

# The Mobility and Modality of Adolescents

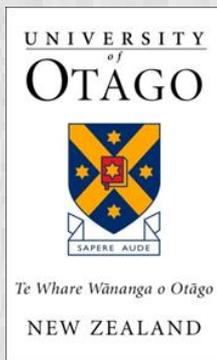
**Debbie Hopkins<sup>1</sup>, Janet Stephenson<sup>2</sup>, Sandra Mandic<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Transport Studies Unit, School of Geography and the Environment, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

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# The Mobility and Modality of Adolescents (& 'Young' Adults!)

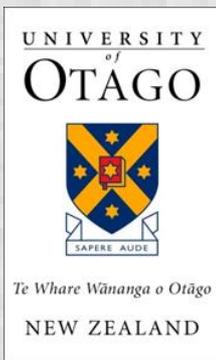
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# The Mobility and Modality of Millennials

**Debbie Hopkins<sup>1</sup>, Janet Stephenson<sup>2</sup>, Sandra Mandic<sup>3</sup>**

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# Why does it matter?

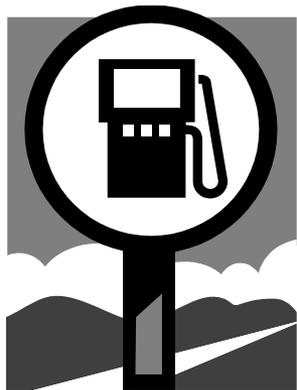
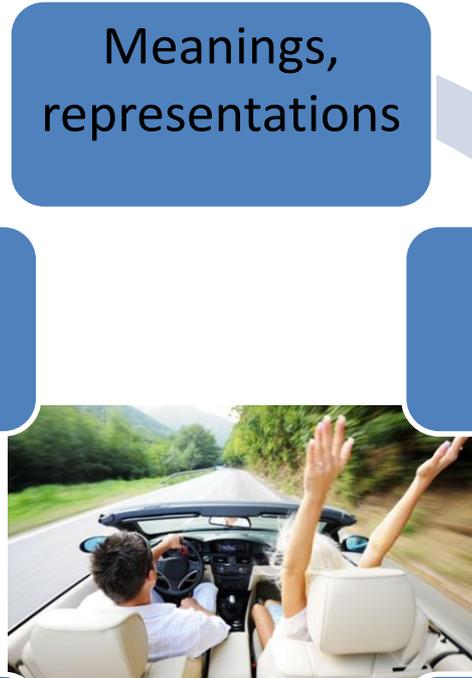


# Automobility: The artefact

- An artefact of automobility;
- A highly contested, iconic commodity;
- The hegemonic class of contemporary everyday mobility.



# Automobility: the system



# Why millennials?

- Still forming habits, patterns, routines and identities;
- Tomorrow's adults: behaviours are critical to future emissions;
- Interesting patterns emerging in light of new technologies, and social practices;
- The largest generation in the USA and Australia...



# Patterns of mobility and modality

- Car ownership and use is spatially diverse
- The “peak car” phenomenon: a stabilisation and decline in vehicle kilometres travelled, car ownership and driver’s licensing (Goodwin & Van Dender, 2013).
- Behaviour change trends observed in ‘millennials’, evidence from some industrialised countries of declining preference for car-based travel (Delbosc & Currie, 2013).



# Global millennial mobility trends



Declining rates of: **licensing** (average  $-0.6\%/year$ ), **vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT)** and **car ownership**



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## Kiwi teens turn off driving

KIRSTY JOHNSTON

Last updated 05:00 02/03/2014

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MICHAEL BRADLEY/Fairfax NZ

NO THANKS: Jay Lichter, 17, finds the idea of driving intimidating.

Growing numbers of teens are refusing to get behind the wheel, because they think cars cost too much, they're worried they might drive into someone, or they just can't be bothered sitting their licence.

A worldwide trend known as "driving ambivalence" has hit young people in New Zealand. Figures show the number of teens getting their licences has dropped drastically in the past five years.

Experts cite a variety of reasons for the decline, from the expense of maintaining a vehicle to the dangers of driving.

They also say smartphones and social media have rendered the need for teens to get behind the wheel less important.

"I think more people should put in a bit more consideration into driving ... it's a tonne of metal going at 100km per hour, and it's intimidating," non-driver Jay Lichter, 17, told the Sunday Star-Times.

Both rural and urban New Zealand are affected by the trend, New Zealand Transport Authority statistics show. Of the cities, Wellington

## Have we reached peak car?

There's good evidence that car use may have peaked and other forms of transport will take its place.

By Rebecca Priestley In Science

Print Share

15th April, 2014

Public Transport, Peak Car

1 comment

One of this country's so-called Roads of National Significance passes close by my house, where the New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) proposes to widen a two-lane stretch of State Highway One to six lanes as part of a plan to "improve Wellington's transport network".

As someone who commutes daily from an eastern suburb to a western suburb, I'm one of the people they're building the road for, but I don't need or want it. I usually catch a bus to work and sometimes walk. When I do drive the family car, the roads can be busy, but not so much that it bothers me.

The NZTA's highway-building programme assumes that car use will increase, but there's growing evidence that we have already passed "peak car". In line with an international trend, our per capita car ownership and annual travel distance have declined since a peak in 2005.



# The future of automobility

Despite claims that millennials might cause a ‘crack’ in the system of automobility (e.g. Hopkins, 2017)

Others have suggested that automobility may have the “**capacity to endure**” and that this conceptualisation should be used to “**caution against over-optimism about the post-automobile city**” (Schwanen, 2016: 152)





# Methods

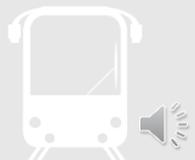


## Energy Cultures II Project

- Qualitative approach
- Seventeen semi-structured interviews conducted with 19-35 years olds in Dunedin
- 11 females and 6 males
- Six participants had full driver's licences, six had a learners licence, and five had no licence
- Part of a larger study of 51 qualitative interviews across NZ

## BEATS Project

- Qualitative approach
- Ten focus groups at Dunedin High Schools (n=54 participants)
- Years 9 to 13
- Mix of single sex and co-ed schools
- Part of the broader BEATS study



# Findings

The findings speak to two main themes drawing selectively from the qualitative empirical material from the two projects:

- Learning to drive
- Perceptions of walking



A person's hands are visible, holding a large white sign with a red letter 'L' in the center. The background is a clear blue sky. The person is wearing a light-colored, patterned shirt. The overall scene is bright and clear.

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# **LEARNING TO DRIVE**



# Learning to drive (interviews)

Table of overriding empirical themes, motivations and goals arising from the research: motivations for learning to drive.

Meta theme	Sub-theme	Primary goal outcome
Perceived need for a driver's licence	This relates less to learning to drive, and more to the necessity to have the driver's licence for a non-mobility purpose Employment/employability Identification 'Rite of passage' into adulthood Family pressures/encouragement Peer pressure	A job/employment, access Proof of age Entry into adulthood, respect from others Social acceptance Social acceptance, driver's licence



## Learning to drive (interviews)

I felt [I should have my licence] mainly just for social reasons, like your friends all have it so I should have it too. . . I felt like I wasn't as good as them if I didn't have it [Olivia, 21, Dunedin, Learner's licence]



# Learning to drive (interviews)

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	Employment/employability	A job/employment, access
	Identification	Proof of age
	'Rite of passage' into adulthood	Entry into adulthood, respect from others
	Family pressures/encouragement	Social acceptance
	Peer pressure	Social acceptance, driver's licence
Perceived need to drive a car	This directly relates to the LTD process, needing the functional capability/competency of driving	Reciprocity and to relieve chauffeuring demands
	Independence from others – to not be a burden	Access
	Perceived distance from school, work, friends, etc.	Access
	A need to access something (e.g. hobbies)	Access



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	Perceived distance from school, work, friends, etc.	Access
Desire to drive a car	A need to access something (e.g. hobbies)	Access
	Rather than a perceived need, this meta theme relates to a more general desire to drive, either to achieve something (e.g. freedom), or for enjoyment (intrinsic motivation)	
	Independence, freedom	Independence and autonomy in mobility practices
	Enjoyment of cars and/or driving as an activity	Enjoyment



# Learning to drive (interviews)

Table of overriding empirical themes, motivations and goals arising from the research: motivations for learning to drive.

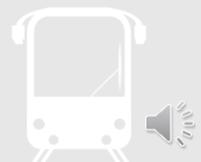
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	Rather than a perceived need, this meta theme relates to a more general desire to drive, either to achieve something (e.g. freedom), or for enjoyment (intrinsic motivation)	
	Independence, freedom	Independence and autonomy in mobility practices
Perceived capacity to learn to drive	Enjoyment of cars and/or driving as an activity	Enjoyment
	'I can do it, so I should', simply learning to drive because the opportunity presents itself and there are no (perceived) barriers	
	Parental/family support	Unclear
	Access to a vehicle, driving lessons	Unclear



# Learning to drive (focus groups)

A range of motivations to learn to drive were articulated in the focus group sessions. While most intended to learn to drive before leaving school, others articulated a desire to wait until the completion of tertiary education. Seven themes arose as motivation for learning to drive:

1. Driving is 'better' than relying on active or public transport
2. Convenience of motorised mobility
3. The 'cool factor'
4. Family dynamics including encouragement, helping with chores
5. Independence
6. A skills to report on their CV
7. Because it is 'adult like' behaviour.



# Learning to drive (focus groups)

**Interviewer:** So why do you think you'll get [your driver's licence]?

**Participant D:** Because then you don't have to rely on transport from your parents or the bus timetable you can just go out whenever you want.

**Participant C:** If you want to go out with your friends you don't have to say, "Well can you drive me?" You can just drive yourself.

**Participant E:** It would be more convenient for them as well as us.

**Interviewer:** For your parents?

**Participant E:** Yeah, you can just be like, "I'm going here". They don't have to like run around after you.

**Participant K:** It can make you more helpful too. [Focus Group #03]





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**NOT LEARNING TO DRIVE**



# Themes identified

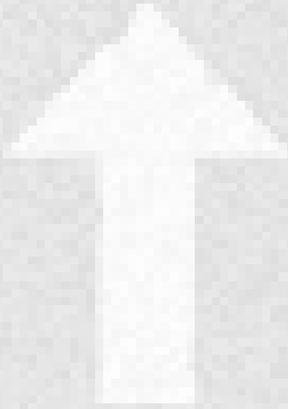
- Low or no perceived need for a driver's licence
- Low perceived need to drive
- Low or no desire to own or drive a vehicle
- Low perceived capacity to learn to drive
- Low perceived capacity to own or drive a vehicle



# Learning to drive (interviews)

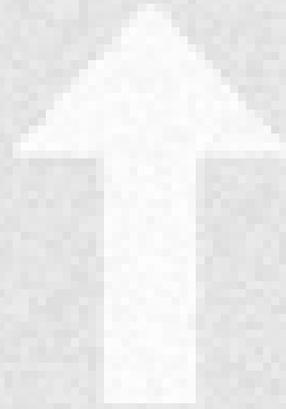
'I guess originally it started because I just didn't get one [a driver's licence], **it wasn't a thing I needed when my high school friends were getting it.** . . . I lived basically ten minutes' walk away [from school]. Every friend I had was close to me. . . . Then as I grew up, again I never really needed a licence... **It almost became a habit not having a licence, I just got used to getting places without one** [Jack, 23, Dunedin, No licence]





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# PERCEPTIONS OF WALKING



# Perceptions of walking (focus group)

**A** traditional 'transportation' framing of walking

**B:** Well, if they live close to the school [they might walk]

**A:** Somebody [who walks will] generally [be someone] who has enough time in the mornings to walk to school

(Student Focus Group #1)



# Perceptions of walking (interviews)

I would say the walking is good because like **it does wake me up**. I definitely struggle in the mornings so it's quite nice. And in summer it's great like you get to work and you feel like it is exercise as well... and **I did lose a bit of weight** and **I felt a bit better** just because there's everyday about an hour walking all up. So I liked that *(Sophia, 24, Dunedin, Learner's licence)*



# Perceptions of walking (interviews)

I kind of like relying on myself. Like in terms of going to work like if you miss the bus in the morning, you're going to be late or whatever. It's relying on myself... and **it's kind of a chance to you know, to wake up and get into the day, sort of a nice casual 20 minute walk rather than suddenly I'm at work straight away** (Lily, 31, Dunedin, No licence)



# Perceptions of walking (focus group)

It's just kind of a break from... kind of the transition between [being] at home. In the mornings things can be a little frantic, the organization of everything. And then school, then when you actually have to start knuckle down and get working. So it's quite nice [to walk]. **There is nothing else really to do, you know what I mean? You've just got to walk.**

(Student Focus Group #2, Participant C)



## Perceptions of walking (focus group)

I usually walk through the botanical gardens on the way home, because **it's just nice to walk through the gardens**, I quite like **that** (Student Focus Group #8, Participant C).





# Concluding remarks

- Automobility dominates NZ's mobility culture
- Learning to drive is entrenched in this culture, and supported by prioritisation of independence, speed etc.
- However, alternative modes (e.g. walking) offer different benefits that are well appreciated by young people and should be used to inform policy and practical interventions.



# If you'd like to know more...

Hopkins, D. & Mandic, S. (2017). Purposeful leisure mobilities: reframing the walk to school, *In: Hall, C.M. et al. [Eds]. The Routledge International Handbook of Walking*, Routledge, London

Hopkins, D. (2016). Can environmental awareness explain declining preference for car-based mobility amongst generation Y? An examination of learn to drive behaviours, *Transportation Research Part A: Policy & Practice*, 94, 149-163

Hopkins, D. & Stephenson, J. (2016). The replication and reduction of automobility: Findings from New Zealand, *Journal of Transport Geography*, 56, 92-101



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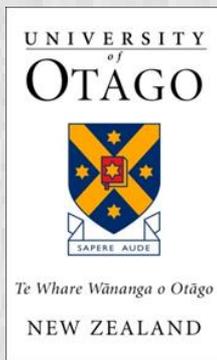


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