In This Issue…

Welcome to the sixth issue of the Active Living Laboratory Newsletter! In this issue, we are sharing information about an extension of the BEATS Study to the rural Otago region, visiting researchers working in our laboratory, profiling our students and cycle skills training project, podcasts from the International Symposium Active Living and Environment, and a new BEATS Study publication. Please feel free to share this newsletter with others.

Thank you again for your interest in our work!

Dr Sandy Mandic
Academic Leader, Active Living Laboratory

The BEATS Study is Now Extending to the Rural Otago Region

The BEATS Rural Study (BEATS-R) will examine active transport to school in adolescents living in rural Otago using the published BEATS Study methodology and conceptual framework. This study will examine individual, social, environmental, and policy influences on rural adolescents’ transport to school. BEATS-R will generate valuable rural-specific data to inform future interventions for built environment change, education campaigns, and policy development in rural areas.

This study has been funded by the University of Otago Research Grant. We are now in the process of recruiting rural Otago secondary schools for data collection in 2018.

Visiting Researchers from Spain, Brazil and United States

Our laboratory hosted seven visiting researchers (and their families) from Spain, Brazil and United States between August and October 2017. We very much enjoyed learning together and from each other and experiencing what Dunedin and New Zealand have to offer, including an unforgettable All Blacks rugby game. We all feel enriched for new research collaborations and friendships and look forward to working together in future.

Visiting researchers: Associate Professor Palmà Chillón Garzón, University of Granada, Granada, Spain; Professor Eduardo Generelo Lanaspa, Professor Javier Zaragoza Casterad and Dr Alberto Aibar Solana, University of Zaragoza, Huesca, Spain; Dr Daniel Camiletti Moirón, University of Cádiz, Cádiz, Spain; Assistant Professor Jennifer Roberts, University of Maryland College Park, MD, United States; Associate Professor Ricardo Brandão de Oliveira, Institute of Physical Education and Sports, Rio de Janeiro State University, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

The BEATS Public Lecture Podcast is Now Available Online…

This lecture held at the University of Otago on 29 August 2017 shared unique aspects of the BEATS Study including community-based participatory approach and successful multi-sector collaborations between secondary schools, city council, and academia.

Current Students and Projects

The Active Living Laboratory awarded Summer Research Scholarships 2017/2018 to Isobelle Lane and Olivia Eyles. Both students are supervised by Dr Christina Ergler and Dr Sandy Mandic and work on the BEATS Study-related projects.

Our research team has also been collecting data and organising exhibitions at participating schools of children's work created as part of the Cycle Skills Training project. This exciting project is led by Dr Christina Ergler (Department of Geography).

Podcasts and Handouts are Now Available from the International Symposium “Active Living and Environment”

This symposium brought together researchers, policy makers, health promoters, urban designers, transport experts and interested members of the public to engage in a multidisciplinary and multi-sector dialogue about Active Living and Environment. Symposium themes were Health, Transportation, Environment and Sustainability.

Presentation handouts and audio-slides (podcasts) are now publicly available on the symposium website:

Check out comments from the symposium delegates:

We are now planning the next ALE symposium for 2019 (dates to be confirmed). If you and/or your colleagues would like to receive future ALE Symposium updates, please sign up online: http://goo.gl/aqulDj

Please share this information with relevant networks and colleagues.

New BEATS Study Publication

Adolescents’ Perspectives on School Choice

This article shows that the most common reasons for school choice included: preference for a co-educational school, school’s facilities, positive comments from parents/students and friends’ enrolment. Reasons for school choice differed by who is making the decision (student, parent, or student and parent together). These findings suggest that social factors and school programmes/facilities rather than proximity to home influence school choice decisions in Dunedin.


Contact Details and Sign Up

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