In This Issue...

Welcome to the ninth issue of the Active Living Laboratory Newsletter! In this issue, we are sharing information about the upcoming BEATS Study Symposium 2018, 2nd International Symposium Active Living and Environment, BEATS Rural Study update and latest updates from our laboratory. Feel free to share this newsletter with others.

Thank you for your interest in our work!
Associate Professor Sandy Mandic

Join us for the BEATS Study Symposium 2018

Friday, 16 November 2018  |  University of Otago  |  Dunedin, New Zealand
School of Physical Education, Sport & Exercise Sciences, Seminar Room 213/214

This symposium will celebrate 5 years of the BEATS Study and showcase the latest study findings, including the preliminary findings from the BEATS Rural Study. Over 20 abstracts will be presented as verbal presentations or posters. We look forward to bringing together researchers, research students, representatives from local government, schools and public health sector and community members to discuss challenges and opportunities for encouraging active transport to school.

Zoom link will be available to registered participants who are unable to attend in person.

Call for Abstracts:
2nd International Symposium Active Living and Environment

13-15 February 2019  |  University of Otago  |  Dunedin, New Zealand

Are you interested in an international, multidisciplinary and multi-sector dialogue about creating active living environments? The goal of this symposium is to bring 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 include Health, Transportation, Environment and Sustainability.

Visit symposium website for details: www.otago.ac.nz/active-living-2019
Share your research, programs, interventions, or impacts of policy or advocacy.

Final data of data collection for the BEATS Rural Study in 2018. Excellent teamwork, Everyone! (Left to right: Sandy Mandic, Angela Findlay, Aprille Mincher, Kim King and Ann-Maree Fox).
BEATS Rural Study Update

We have now completed the BEATS Rural Study data collection for 2018 engaging 1008 adolescents from 11 out of 15 rural Otago secondary schools: 995 students completed an online survey, 178 students wore an activity meter to date, 195 participated in a mapping activity and 71 shared their views in focus groups. In addition, 71 parents completed a survey and 21 participated in a phone interview. Very busy year, fantastic teamwork and many wonderful memories! Well done, Everyone!

Reflections on insights from rural schools to date
(Written by research assistant Ann-Maree Fox)

Rural schools which we visited have some common factors influencing their travel to school. Some schools are very isolated and away from the main highways. In these schools the students have commented they can identify the traffic and recognise a vehicle that is not local. Other schools are located in towns situated on main highways. In these towns the main road is very busy and often with large trucks. This can be a consideration for students choosing their travel to school.

The rurality of these schools means some students are travelling long distances to school. So, driving to school or taking the school bus was something that had to be planned. Long distances did not make cycling an option. Students had to be organised at the beginning of the day for their school activities because you could not just slip home if you forgot your gear. After school work and activities had to be organised too.

The parents’ occupation influences the school community. Agricultural work often requires long hours especially dairying and students can be expected to assist after school. This is taken into consideration when planning school events. This was often a consideration for students.

Sport is an important part of rural communities. Students get to practice, play and take part in
tournaments often travelling long distances. Schools do support students but it is easier for the larger schools to form school teams.

The school location is an influence on cycling. Busy highways and long distances did not make this an easy option. This was reflected in school bike stands. They were often not under cover. Schools situated near cycle ways and mountain biking tracks had more students with an interest in recreational cycling.

Mobile phones are key for students to communicate with their parents to arrange travel. This is important when some journey can take up to 45 minutes, parents are busy and petrol is expensive. Mobile phones can stop waiting around and wasted trips.

For students living in the small rural towns walking to school was the main option. Although some towns are quite spread out the distance could usually be covered in thirty minutes.

School travel in rural schools is often determined by factors outside the students' control especially the distance from the school and the parents' occupation.

Recent Updates from the Active Living Laboratory

It has been a busy few months at the Active Living Laboratory with student research projects completions and sharing BEATS Study findings locally and internationally...

- Tessa Pocock officially completed her Master's degree. Tessa also won Young Geospatial Competition at GeoCart 2018 Conference. Sincere congratulations, Tessa, and best wishes for your PhD studies at the University of Auckland!
- Garrick Hately has also officially completed his Master's degree. Congratulations, Garrick!
- Tessa Porskamp (Maastricht University, The Netherlands) completed her 3.5-month internship at our laboratory. Well done, Tessa!
- Sandy Mandic presented the BEATS Study findings at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University in June 2018 and to Queenstown Transport Technical Group and Dunedin Secondary Schools' Partnership in July-August 2018.

Two busy days of data collection at Mt Aspiring College in Wanaka in July 2018. (Left to right: Brittany White, Long Chen, Chris Tait, Sandy Mandic, Christina Ergler, Juddy Rodda and Olivia Eyles)

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