by 70% of respondents. While a good result, it was the lowest of the activities. This may be due to people not managing to meet up with their buddy/mentor (see 'Bike buddies' section below for more detail).

Table 4 Number of participants who requested tools or expressed interest and the share who found them useful

Tools	Number distributed or expressed interest	Share of respondents who found the tools useful
Newsletter	1,132	87%
Nutrition information	618	80%
Desktop calendar	796	80%
Reflective slap band	682	80%
Goal magnet	747	76%
Phone call	249	51%

Pedometer	649	50%
Membership card	1,132	47%
Smoking cessation information	57	18%
Events/activities/services		
Journey planner	Not Applicable	93%
a2b GO	620	92%
Go By Bike Day	Not Applicable	87%
Walk2Work Day	Not Applicable	87%
Fix a Flattie	248	83%
Bike maintenance	248	78%
Cycle skills workshops	217	73%
Bike buddies	80	70%

4.5.5 Bike buddies

Eighty four participants registered for the bike buddy scheme – 44 buddies and 31 mentors. Of the 31 mentors, 11 were new to the programme and they were sent more information about the scheme at registration. Most buddies were matched with a single mentor and they were introduced to each other via email and encouraged to make contact. Active a2b learnt of at least four successful matches, resulting in more confident active commuters, although there were likely more.

The bike buddy scheme was good, great way of meeting other people to commute with. Would be good if you could get more people involved across town in areas close to each other.

Bike buddy is a great idea to build confidence & encourage more people to cycle to work.

The cycle mentor that Active a2b paired me with has been fantastic. [She] has a lot of skills and thoroughly enjoys riding.

4.5.6 Fix a Flattie and cycle maintenance workshops

Four Fix a Flattie workshops were held in 2014, one each in January and February, and two in March. A total of 20 people attended. However, 29 rated it as somewhat or very useful and six as not useful – it is not clear which of these respondents to the survey actually attended. Three cycle

maintenance workshops were held, two of them in Lower Hutt and one in Wellington, and a total of 15 people attended. The survey found that 21 considered it useful.

Although there is generally a fairly low attendance for these workshops, they provide invaluable skills and are attended by both new and more experienced cyclists. They are also free of cost to the programme, aside from staff time. Relevant comments are shown below.

The bike maintenance course was superb.

Fix a flattie & Cycle Skills workshops were a great idea.

4.5.7 Cycle skills sessions

Four cycle skills workshops were held during the programme. These are regular programmed events from Pedal Ready, and a 50% discount is offered to Active a2b participants. A total of 17 Active a2b participants took part in them, giving positive feedback:

Great programme - thought the mentor programme great and the skills workshops also very good.

Confidence to ride with other traffic is one of the greatest barriers to cycling. Cycle skills workshops are a good way to give people the confidence they need.

4.5.8 a2b GO Walk/Bike Challenge

Of the 620 people who registered interest for the a2b GO Walk/Bike Challenge, 318 actually took part in the event. Promotion was done primarily through workplaces and the Active a2b newsletter, along with distributing some flyers at Park & Ride stations and at Go by Bike day.

The usefulness of the challenge was rated highly by the Active a2b participants who did take part. The numbers of participants was lower than hoped. It is possible there is some confusion about the difference between 'Active a2b' (the programme) and 'a2b GO' (the challenge), which may have meant some workplaces didn't promote it, thinking that they already had.

In the a2b GO competition the exercise of trying to convince a driver to walk was fun and helpful. While it didn't make a huge difference to my habits I found it fun and creates a kind of 'active commuting posse' in the workplace. It's something to be proud of.

We enjoyed the challenges and opportunity to earn more points and of course the opportunity to win a prize was great for the team.

For a more detailed report of the a2b GO Walk/Bike Challenge please see the separate report.

4.6 Wider self-reported influence of Active a2b

Using information supplied by those participants who completed the evaluation survey, it was found that 54% of all respondents thought that Active a2b had helped them walk or cycle to work more (Figure 11), up slightly from 50% in 2013. The Active a2b Plus participants (51%) were slightly less

likely to think this than Active a2b Standard participants (54%), which is a little different from what our results actually show. This may simply demonstrate that self-reported behaviour isn't always equivalent to actual behaviour.

Outside of work trips, 49% of respondents thought that Active a2b had helped them to walk or cycle more and 68% thought that it had helped improve their health and well-being. For these responses, higher proportions of Plus group participants than Standard group participants were likely to think this. These results are both higher than in 2013, with figures of 45% and 61%, respectively.

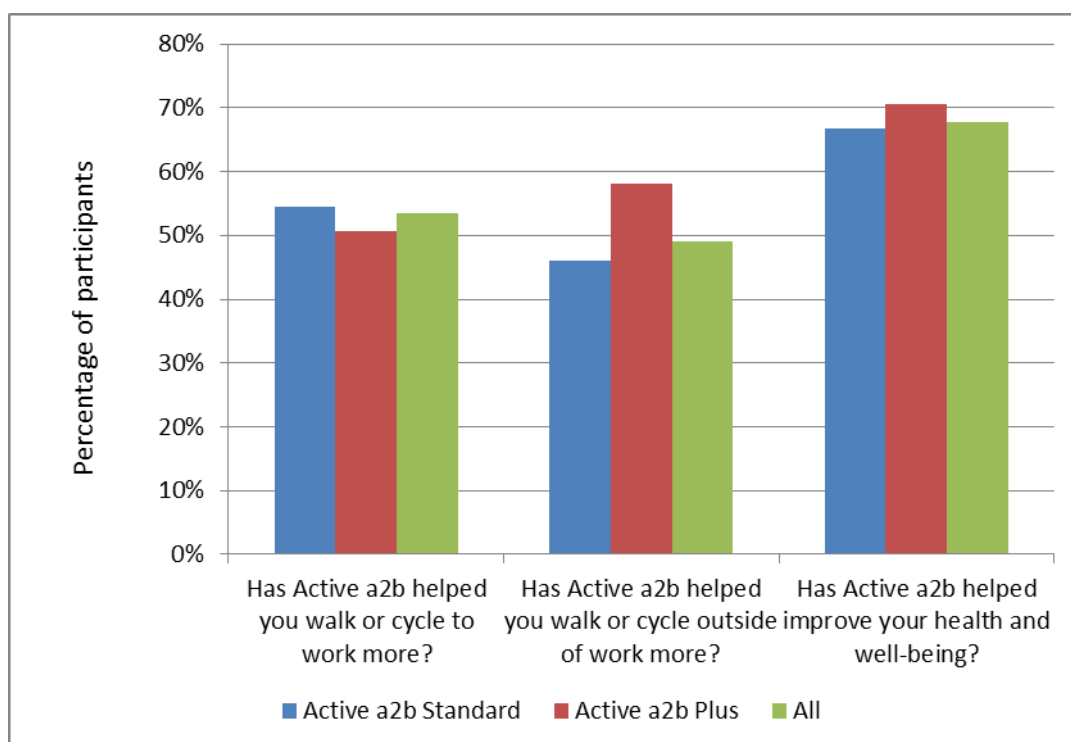


Figure 11 Reported influence of Active a2b programme on walking and cycling levels and well-being

5. Discussion

Active a2b continues to meet its goal of reducing the number of people that drive to work and increasing the role of active modes in people's commuting patterns. The Active a2b Plus group significantly reduced their car mode share (as reported in Section 4.1), VKT reduced from 91% to 69% with the number of participants that drove alone significantly reducing from 54% to 39%.

Alongside the reduction in driving to work, the Active a2b Plus group increased their active travel from 6% of work journeys at the time of registration in January to 19% in the evaluation survey.

Public transport trips to work increased fourfold for the Plus group this year, from 3% to 12%, which may be due to the longer distance trips that many of these participants made. While many were unable to walk or cycle their entire journey, using public transport instead of driving may have opened up the opportunity to incorporate some active travel into an otherwise sedentary trip. This is supported by the secondary mode data which showed an increase in active travel for secondary modes from 59% to 67%, with the increase accounted for entirely by walking.

Although car use was low for the Active a2b Standard group at the time of registration, there was an increase in car mode share by the time of evaluation in April, from 5% to 12%. There were marginal increases of 1-1.5% in the active modes. By contrast, public transport use fell by 10% to 34%, with 7% due to falling numbers of bus trips. It should be noted that some of the increase in car use may be a result of seasonal change. Research is currently underway, which is hoped to provide a better understanding in this area, along with the long-term impacts of Active a2b beyond the end of the programme.

Overall, 54% of Active a2b participants reported that the programme helped them walk or cycle to work more. Almost half (49%) of respondents also thought that Active a2b had helped them to walk or cycle more outside of work and 68% thought that it had helped improve their health and well-being. This hopefully demonstrates the wider health benefits of Active a2b, and justifies the valued sponsorship received from our external health partners (Compass Health, Regional Public Health and Cancer Society).

In its fifth year of delivery, Active a2b does not seem to be losing its momentum. In 2014, the number of participants was comparable to the peak numbers of 2012 and 2013. Active a2b is still managing to reach new participants with 70% of them being new to the programme.

5.1 Key successes

5.1.1 Newsletter

This year the e-newsletters were distributed weekly. They were regarded as the most useful tool of Active a2b and were received well by the vast majority of participants, as discussed in Section 4.5 above.

Newsletters were sent more regularly than last year. The numbers unsubscribing from the mailing list was low, and readership rates remained higher than last year, even with the increased number of emails sent out.

5.1.2 Healthy lifestyle changes

Active a2b once again partnered with the Cancer Society, Regional Public Health and Compass Health to deliver a more holistic health programme. Although the main focus of Active a2b is to encourage active commuting as a sustainable transport method, the implementation of healthy lifestyle changes are a roll-on effect of participation and a major success of the programme.

The partnership with these health sponsors is invaluable for Active a2b. Their ongoing support also helps to legitimise Active a2b as a valuable holistic health programme.

Examples of feedback in this regard are as follows:

I kept up the cycling [...] it's become a habit now and the benefits are endless...better health, save money on fuel, save parking worries, take less things to work, makes life simple and the fresh electric air makes me feel good.

I personally think this programme is really good one. It raises the awareness of the importance of physical exercise and improves health by taking actions.

I have lost a further 4 kg during the programme as part of an overall weight reduction continuing from last year's promotion. Great

Just having the programme, with email contact in particular but also personal calls, makes a measurable difference to my awareness and actions on healthy exercise and reducing emissions/traffic congestion. Thanks!

5.1.3 A good balance between walking and cycling

In 2013, multiple comments indicated that the programme was too heavily focused on cycling, with little coverage of walking. Effort was put towards rectifying this. Shoe Clinic discount vouchers were sent out in the welcome packs, a pedometer discount was arranged and promoted to walkers, and more stories in the newsletter profiled walkers. This seems to have restored the balance.

5.1.4 A focus on peer support and extending the reach

Although Active a2b is targeted towards individuals, it is likely that the programme achieves a wider reach than to participants alone. For example, the a2b GO challenge is a team event and various challenges may have created more visibility in the workplace for active commuting. Various comments reflected this wider reach.

Ever since Active a2b launched, I have been the enforcer for C&CDHB's participation each and every year, and I endeavour to continue enforcing this programme at my workplace and sending out the newsletters to all of our 5700+ staff as they come through. Keep up the great work Active a2b team.

I run a community centre in Island Bay, and I would like to add a cycling activity out here next year.

What a great initiative that I have recommended to my friends and work mates. Just the kick start I needed

Other comments showed the benefit of having peer support from colleagues and friends, and the benefits that can be achieved for a workplace through team bonding.

The work team commute competitions this year were AWESOME. No one at my workplace did it, but heaps of my mates' workplaces did. FANTASTIC way to get peer motivation and help the health and mental well-being of work teams

I thought that overall it was a great programme, not only did it motivate me, it was also fantastic for team bonding...

I started walking to and for work with another colleague. Probably wouldn't have done it on my own but now in the habit I might.

5.1.5 Participants want and expect the programme to continue

It is clear from many participants that the responses were generally positive and that they are looking to incorporate the programme and associated incentives and information into their lifestyle on an ongoing basis. A few examples of this are as follows:

Keep doing what you are doing, please! If we move to a different location and get different childcare options available to us, I'll be participating with full force and encouraging all colleagues to do it too!

Hoping that A2B will continue. I'd like to make use of the cycle skills workshop one day.

Thank you so much and look forward to the next round :)

Bring on next year!

5.2 Recommendations

Overall, the programme seems to be well established, with a recognised and respected 'brand' and approach to promoting active travel. The primary recommendation is therefore to continue with the programme, without any major overhaul of how the programme is run. The partnerships with our health partners is an important part in this, allowing for the staffing required to run the programme to a high standard.

While no major change is recommended, the following recommendations might help to improve the programme for the coming year.

5.2.1 Highlight the distinction between Active a2b and a2b GO

In re-branding a2b GO (from Streets Alive), a decision was made to associate it with Active a2b. The challenge is both a subset of Active a2b, and an independent challenge in its own right. While there are benefits of having the name association, this also appears to cause some confusion as to what each one is.

It is therefore recommended to be as clear as possible, to both workplace contacts and participants that they are two separate things, and that people can register for a2b GO, even if they are not part of Active a2b. By clarifying the distinction and independence of the two programmes, workplaces will more likely promote both programmes to their staff.

Consideration could be given to renaming a2b GO (again), however there are benefits of the association, and over time it is hoped that a better understanding of the differences between them will be understood.

5.2.2 Ensure staff resourcing can cover follow-up phone calls

Unfortunately, not all people initially contacted by phone received a follow-up phone call as promised during their welcome phone-calls. March is a very busy month, with a2b Go running in parallel, and this made it difficult to ensure this was done.

Effort is needed to ensure that there are sufficient staff-hours available to maintain the phone calling right through to the end of the programme, as this may also help ensure a large response to the evaluation survey.

5.2.3 Continue to improve on the use of social media

For 2014, Facebook continued to be used fairly regularly. Twitter was not used directly, although Facebook posts also come through as tweets, but this year, emphasis was placed on Facebook.

The Active a2b page gained 235 likes by the end of the season, which is a fairly valuable following. Effort is required to keep updates regular and interesting. There was not a lot of comments and discussion through this channel, which could be aimed for in the coming year, through engaging questions, or small prizes.

Last year's recommendations in this area are still useful and relevant. They are given below:

- a) Updates can direct participants to issues beyond active commuting, but are common areas of interest. Perhaps links from the newsletter (benefit of the week) could be shared for example.
- b) Newsfeed stories can include opinion polls on commuting issues, e.g. What is your top reason for active commuting (health, environment, cost-saving)? What is your biggest issue active commuting (infrastructure, weather, motivation)?
- c) Newsfeed stories can be more personal. For example, photos of the co-ordinator's commute, personal commuting issues/successes, live tweets of co-ordinator's commuting etc.
- d) More direction to the links for the Facebook page in the newsletter is needed so they can be found easily and grow the audience.
- e) Find ways to direct participants to Active a2b social media outside of work time, given some workplace restrictions on access to these sites.

6. Conclusion

This evaluation shows that Active a2b continues to achieve its aims of increasing the amount of active modes and decreasing car usage. The Active a2b Plus group showed a significant decrease in car mode share. Participants' confidence, in particular with cycling, appears to have improved.

Overall participation in Active a2b remains steady, with 1,132 participants. This is only just shy of last year's record of 1,170. This indicates that there is still plenty of scope for continuing the programme and reaching new people across the region. Seventy percent of 2014's participants were new to the programme.

Active a2b provides a wide range of tools, resources and workshops, which widen the possibility for benefiting numerous types of people. This year's theme of 'the daily getaway' seems to have resonated with some people in their recognition of the healthy nature of an active commute. The inclusion of some sporting event discounts seems to have brought in some people with a higher level of fitness and ambition, although effort was made to ensure the stories and target audience remained the 'everyday' commuter, not the super-athlete.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many people indicating that they would recommend it to others and that they intend to return in future years.

In summary, Active a2b has contributed to more active commutes which can help to minimise congestion in the region and reduce air pollution and emissions. The wider health benefits from the programme will help to maintain health, raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity, and promote the commute to work as a valuable time for fitting in exercise into a busy lifestyle. The health and wellness approach proves to be a valuable channel for promoting sustainable transport, due to the overlapping goals and benefits.