

# Active a2b

## Final report for 2013

A health and wellbeing programme from Greater Wellington Regional Council and partners



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## Executive summary

Active a2b is a health and wellbeing initiative that was delivered in 2013 for the fourth 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 directly request a number of resources and choose from a range of workshops and challenges. Participants also receive a fortnightly 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 to work in a vehicle at least twice a week at the time of registration. This 'Active a2b Plus' group receives a higher level of personalised support than other participants.

Active a2b was once again delivered with support from 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.

This year, an additional branch of the programme was offered, with assistance from Regional Public Health, to non-office based (offline) organisations such as factories and large retail outlets outside of Wellington CBD. The purpose of this was to engage more Maori and Pacific Island participants who are a target demographic of the health sector. Offline organisations typically have a high representation of these two populations. Although this offline aspect had only a small number of participants, and failed to increase Maori and Pacific Island participation overall, the majority that did participate felt well supported by the programme. The success of one particular organisation (a participation rate of nearly 25 per cent of all staff) highlighted the importance of a workplace "champion" to motivate staff to take part.

In 2013, 81 workplaces registered, representing a total of approximately 41,000 employees. Altogether, 1170 individuals participated in the programme, with 294 part of the 'Active a2b Plus' group.

Results from participants who completed both the registration and evaluation survey showed that Active a2b achieved increases in the use of active trips to work. The increase in walking trips was not significant, however cycling trips in the Active a2b Plus group increased by 5 percentage points (from 9% to 14%). Car trips for the Active a2b Plus group also decreased significantly from 79% to 63%. This is similar to the reduction in car trips observed for Active a2b Plus participants in 2012. In 2013 there was little change in travel behaviour for the Active a2b Standard group.

Evaluation data from the Active a2b Plus group indicated that the programme led to a reduction of 3664 kilometres of vehicle travel a week. Using prices set by the New Zealand Transport Agency, the economic value of the increase in walking and cycling was \$42,602, producing a cost benefit ratio for the programme of 1:4.3.

Sixty four per cent of participants responded to the evaluation survey and reported that the programme had helped improve their health and well-being including increased levels of physical activity, better mental health, improved nutrition and in some cases, smoking cessation.

## **1. Introduction**

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

In 2011, the programme was expanded out from the CBD to the wider region and a total of 80 organisations took part, including three district health boards, three tertiary institutes, six territorial authorities and twelve ministries and government departments.

In 2012, the programme was boosted by collaboration with health partners, the Cancer Society, Regional Public Health and Compass Health Their support enabled promotion of the programme to workplaces with health and wellbeing benefits of active travel.

The goals of the programme were always transport-related but the programme was promoted and packaged as 'health and wellbeing' to workplaces, because a 'sustainable transport' programme didn't appear to have the same appeal. Many of the health and safety people it was promoted through would not have taken an interest if it had had a sustainable transport focus.

This year, the programme attracted 81 organisations. This included nine workplaces with staff that primarily did not have access to computers. These “offline” organisations were approached to encourage more participation from Maori and Pacific Islanders who are typically overrepresented in offline workplaces. The health partners identify these two populations as a target demographic to engage in health and wellbeing initiatives. These workplaces received a modified Active a2b program which consisted of a six-week challenge to walk or cycle to work as much as possible. The same tools and gifts were offered, with the exception of the Go by Bike day and Walk 2 Work day events.

The programme began on January 7 and ran until the last week of April. Each year 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 health and wellbeing of participants.

## 2. Programme description

Active a2b is a health and wellbeing programme which is communicated to workplaces in the Wellington Region. Workplaces are encouraged to promote this programme to their staff as a free health and wellbeing initiative supported by their employer. Workplaces were contacted at the end of 2012 and for those interested in participating in the programme, were provided with easy-to-use communication material ready to be sent to employees in January 2013.

Greater Wellington ran the programme for those staff that registered. These individuals received a programme built from their choice of a list of tools, events, workshops and social support mechanisms offered.

The **tools** on offer were chosen for their practicality and capacity to motivate participants to actively commute. These included: a desktop calendar, with motivational photos and an area to tick active commuting days; a goal magnet with the participant's goal written on; an online walking and journey planner enabling participants to find their best active commuting route; reflective slap bands and bag tags; and a discount card giving them discounts at bike and adventure outdoors stores.

The **events and challenges** were designed to be both motivating and celebratory. The Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge was especially motivating for new active commuters or those who were infrequent commuters. Go by Bike Day and Walk 2 Work Day celebrated the growing culture of active commuting in Wellington.

**Advice, information, training and social support** was offered in a variety of ways to participants. Including cycle skills training, fix a flattie workshops, walking gym workshops, the bike buddy scheme, phone support and Facebook and Twitter. A fortnightly e-newsletter was the main form of

communication and support during the programme and was automatically sent to all registered participants. The newsletters shared inspiring stories profiling participants' walking and cycling efforts, alerted people to upcoming events and workshops and encouraged people to interact on the Active a2b Facebook page.

## **2.1 New Features for 2013**

### **2.1.1 Engagement of offline organisations**

Active a2b was adapted in 2013 to cater for 'offline' organisations where employees worked away from a desk for the entire, or majority of the day. This included factories, meat-works, hardware stores and the bus network where a much higher percentage of workers are Māori and Pacific Islanders. This was done to attract more of this population who are a target group of our health partners for health and wellbeing initiatives.

### **2.1.2 Streamlining the registration process**

As recommended in the 2012 report, the registration process was streamlined in 2013 by including nutrition and smoking cessation information as part of the tools requested online, rather than during the phone conversation. At the time of registration, participants could also elect to receive a fridge magnet with a personalised goal written on it.

### **2.1.3 Free gift at registration**

In addition to the tools available on request, participants were able to choose one of three small gifts. These included branded bike seat covers, a 'manky' (a Wellington walking map on a hanky) or a key ring torch. The free gifts were considered a way to reward the many people participating in the programme that already walked and cycled to work. The branded goods also helped to increase the social diffusion of the programme and promote participation via word-of-mouth within workplaces.

### **2.1.4 Active a2b Facebook page.**

As recommended in 2012, the Active a2b Facebook page was refreshed and used as a communication channel, replacing the Ning social networking site. Over 100 participants 'liked' the page. The page had daily 'updates' on active commuting, links to relevant articles and the fortnightly Active a2b newsletter.

### 2.1.5 Streets Alive walk/bike challenge

This year the Streets Alive walk/bike challenge was adapted to include both walkers and cyclists. This change was prompted by the cancellation of the annual BikeWise challenge which created a gap for competitive Active a2b cyclists. Streets Alive had a more focussed approach in 2013, and only included active commuting as opposed to all active travel.

### 2.1.6 Walking Gym workshops

In order to ensure there was an equal amount of walking and cycling promotion, walking gym workshops were introduced. These workshops consisted of a one-hour walk from a suburb to the CBD and aimed to educate participants in ways to increase the benefits of their walks. This was achieved by introducing participants to Nordic walking, the principal of interval training and three strength training exercises at strategic points along the way. Eleven people took part in the four walking gyms.

## **2.2 Active a2b Plus phone calls**

A key objective of Active a2b is to decrease kilometres travelled by car, so participants who indicated on their registration form that they drove to work at least twice a week became part of the target Active a2b Plus group. This group was split in such a way for evaluation purposes only.

In 2012, all Active a2b Plus participants were contacted by phone. However in 2013, only those who drove at least three times a week at the time of registration, received a welcome phone call. Due to time restrictions, only 10 follow up phone calls were made and three emails were received from participants giving feedback about their progress.

## **2.3 Go Well through Winter**

In the past three years, Active a2b concluded with a 'Be Safe Be Seen' road safety campaign to encourage participants to increase their visibility as walkers and cyclists during winter months. This was repeated in 2013 with a Go Well Through Winter quiz which promoted visibility, safety and awareness. The quiz was distributed through the Active a2b e-newsletter and health and safety workplace contacts. Nine hundred people completed the quiz.





**Figure 1 Photo used in Go Well through Winter quiz to highlight the benefits of light and reflective clothing at night**

### **3. Methodology**

Details on the process of recruiting online workplaces, collecting data and statistical analysis can be found in the Active a2b Final Report from 2010, [www.tinyurl.com/activea2b2010](http://www.tinyurl.com/activea2b2010). Address information was gathered at the point of registration and where participants mixed modes for their journey to work, they recorded their secondary mode if it was over 500 metres.

Recruitment of on-line workplaces started in December 2012. Most of the workplaces were registered by the end of December, with only a few late additions in early January. Registration for the 73 online organisations simply involved them emailing confirmation of their participation or approving participation during a follow up call.

Twenty seven offline organisations were invited to register for Active a2b (by letter, email and follow up phone call) and nine offline workplaces accepted the invitation including: Mitre 10 Mega Petone, Mitre 10 Masterton, The Warehouse Wellington, The Warehouse Lyall Bay, The Warehouse Paraparaumu, The Warehouse Lower Hutt, Petronics, Taylor Preston and NZ Bus.

Active a2b was packaged as a six-week challenge for these organisations, with participants recording their active trips on a personalised company wall-chart. Information about the programme was passed on via email and phone calls to the lead-people at each organisation. Promotion of the challenge was through personalised posters, staff newsletters, emails and team meetings.

Employees were encouraged to register via paper forms or online through their manager. They then wrote their name on the challenge wall-chart, which was displayed in a common staff area, and marked the days they walked or cycled at least part way to work during the six week challenge. Employers were encouraged to organise a celebratory event or prize for participants to acknowledge their efforts in taking part in the challenge. When uptake was slow for the offline organisations, it was decided that the paper registration would be abandoned and people could take part by simply signing up on the wall chart.

After registration, both the online and offline participants received the tools and gifts they requested. Those who registered interest, were sent further information about workshops and were invited to register. Welcome phone calls were given to 78 per cent (229) of the Active a2b Plus participants who drove three or more times per week. The Active a2b standard group did not receive phone calls this year.

All participants were supported by e-newsletters sent out fortnightly and all were invited to take part in the Streets Alive Walk/Bike Challenge. Those who were connected to Active a2b through Facebook and Twitter, received motivational and informative comments three to four times per week for the duration of the program.

In the final week of April, 10 follow up phone calls were made. At the same time all participants were invited to complete the evaluation survey and 427 responses (36 per cent of participants) were received. Of these responses 99 were from Active a2b Plus participants. The evaluation of offline organisations was less robust, due to varying registration methods resulting in no baseline data being gathered for some participants.

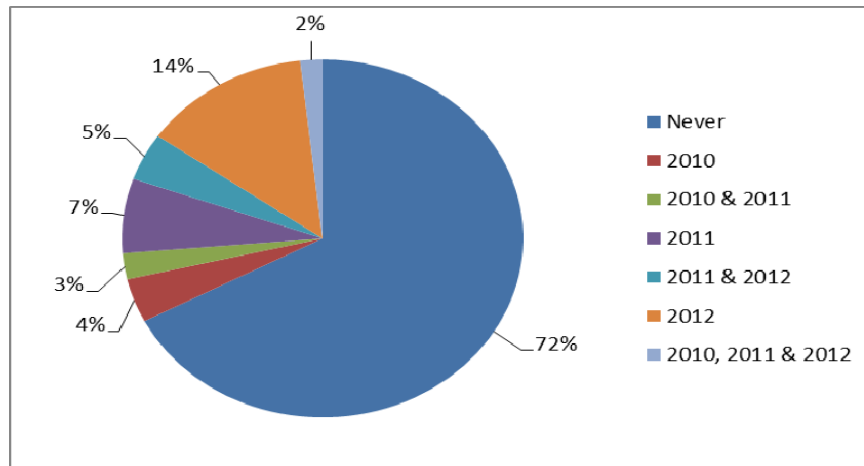
## **4. Participant Characteristics**

### **4.1 Participant demographics**

In 2013, 1141 participants from 72 online workplaces and 29 participants from 9 offline workplaces in the Wellington region registered for Active a2b.

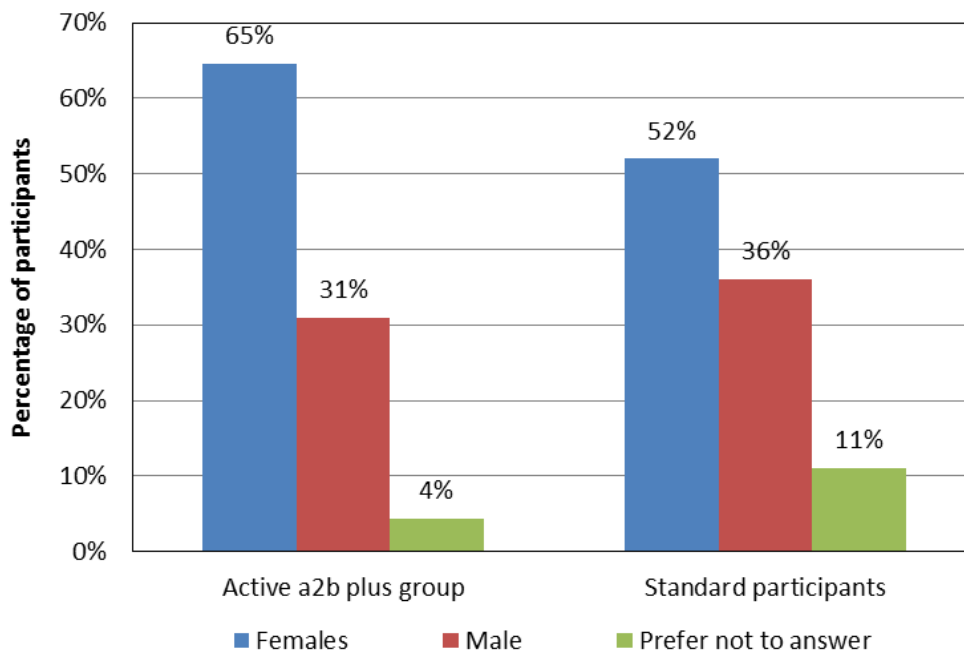
Of all participants 25% (294) drove at least twice a week at the time of registration, classifying them as Active a2b Plus. This year the Active a2b Plus group was further broken down in to those that drove twice a week and those that drove three or more times per week. Twenty two per cent of the Active a2b Plus group drove at least twice a week, while the majority (78%) drove three or more times per week.

Most registrants were new to the programme (72%), with the rest having participated in previous years (Figure 2).

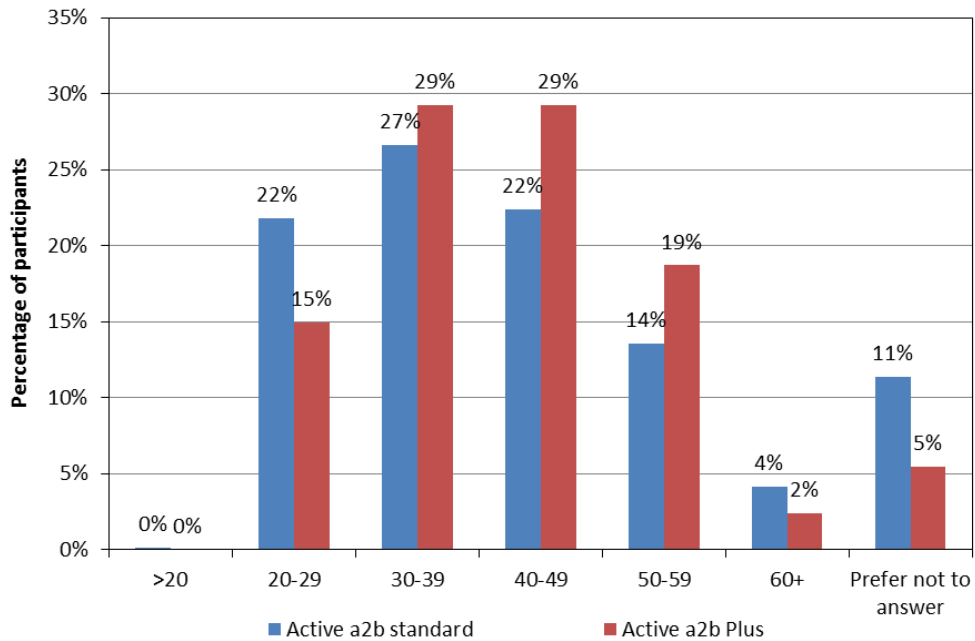


**Figure 2 Previous Active a2b participation of 2013 participants**

The majority of participants were female (55%). This was more pronounced in the Active a2b Plus group where 65% were female compared to 52% in the Active a2b Standard group (Figure 3). Plus group participants were also older (Figure 4). The majority were aged from 30-49 (58%), compared to 49% in this age range in the standard group.

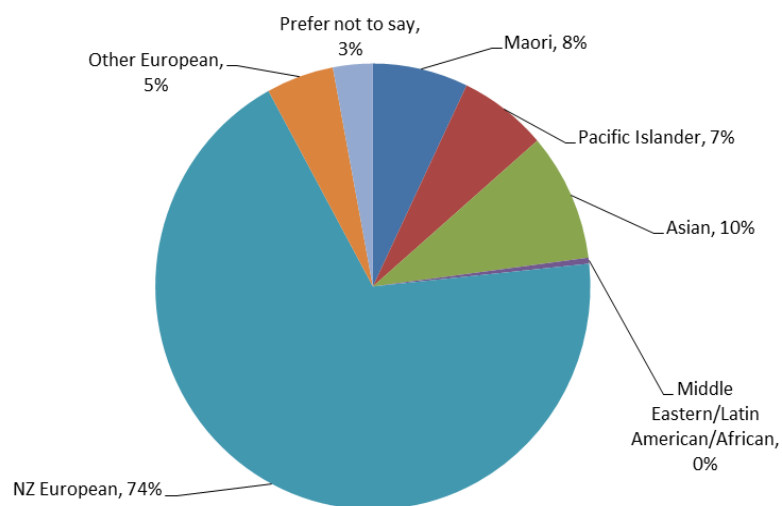


**Figure 3 Gender of Active a2b Plus and standard participants**



**Figure 4 Age groups of Active a2b Plus and standard participants**

Participants were asked their ethnicity at registration (Figure 5). Just over 73% reported they were NZ European, 7.6% of participants were Maori, 7.6% were Asian, 5.4% were Other European, 1.9% were Pacific Islanders and a small percentage (less than 0.5%) were of Middle Eastern, Latin American or African descent. Compared to last year there was a decrease in the proportion of participants of Maori and Pacific Island descent, an increase in those of Asian descent and little change for the other groups.

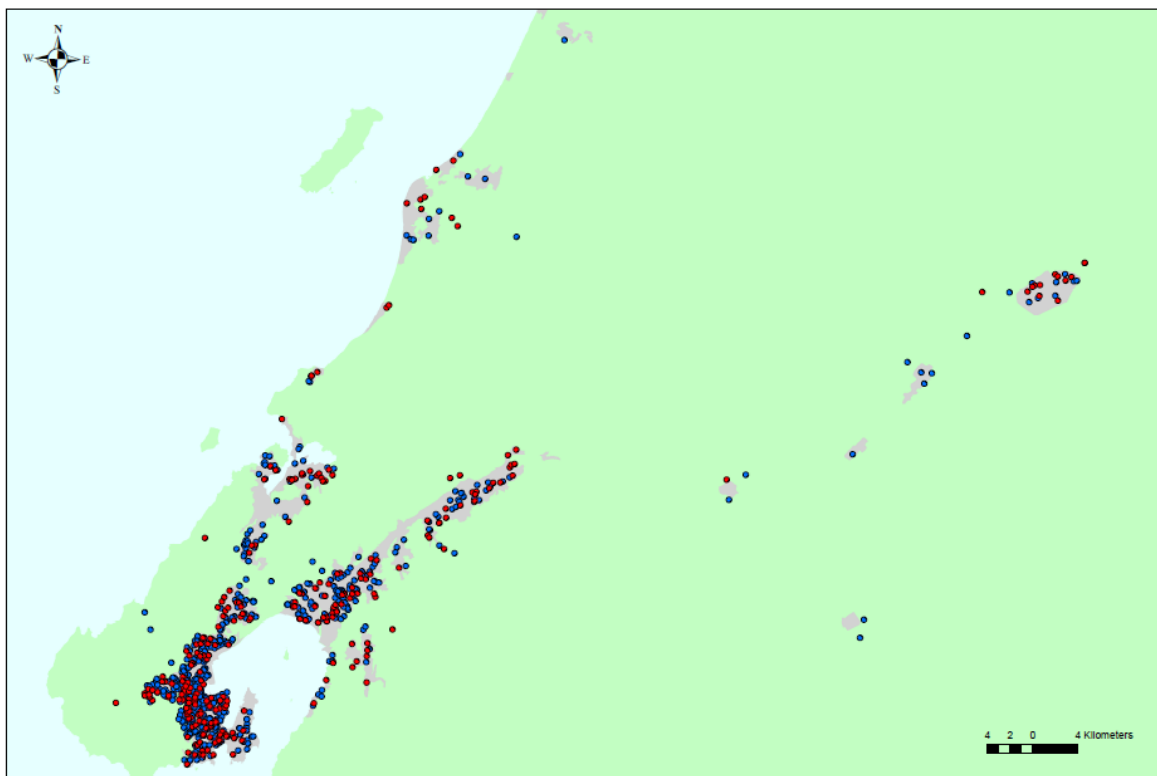


**Figure 5 Ethnicity of Active a2b participants**

**Table 1 Workplace destination for Active a2b participants**

	All	Active a2b Plus	Active a2b standard
Wellington City	83%	61%	92%
Lower Hutt	7%	16%	4%
Upper Hutt	3%	10%	1%
Porirua	3%	6%	2%
Kapiti	1%	1%	1%
Wairarapa	2%	5%	0%

Although the vast majority of standard participants worked in Wellington City (Table 1), Active a2b Plus participants were spread widely around the region, with 40% working outside the Wellington CBD (Figure 6). This is likely to be related to the reduced congestion and cost of parking outside of the CBD that makes driving to work more attractive.



Active a2b participants 2013

• Active a2b plus group • Active a2b standard group

**Figure 6 Place of residence of Active a2b Plus group (red) and standard group (blue)**

## 4.2 Kilometres travelled by Active a2b Plus participants

Very few Active a2b Plus participants travelled less than 2kms to work. Outside of this distance bracket, there was a relatively even spread of trip distances, including 44% of people travelling over 10 kilometres to get to work.

The highest proportion of Active a2b Plus group participants travelled between 2- 4.99km (29%), followed by 27% travelling between 5- 9.99km, 19% travelled 10-19km and a quarter of participants had a commute of 20km or more (Figure 7). This spread of journey to work distances is very different to last year, where just over 70% of the participants were travelling distances of up to 10 kilometres. With such a high proportion of Plus participants travelling long distances to work, integrating active and public transport is important for these commuters.

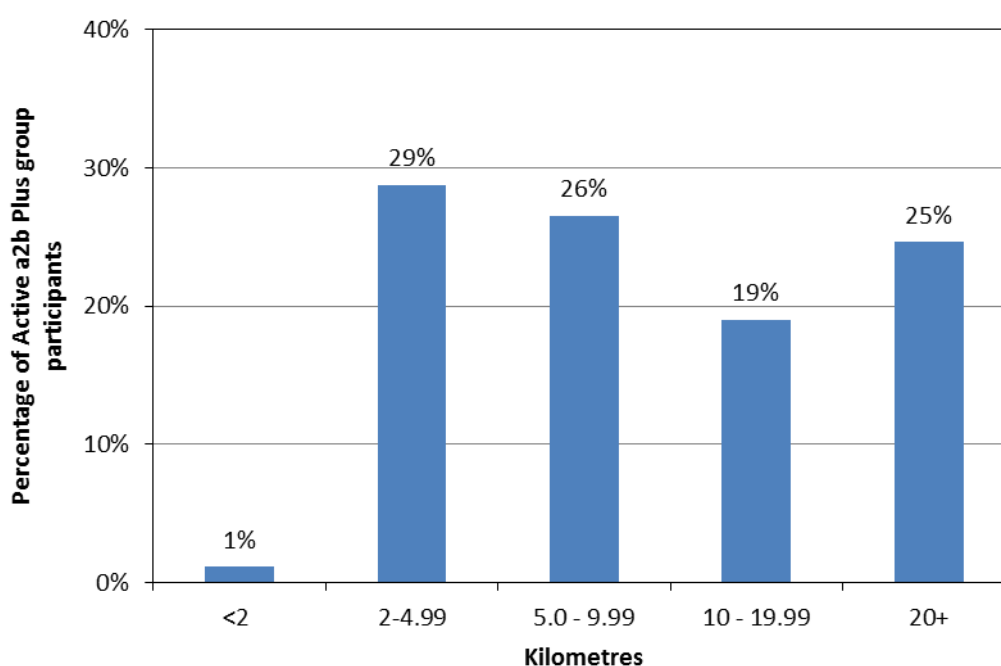


Figure 7 Kilometres travelled to work by Active a2b Plus participants

## 4.3 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 Active a2b participation. Known collectively as 'stages of change' the six response categories provide a progression of behavioural change in relation to the feasibility of walking/running or cycling for work trips.

On registering for Active a2b, it was found that just over half of the Active a2b Plus group indicated little interest (selecting *not consider* and *sometimes think about*) at all in walking/running (55%) or cycling (57%) for their trips to work. At the other extreme relatively few placed themselves in the 'doing' end (selecting *almost always* or *half the time*) of the stages of change continuum for walking/running (10%) or cycling (13%) to work. The remaining 35% for walking/running and

30% for cycling were in the potential for change groups (selecting *some occasions* or *think seriously*). This pattern of behaviour change is not unexpected considering the criteria for inclusion in the Active a2b Plus group was that you drive to work two or more times per week.

As would be expected the majority of Active a2b standard participants (34.9%) ‘Almost always’ walked or ran to work, which was in stark contrast with the majority of the Active a2b Plus group. Interestingly, the majority of both groups did ‘not consider’ cycling to work (31.6% for the standard, 52.9% for the Plus group) (Table 2).

**Table 2 Running/walking 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
Almost always	35%	5%	28%	2%
Half the time	11%	5%	9%	7%
Some occasions	18%	23%	9%	18%
Think seriously but rarely do	10%	13%	7%	8%
Sometimes think about	9%	23%	16%	12%
Not consider	18%	30%	32%	53%

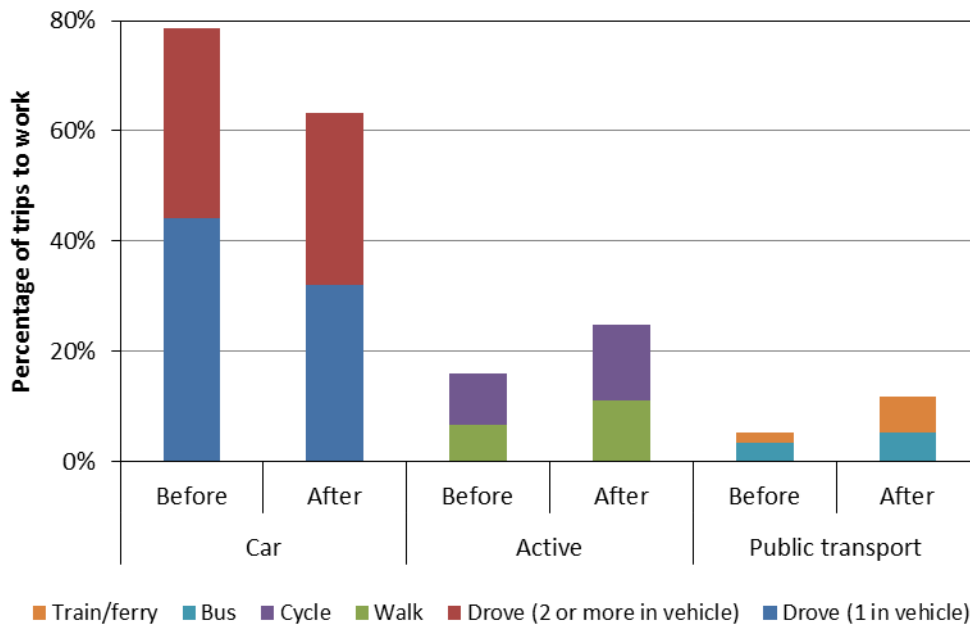
## 5. Evaluation

### 5.1 Mode shift before and after Active a2b

Figure 8 shows the mode share of travel to work trips for Active a2b Plus participants before and after participating in the 2013 programme. Active a2b Plus participants had significantly increased their travel to work trips by active mode from 16% to 25%. Although the increase in walking trips was not significant, there was a significant increase in cycle mode share of travel to work from 9% to 14%.

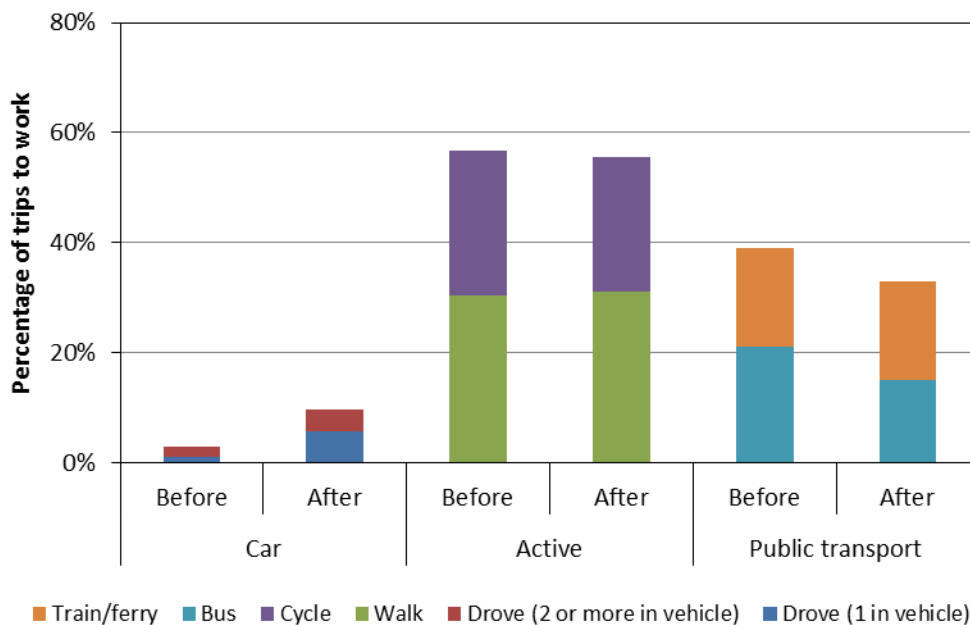
A significant reduction in car mode share (from 79% to 63%) was also observed. Of particular note is the decrease in drive alone trips from 44% to 32%. There was little change observed in the proportion of carpooling trips.

Public transport trips were initially low for this group. However, public transport use had significantly increased following participation in the Active a2b programme.



**Figure 8 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 9. There was no change in active mode use or public transport use for this group. Although car use for this group was low, a slight increase in car mode share was observed.



**Figure 9 Mode share of Active a2b standard participants before and after the programme**



Overall, there was an increase in active travel for secondary modes from 59% to 68% (Figure 10).

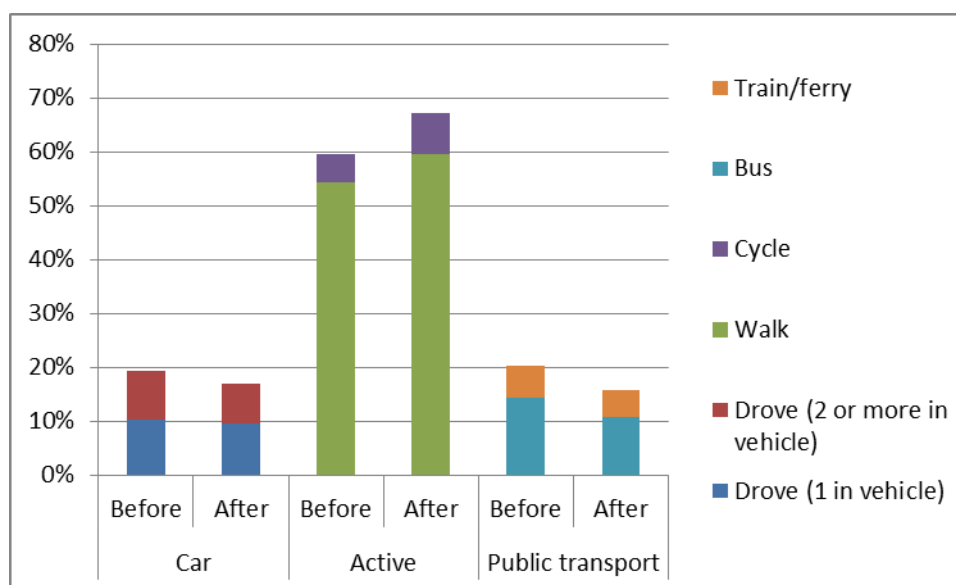


Figure 10 Secondary mode share of all Active a2b participants before and after the programme

## 5.2 Reduction in vehicle kilometres travelled to work

Ninety five 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 to work by 12.3kms per week, increased their walking KT by 0.95km and increased their cycling KT by 2.5km.

The average reduction in vehicle KT is similar to that observed for Active a2b Plus participants last year, whereas the average increase in walking KT is lower (0.95km compared to 2.2km) but that for cycling is higher (2.5km compared to 1.7km). This finding may be due to the difference in the spread of distances to work compared to last year. In 2012, 72% of Active a2b Plus group participants lived within 10km of their workplace compared to 56% in 2013.

If the changes in KT for the sample above were assumed to be representative of the whole Active a2b Plus group, this group would have decreased their weekly vehicle KT to work by 3664km, increased their walking KT by 282km and increased their cycling KT by 742km.

## 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 in 2013 of \$10,000. 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 were funded by health partners, or the cost of Greater Wellington 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 5.2, the estimated benefits of Active a2b were evaluated. The total benefits for all participants over the 16 week life of the programme was estimated at \$42,602, with the majority of the benefit related to the changes in travel behaviour of the Active a2b Plus group (Table 3). This produces \$4.30 worth of benefits for every dollar spent (cost benefit ratio of 1: 4.3).

**Table 3 Estimated benefits accrued from Active a2b programme**

	<b>All participants (n=1141)</b>	<b>Standard participants (n=843)</b>	<b>Plus participants (n=294)</b>
<b>Weekly benefits from walking</b>	<b>\$3,872</b>	<b>\$3,091</b>	<b>\$761</b>
<b>Weekly benefits from cycling</b>	<b>-\$1,209</b>	<b>-\$2170</b>	<b>\$1,076</b>
<b>Total weekly benefits</b>	<b>\$2,663</b>	<b>\$920</b>	<b>\$1,837</b>
<b>Total benefits over 16 weeks</b>	<b>\$42,602</b>	<b>\$14,727</b>	<b>\$29,387</b>

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. The calculations also assume that standard group participants would not have reduced their active travel in the absence 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, and active travel by standard participants would be expected to drop in the absence of the programme. These calculations also exclude the benefits from active travel outside of journey to work trips, which 45 per cent of participants reported to have increased, and increases in secondary mode walking and cycling trips (i.e., walking to the train station).

## 5.4 Stages of change

Figures 10 and 11 show the extent to which participants who completed the evaluation survey considered walking/running and cycling as a good option for trips to work for the Active a2b Plus group and Active a2b Standard group respectively.

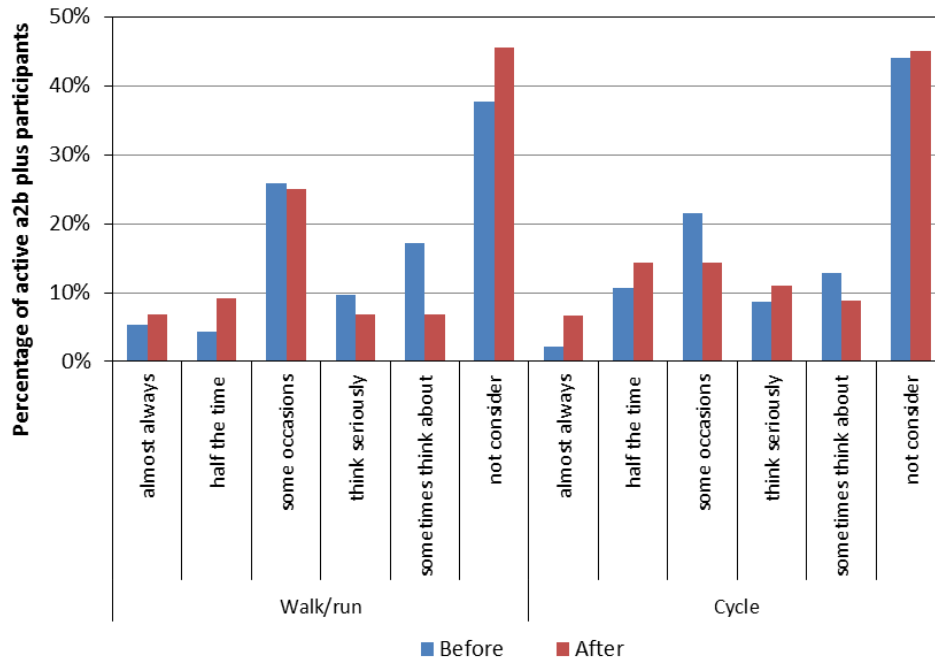


Figure 11 Shift in walking and cycling stages of change for Active a2b Plus participants

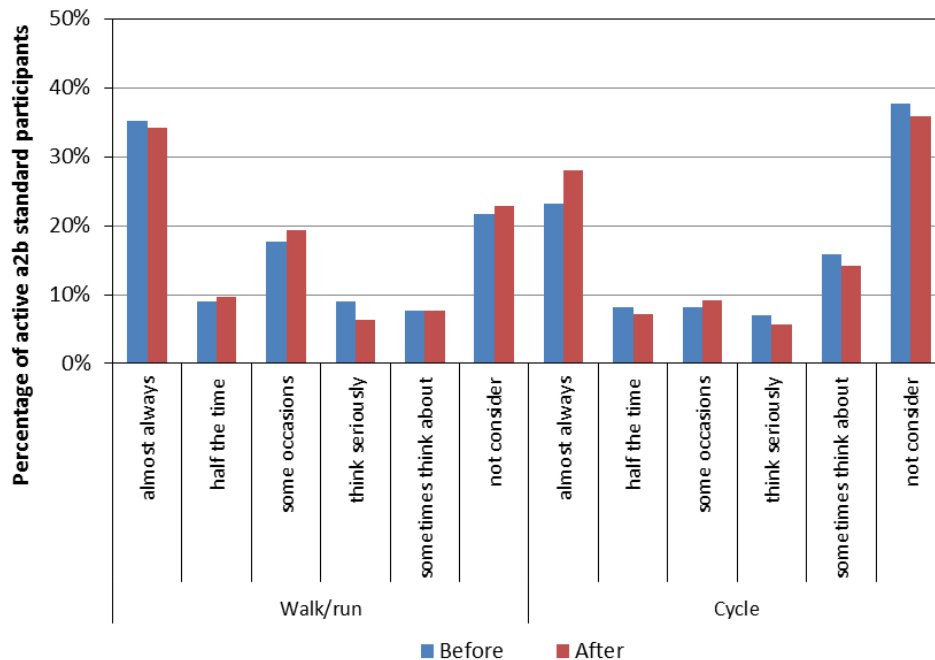


Figure 12 Shift in walking and cycling stages of change for Active a2b standard participants

After participating in Active a2b, the Plus group showed significant increases in the doing end of the stages of change continuum. The proportion that indicated they regularly (selecting *almost always* or *half the time*) walk/run to work increased from 10% to 16%, and those cycling increased from 13% to 2%. This increase was a result of participants moving out of the potential for change (selecting *some occasions* or *think seriously*) groups, resulting in a decrease in the proportion of Active a2b Plus participants in the potential for change groups. There was little change in the total proportions that showed little interest in using active modes to travel to work (selecting *not consider* and *sometimes think about*).

There was very little movement in the stages of change for the Active a2b standard group.

## 5.5 Tools

### 5.5.1 Tools distributed

A range of tools, including nutrition and smoking cessation information, were requested during registration. The branded desktop calendar was the most popular tool with 622 distributed. The second most popular tool was the reflective bag tag and 595 of these were sent out. The goal magnet was requested by 555 participants and 531 slap bands were also distributed. The inclusion of nutrition information at registration was a successful adaptation, with 539 booklets sent out (compared to 256 people requesting information via phone calls last year). Forty nine smoking cessation booklets were also requested.

Additional reflective gear was distributed through the Go Well Through Winter campaign to 75 people.

### 5.5.2 Gifts distributed

The most popular gift requested was the key-ring torches (420), followed by the mankys (342) and then the bike seat cover (206). Although the key-ring torches were the most popular they were found to be of a cheap quality and therefore not very useful, however the mankys were well liked.

*Really liked the map on hanky, that was such a good idea*

*I am appreciative of the free gifts*

Membership cards were sent to every participant who requested tools or gifts. A total of 12 retail outlets provided discounts to members region-wide. Less than 10% of participants did not request any tools or gifts.

### 5.5.3 E-newsletter

Ninety four per cent of participants remained on the distribution list for e-newsletters, with an average of 38% opening the fortnightly emails. These results are comparable to last year, where 93% of participants received the e-newsletter with an average opening rate of 37%.

The e-newsletters were well-received despite the low number reading them.

*The newsletter kept me motivated and inspired.*

*I thought it was encouraging with the stories about each person and I always liked reading that just to see what other people were doing*

*Loved the regular newsletters and other tips like the places you can walk featured in the desk calendar.*

*The newsletters have been good - some handy tips and thought provoking ideas.*

#### 5.5.4 Phone Calls

Of the participants who drove to work three or more times a week, 294 were called at the start of the programme and ten participants were given a follow up phone call. The phone calls were appreciated by some.

*I felt supported and encouraged by staff especially through phone-calls and email replies*

#### 5.5.5 Usefulness of tools

Ninety two per cent of the Active a2b standard group rated the key-ring torch and the Journey Planner as the most useful tools. Ninety per cent of the Active a2b Plus group rated the e-newsletter as being useful, followed closely by the key-ring torch (89%) and the Journey Planner (86%).

The Active a2b standard group also found the reflective gear, e-newsletter, desktop calendar and the three events (Walk2Work Day, Go by Bike Day and Streets Alive) as being useful tools. The phone calls, manky and desktop calendar were also rated highly by the Active a2b Plus group.

There were however several complaints about the quality of the tools:

*The freebies (such as reflective bag tag) were very poor quality. Mine fell off on first use. I'd rather you don't bother handing out such low quality things in favour of saving money and avoid creating waste. Either that or have better quality give away*

*If the give-aways are decent quality you'll get more word of mouth promotion.*

There was some confusion in the responses to the workshops. Most of the workshops were rated very low by the Active a2b Plus group, while being useful for only around 50% of the Active a2b standard group. This is in stark contrast to the feedback received from attendees. Looking at the number of responses, it was found that there were around 75% more people who rated the workshops, than actually attended one. So, it can be assumed that these low ratings can be due to people not being able to attend a workshop, rather than those attending and finding the workshop to not be valuable.

Similarly, the smoking cessation information was only requested by 49 participants while 79 people commented on the resource in their evaluation. It can be assumed that the low rating of this resource was largely due to people not receiving this information. Or it could be due to the 42% of participants who requested the information, were asking on behalf of someone else.

The bike buddies scheme was rated as being useful by only 44% of the standard group and 23% of the Plus group. This may be due to a low rate of contact between mentors and buddies and due to the low rate that actually managed to organise a ride together (see [Bike buddies](#) for more detail).

There are several other discrepancies about the rated ‘usefulness’ of tools, between the Plus group and the standard group including the rating of the reflective gear, bike seat covers, and the two events Go by Bike Day and Walk to Work Day. These may be indicative of the standard group using (or attending) these tools more often than the Plus group (see Table 4).

**Table 4 Number of participants who requested tools or expressed interest in them and the percentage of those who found them useful**

	Number distributed or expressed interest	Active a2b Plus	Active standard a2b
		(% that found the tool useful)	(% that found the tool useful)
Newsletter	1096	90%	87%
Phone call	294	81%	n/a
Reflective bag tag	595	59%	86%
Desktop calendar	622	77%	80%
Reflective slap band	531	69%	90%
Goal magnet	555	53%	60%
Key-ring torch	420	89%	92%
Manky	342	77%	76%
Bike seat cover	206	59%	75%
Membership card	1033	49%	47%
Journey Planner	Unknown	86%	92%
Nutrition information	539	61%	70%
Smoking cessation	49	9%	23%

information			
Go By Bike Day	Unknown	65%	86%
Walk 2 Work Day	Unknown	68%	87%
Streets Alive	420	61%	84%
Bike buddies	59	23%	44%
Cycle skills workshops	138	18%	62%
Bike Maintenance	162	40%	60%
Fix a flattie	162	36%	67%
Walking gym workshops	331	36%	57%

### 5.5.6 Bike buddies

Eighty four participants registered for the bike buddy scheme - 32 buddies and 51 mentors. Of the 52 mentors, 19 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 three successful matches, resulting in more confident active commuters.

*I think it's a great idea and it really helped me with my confidence – just being able to follow Susan and copy her.*

*My bike buddy Marilyn was **fantastic**. I learnt so much from riding with her. I now use the route she showed me when I bike to work. Unfortunately I had a little accident in February which was entirely my own fault. It knocked my confidence but I am motivated to cycle so when it's not too wet or windy I still bike to work.*

The value of the bike buddies scheme (as shown in Table 4) was low, which is interesting considering the very positive feedback given by participants. This could be due to several factors:

1. The relatively low rate of contact between buddy and mentor. Only 63% of buddies reported being contacted by their mentor, while only 42% of mentors reported being contacted by their buddy.

2. The low rate of follow through from making contact with each other to actually riding together.
3. The fact that some mentors were not matched with buddies.

The statistical evaluation of the bike buddies scheme in Table 4 is therefore not reflective of its real value. Of the few matches that managed to schedule a ride (or several) together, only positive comments have been made.

### 5.5.7 Fix a Flattie workshop and cycle maintenance

Twelve participants in total attended the three Fix a Flattie Workshops held at the Greater Wellington Regional Council. Six participants attended the cycle maintenance workshop held in Avanti Plus, Lower Hutt. This was significantly lower than in 2012, where there were 35 participants across three workshops.

Although there was low attendance this year, these workshops provide invaluable skills and are attended by both new and more experienced cyclists. More and varied classes for next year were commented on.

*I was intending to attend the bike maintenance and fix a flattie workshops but it was difficult to get to the venue at a particular time - is there any chance of rotating venues, e.g. a venue close to north end Lambton Quay/Thorndon?*

*I really liked the fix a flattie workshop and the cycle to work day, it put me in contact with people to improve my cycling knowledge around wellington, great since I'm new to the area!*

### 5.5.8 Cycle skills sessions

Eleven participants took part in the three cycle skills workshop – one in Petone and two in Lyall Bay. The feedback was very positive from all participants:

*The whole course was great and I really enjoyed it*

*The instructors were the best part. They really helped me immensely with my confidence.*

*The cycle skills course was really well run and gave me buckets of confidence to continue riding, and particularly through the hairy intersections where I have to make two lane changes to get into the turning lane.*

There were some suggestions on how the course could be improved for the future including:

- Providing participants with information on cycling support groups in Wellington
- Developing an advanced cycle skills class to further practice and improve on skills
- More practice on-road especially entering and exiting roundabouts.



Although the cycle skills sessions do not attract large numbers, the skills the few participants learn are invaluable. Confidence to ride with other traffic is one of the greatest barriers to cycling, and nearly all participants commented that they felt more confident to do so after the sessions.

### 5.5.9 Walking gym workshops

Seventy participants registered interest for these workshops, resulting in seven walking gym workshops being confirmed which included 45 people. With a minimum of four people needed from one area, the remainder of interested participants were contacted to let them know a walking gym was not feasible in their suburb.

Participants were contacted two days prior to the workshop to confirm their attendance, with a minimum of four confirmed for it to go ahead. As a result, three workshops were cancelled due to insufficient numbers. The remaining four workshops had a total of 11 people in attendance. All feedback was positive with all participants rating their overall experience as being either “very good” or “excellent” and all saying that they would recommend this workshop to a friend.

*It was a pleasant experience, even the weather played along. I am motivated to continue the programme armed with some exercises I can do at home, or anywhere. Great start to the day.*

*I think the whole concept is fantastic... it's like having your own walking guide and personal training session all in one. All the people I have talked to about it think the idea is cool and would get into it*

*It is a shame you couldn't run more walking gym workshops in Lower Hutt.*

*Enrolled for walking gym workshop but cancelled due to low participant numbers*

*Would like to have been able to do the walking gym more than once*

A few suggestions to improve the workshop included:

- Having the workshop run on a regular basis
- Being more specific in the details of the workshop (walking guide and personal training) to improve uptake.
- Providing courses further afield, especially in the Hutt area.

### 5.5.10 Streets Alive walk/bike challenge

Of the 528 people who registered their interest for the Streets Alive challenge, 396 (99 teams of four) actually took part in the event. As was recommended in 2012, Streets Alive was promoted beyond the Active a2b programme. Promotion included emails to Active a2b and Spring to the

Street participants as well as flyer hand outs at key active commuting points around Wellington, and at Go by Bike Day. A4 posters were also put up in several gyms around Wellington.

Seventy two per cent of participants said that they would recommend the challenge to others in the future. The event received positive feedback in its sense of camaraderie, fun and encouragement of exercise and active travel.

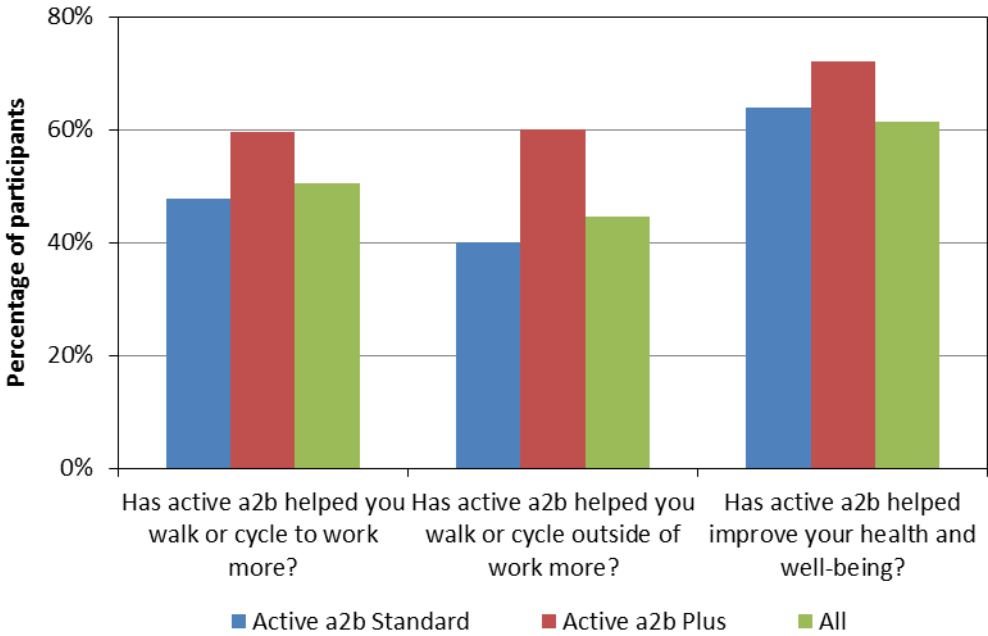
*“It is a great way to feel supported and encouraged to commit to biking and walking to work”*

*“By logging your rides you get more satisfaction by seeing your progress. By being part of a team you have more obligation to pull yourself out of bed every morning and hop on your bike! By the end of the month you are more organised and it now it is seamless!”*

For a more detailed report of the Streets Alive Challenge please see the separate report.

**5.6 Reported influence of Active a2b**

Using information supplied by those participants who completed the evaluation survey, it was found that 50% of all respondents thought that Active a2b had helped them walk or cycle to work more (Figure 12). Active a2b Plus participants (60%) were more likely to think this than Active a2b standard participants (48%). Forty-five per cent of respondents also thought that Active a2b had helped them to walk or cycle more outside of work and 61% thought that it had helped improve their health and well-being. Once again higher proportions of Plus group participants than standard group participants were likely to think this. Results were similar to previous years.



**Figure 13 Reported influence of Active a2b programme on walking and cycling levels and wellbeing**

## 6. Evaluation of the offline version of Active a2b

In order to better align itself with the Health partners' goals, Active a2b created the 'offline' branch of the program to increase participation from Maori and Pacific Islanders. To do this 'offline' organisations (where employees worked the majority of the time away from a desk) were invited to take part in an adapted version of Active a2b which included a six-week challenge. These businesses included factories, meat-works, hardware stores and the bus network where a much higher percentage of workers are of Māori and Pacific Island descent. Nine offline organisations, representing 2093 staff actively promoted the Active a2b six-week challenge. Of those, five offline businesses had employees sign up.

Although interest for the programme was relatively high, uptake was considerably lower than anticipated (24 participants overall). Of the five organisations that had staff participating, only two organisations (19 participants in total) used the wall chart. From this chart, it was found that on average, each participant walked or cycled to work 2.6 times per week during the 6-week challenge. Some participants were clearly highly engaged, commuting four to five times per week. Some participants actively commuted only once during the entire six weeks.

The overall aim of the offline branch of Active a2b was to engage more Maori and Pacific Island participants. However the evaluation showed that there was a decrease in these two populations compared to 2012. Maori participants dropped from 11% in 2012 to 8% this year, while Pacific Island participation rates dropped from 4% in 2012 to just under 2% this year.



### 6.1.1 Key successes

Although the engagement of offline organisation employees was small, the few that did sign up reported that they found the programme valuable.

*I helped as workplace coordinator; in some ways the web-based vs. sign up on paper was a bit confusing as hard to know exactly who had signed up. Overall it seemed well run, and communication from Nicola was great. Thanks!*

*Just more conscious of watching my health and wellbeing*

*I have enjoyed walking more, especially in the rain.*

*I think the programme is a great idea but I couldn't access the Facebook page.*



### c) Fostering relationships for Regional Public Health

The Active a2b recruitment process opened a door for relationships to be formed between Regional Public Health and these organisations that typically employ more Maori and Pacific Islanders – a target group for this health sponsor.

#### 6.1.2 Reasons for low uptake

Several reasons for the low uptake were highlighted through discussions with employers and review of the modified offline Active a2b challenge. These included:

- Knowledge of the programme was minimal, although emails/newsletters/team meetings covered the details, employees did not feel they knew enough about the programme.
- The remote locations of the offline organisations meant that normal travel issues including insufficient parking, congestion and driving frustration weren't significant problems for participants.
- Early starts or late finishes due to shift work in remote areas meant that participants were not as keen to actively commute to and from work.
- Inadequate facilities to cater for active commuters in the workplace (e.g. showers, bike racks/cages, lockers etc.).
- Employees were more interested in recreational walks rather than active commuting.
- Unappealing sign up process – four pages to fill out and return.
- Lack of recognition for participation.
- General lack of interest to participate.

## 6.2 Recommendations

It is recommended in the future that the engagement of offline organisations be contracted out to a separate provider (for example, Regional Public Health). Engaging these types of businesses required more than the resources available within Active a2b this year. This tended to take away some support from the online organisations but was still inadequate for the offline businesses.

Further recommendations to improve the programme for offline organisations:

- Include the Active a2b challenge as part of a holistic health initiative. This wider initiative could include health tests at the outset for participants to get personalised data on cholesterol, fitness and blood pressure. Gathering these health stats might help engagement with the programme and offer an opportunity to collect more robust travel data as well.

- As part of a holistic health initiative, package the ‘active commuting challenge’ as a shorter, one or two week event.
- Include recreational/non-commuter active trips in the Active a2b challenge (for reporting reasons, recording of these trips would need to be differentiated from active commuting trips).
- Engage local businesses to support active commuting with discounts and perhaps donation of a grand prize.
- Face-to-face meetings with lead-people in offline organisations to build rapport and excitement for the event.
- Identify a suitable “champion” in the workplace who is enthusiastic, passionate and willing to recruit fellow colleagues.
- Develop specific Active a2b information flyers for distribution to employees
- Make the registration process easier, by either reducing pages, or by having registration by sign-up on the wall-chart only.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

The uptake of the programme was lower than expected from offline organisations, but was still a valuable programme for those that participated. It did not however reach its main aim of engaging more Maori and Pacific Island participants. These populations were down by three percentage points for Maori and just over two percentage points for Pacific Islanders, compared to 2012.

Offline organisations need more personal engagement to increase buy-in from the employer (and increase uptake of the staff) and a more tailored and holistic approach to health than is within the scope of Active a2b. In light of this, it is thought that an external health provider would be in a better position to deliver a health and wellbeing programme that could meet these needs of offline organisations.

## **7. Discussion**

Active a2b continues to meet its targets of decreasing the number of people that drive to work, by encouraging people to take up active modes. The Active a2b Plus group significantly reduced their car mode share from 79% to 63% with the number of participants that drove alone significantly reducing from 44% to 32%.

Alongside the reduction in driving to work, the Active a2b Plus group increased their active travel from 16% of work journeys at the time of registration in January to 25% by May. This demonstrates that the programme continues to be successful in prompting people to try walking and cycling in the

New Year and then supporting them to keep new routines up, even when summer and daylight savings are over.

Public transport trips also increased for the Plus group this year, 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.

All of these changes are slightly less than in previous years, and this is likely to be related to moving some staff resourcing away from the individualised support of participants, to developing an offline version of the programme.

Although car use was low for the Active a2b standard group, there was a slight increase in car mode share at the time of evaluation in May. No change was observed in active modes or public transport use. This is similar to previous years where the increase in car use has been attributed to the seasonal change. A control group experiment would likely show a larger decrease in active travel as winter sets in for those not participating in Active a2b, indicating the programme is successful in retaining levels of active travel despite seasonal changes. However this research has not been done in Wellington.

In 2013, less personalised support was offered to Active a2b standard participants (no phone calls were made to this group) and given that no noticeable difference was observed in the transport outcomes of this group compared with last year, this approach was justified.

Overall, 50% of Active a2b participants reported that the programme helped them walk or cycle to work more. Although this was not apparent in the main mode travel data for the standard group, a significant increase in walking and cycling as secondary modes (e.g. walking to the train station) explains where people were finding opportunities for active travel.

Almost half (45%) of respondents also thought that Active a2b had helped them to walk or cycle more outside of work and 61% thought that it had helped improve their health and well-being. As the most successful element of the programme, Active a2b's relationship with its health partners is crucial to providing a more holistic programme with an outward facing 'health and well-being' focus.

The Active a2b tools were seen to be of real value to participants in terms of practical use, motivation and support. The quality of the tools (the torch in particular) needs to be reviewed, and scheduling and venues of workshops need to be more varied to ensure maximum participation.

There was a concern by the Sustainable Transport team that being in its fourth year of delivery, Active a2b may have lost its appeal. However, this year's number of participants matched those of (the record) 2012, despite 20 organisations opting out. This indicates that participating organisations are potentially more engaged in the programme as time goes on and are able to recruit a larger number of staff internally. Active a2b is still managing to reach new participants with 72% of them being new to the programme.

The offline branch of Active a2b was not as successful as anticipated. The engagement of organisations that typically had more Maori and Pacific Island employees did not result in an increase in participation from these two populations. A decrease of 3 percentage points for Maori and just over two percentage points for Pacific Islanders compared to 2012 was observed.

## **7.1 Key successes**

### **7.1.1 Newsletter**

This year the e-newsletters were distributed fortnightly. Although this was less frequently than previous years, they were still regarded as one of the most useful tools of Active a2b and were received well by participants.

Given the slight decrease in participants unsubscribing from the e-newsletter list, and slight increase in those reading it, dropping newsletter frequency to fortnightly is recommended for future years as it decreases resourcing requirements. However, it is vital for the e-newsletter to remain focussed on individual participant success stories and be accompanied by photos.

*The newsletter kept me motivated and inspired.*

*Keep up the newsletters. Perhaps a weekly update - the individual stories from other people was really neat.*

*The newsletters have been good - some handy tips and thought provoking ideas.*

*I liked the newsletters and am keen to check out the healthy recipes and other links. Many thanks.*

### **7.1.2 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.

*Combined the walking plan with a 'Biggest Loser' competition to reduce weight through healthy eating as well. Have lost over 9 KGs as a result over the 3 months.*

*Before this programme I always seemed too busy to be able to fit in a decent amount of exercise with a full time job and 5 children, but found ways to exercise during work and then early in the morning before the kids woke up. I have enjoyed this programme immensely.*

*Once you get started, everything else falls in to place after that including diet changes*

The partnership with these health sponsors is invaluable for Active a2b to continue as a legitimate, holistic health programme.



### 7.1.3 Participants as mentors and ambassadors

Some participants were already regular active commuters and although they did not benefit as much themselves, many were motivated to make contact with others and spread the word.

*I think it's a great scheme. I'm pretty active anyway, but I've managed to encourage a few others, by mentioning the scheme, and how it's out there for anyone, not just 'already fit/active' people like me!*

*It motivated me to contact an old flatmate who lives nearby to act as his bike buddy when cycling to work. He had talked about cycling to work, but wasn't sure of the route, and I think liked some company to start off. He has started biking to work by himself sometimes after a month of bike buddying.*

*Once I signed up, I sent an email to my husband to make sure that he signed up, too.*

This mentoring is a key success of Active a2b and helps the programme extend its reach and foster a pro-active and inclusive community.

It emphasises the importance of the Active a2b standard group and the role they play in building acceptance for active travel, inspiring others and normalising walking and cycling. In addition to their function as role models, the programme also provides support for them to continue their healthy travel routines.

### 7.1.4 Good timing of delivery.

Comments from participants suggest that the attraction to the programme is partly due to its well-timed motivation to 'kick-start' active commuting in the New Year. While many of the Active a2b standard group include some who walk and cycle for their journeys to work, the programme appears to remind them of the benefits and encourage them to keep up their efforts, or increase them further.

Participants from previous years seem to appreciate the regular nature of the programme, and the fact that they can expect to see it again in their workplace the following year. This is encouragement to continue delivering the programme on an annual basis.

*Regular emails provided reminders and motivation to keep up the activity.*

*This programme kept me aware - too easy to fall back into old habits*

*I'm glad I found (was directed to) Active A2b - as it lined up nicely with my own personal goals and gave me that extra incentive to keep my motivation inertia rolling and growing*

*It was much better than previous years and the competition created great participation. More of the same next year.*

### 7.1.5 Cultural shift towards active travel

Active a2b has helped foster a sense of community and has assisted with the normalisation of cycling and walking as modes of transport.

*I've enjoyed being a part of it ... made me feel part of the Wellington community*

*I really liked the bike to work day for giving the sense of being part of a big community of cyclist, and normalising cycling (by demonstrating that a large and varied group of ppl cycle in WGTN)*

*I may not travel as far as some but I still feel part of the general movement.*

Not only were Active a2b participants engaged, those with families were introducing active travel to their children.

*It encouraged our kids.*

*Better health and helps the kids to see dad making an effort*

As the active travel community builds, walking and cycling will hopefully feel more accessible to a growing number of people and new people will take it up. As one participant mentioned, with this increase, wider acceptance and changes of infrastructure could be a result.

*I am happy that the Active a2b scheme exists but don't think it helps me directly. However if it achieves its goals of getting more people to walk & cycle then it is of tremendous indirect benefit. It makes walking & cycling much more common activities, particularly when commuting, this will hopefully lead to better facilities & road design for pedestrians & cyclists and greater understanding and acceptance of pedestrians and cyclists.*

## 7.2 Recommendations

### 7.2.1 Health sector to deliver offline branch of Active a2b

As concluded in Section 6, an adapted version of Active a2b tailored to offline organisations such as factories and large retail outlets would be better delivered by the health sector than by the Sustainable Transport team at Greater Wellington.

These organisations proved to be difficult to engage with messages of active commuting, often because their worksites are easy and cheap to get to by car, or difficult to get to by any other mode. The nature of the environment also meant that constant communication through e-newsletters was not possible and internal workplace support was limited. Given our expertise lies in active travel and our objectives are to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips, using the limited Active a2b budget for this adapted version of the programme is not the most efficient use of funding.

The health sector has much more to offer these workplaces in terms of wider health and wellbeing initiatives. “Spring in2 It!” is run by Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin and provides a personalised and

flexible health programme for workplaces. Dunedin City Council supports the active transport elements of the programme but this only comprises a small part of the scheme. Participants receive face-to-face support and undergo baseline health tests so they can monitor their progress.

Greater Wellington Regional Council would be a useful partner in a similar programme for Wellington region workplaces and could offer advice and resources on active commuting, but such an initiative would need to be led and delivered by a health agency, preferably a Primary Health Organisation.

### 7.2.2 Maintenance of social media

As recommended in 2012, the Ning website was abandoned and the Facebook page was re-established and linked with Twitter. The Facebook page received 104 'likes' however interaction on this page was limited. A few comments were made initially on the page, but thereafter the comments ceased. Unfortunately the follow-up survey did not ask about the value of this tool; however a few comments were made.

*Twitter was used and good to keep mind tuned into the programme*

*I liked the Facebook element of a2b. It was nice logging in in the morning and having images of wellington posted, and people commenting on their walks/cycles. Made it feel more like a community project*

*I tried to find the Facebook page but could not easily find it*

It can be assumed that all forms of encouragement, no matter how small, can be seen as positive even if there is little interaction. There are several ways social media can be more engaging to participants next year:

- a) Updates can direct participants to issues beyond active commuting, but are common areas of interest (see [Linking to wider issues](#)).
- 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 and Twitter updates 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 and Twitter 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.

Using social media takes relatively little effort and since a significant proportion of participants would be likely to use it, it remains a worthwhile avenue for promotion. It is recommended to maintain Twitter and Facebook for 2013.

### 7.2.3 Linking to wider issues

A few comments have highlighted the need for Active a2b to address wider areas of interest to active commuters including the environment, different types of physical activity, public transport and infrastructure. This would not require Active a2b to provide more resources, but could include links to existing forums, articles or events across the region, through our main avenues of communication - the e-newsletter and social media.

*I'd love to see a tie-in with Wellington round the bays such as a training scheme, regular training sessions and/or team scheme (getting a group of strangers together) to bring people together and challenge each other.*

*It would be useful to have something set up for people who want to be active at lunchtimes in the city area (but need the motivation!)*

By linking to other physical activity events, e.g. Round the Bays and Pound the Pavement, participants will feel the programme is more rounded and relevant. It would also allow opportunities for those outside Wellington CBD to be linked in with events in their area, making the programme of more value to them.

A large number of participant feedback from the evaluation survey showed a desire for improvement of existing infrastructure, particularly for cycling.

*More focus on walkways, cycleways and bike racks*

*Despite a lot of road works, widening etc., no cycle lanes have been put in...where are the safe (separated from traffic) cycle paths? It is great that you send out reflective key rings and bag covers but cyclists really need some safer road infrastructure in Wellington. This is the main issue I see that is not being addressed.*

Considering this, providing participants with contact details of local territorial authorities so their feedback can reach the correct audience would be useful. Alerting participants to opportunities for public input, through submission processes for example could also be an easy addition to Active a2b, and help build on the cultural shift towards active travel.

The increase in longer distance journey to work trips that the Active a2b Plus group were making this year suggest that more emphasis on public transport integration would be appropriate. Stories in the newsletter about mixed mode commuters, highlighting facilities at train stations and generally promoting the use of public transport would be beneficial for next year.

#### 7.2.4 Maintaining the walking and cycling balance

Multiple comments were received about the balance between walking and cycling in the programme, with participants observing more emphasis on cycling than walking.

*Too much emphasis on cycling for me, I am not into it at all but plenty of talk about walking*

This may be due to several reasons. Some of the tools for Active a2b are cycling specific, e.g. the bike seat cover, bike buddy scheme and cycle workshops while the tools that were designed for pedestrians are not explicitly walking related e.g. key ring torch, manky. Additionally, the Streets Alive challenge was previously a walking only competition, but due to the cancellation of the Bikewise challenge, included cyclists this year. These factors may have given the perception that there was more focus on cycling, but during the planning stages of the programme, and the writing of newsletters, the Active a2b team were very conscious of balancing the modes. The walking gym workshops were designed specifically to provide for pedestrians and stories of successful 'walkers' were tracked down to share in the newsletter.

It is thought that although there was a conscious effort to represent walking and cycling equally, perhaps cycling may have seemed over-represented because of the low percentage of people that commute by bike compared with walking. While this is true, the nature of the programme is to inspire more active commuting and normalise both walking and cycling. For this reason, it is suggested that both modes continue to be balanced in the future, to help raise the profile of cycling and encourage uptake. Results of Active a2b show that it is successful in increasing rates of cycling, and given the low baseline of this mode, the coverage it gets in Active a2b is justified.

To help reduce the perceptions of the cycling focus, more effort could be put into linking with external walking and running events. As well as sourcing specific walking tools (see [Investing in tools](#)).

#### 7.2.5 Varied venues and times for workshops

The venues for workshops were largely based around the CBD area this year and comments were received about this making it difficult for people to attend. Participants living and working outside of the CBD also felt they were excluded from much of the programme.

It is recommended that next year more workshops are promoted in the Hutt, Wairarapa and Kapiti areas as well as a better spread within the CBD, to ensure the programme is accessible to all of its participants. Similarly the scheduling of workshops could vary, to enable maximum participation.

These workshops need not all be delivered by GWRC but local bike shops should be encouraged to offer something in each geographic area. This is currently done with Avanti in Lower Hutt but could be extended to Kapiti, Upper Hutt and the Wairarapa.

### 7.2.6 Investing in tools

The cost of providing tools to participants is significant and therefore the tools need to be of a high quality to ensure they are effective and enduring. It is recommended that the key ring torch be discarded next year or one of better quality is sourced.

The gift at registration, could be of a higher quality and discounted, rather than of a lower quality and free. A cycling specific, walking specific and generic item could be available for participants.

Specifically for walking, providing pedometers should be investigated. While they may be prohibitively expensive to purchase, a discounted price could be negotiated with a provider to assist participants purchasing them directly. The key benefit of a pedometer is that it specifically targets pedestrians and has been proven to be effective in encouraging more walking.

### 7.2.7 Limited phone calls

This year only participants who travelled three or more times to work by car, received a welcome phone call. The elimination of personalised support to the Standard group showed no significant difference in reduction of car usage or the increase of active travel in this group. So it is recommended that this method, of calling participants with high car usage only, be continued in the following years.

## 8. Conclusion

Quantitative and qualitative data show that Active a2b continues to achieve its aims of increasing the amount of, the experience and the confidence in, using active modes as well as decreasing car usage. The Active a2b Plus group was effectively targeted with a significant decrease in car mode share and increased confidence in, and adherence to active travel options.

The Active a2b tools and workshops were seen to be of real value to participants in terms of practical use, motivation and support. The quality of the tools (the torch in particular) needs to be reviewed, and scheduling and venues of workshops need to be more varied to ensure maximum participation.

The engagement of the standard group was limited in terms of travel data. However their role as ambassadors and mentors of the programme are invaluable to bring about change within their networks. Identifying, retaining and celebrating these participants could further bolster their role as ambassadors of the programme in the future.

The engagement of offline organisations was not as successful as predicted due to Active a2b's limited resources. A contracted health provider could improve this relationship, with more individualised support and a tailored, more holistic health approach.

Participants showed interest in issues that are beyond the scope of Active a2b, including health, environmental, infrastructural, and public transport topics. In the future, Active a2b could provide links to these matters through the e-newsletters and social media, educating participants beyond the

resources of Active a2b. This would further legitimise Active a2b as a holistic active travel programme.

Feedback on the programme was largely positive with much praise for its role in normalising walking and cycling as modes of transport as well as the support given to participants through tools, workshops and communications. Many commented on the improvement of their mental and physical health as a result of participating in Active a2b, which highlights the importance of Active a2b's relationship with its health partners.