



Turning the Tide - from Cars to Active Transport

“Turning the Tide” provides a clear set of priorities of actions to increase levels of walking and cycling in New Zealand. The report represents the views of a group of New Zealand and international experts of what it would take to create a healthier and more sustainable transport system in New Zealand.

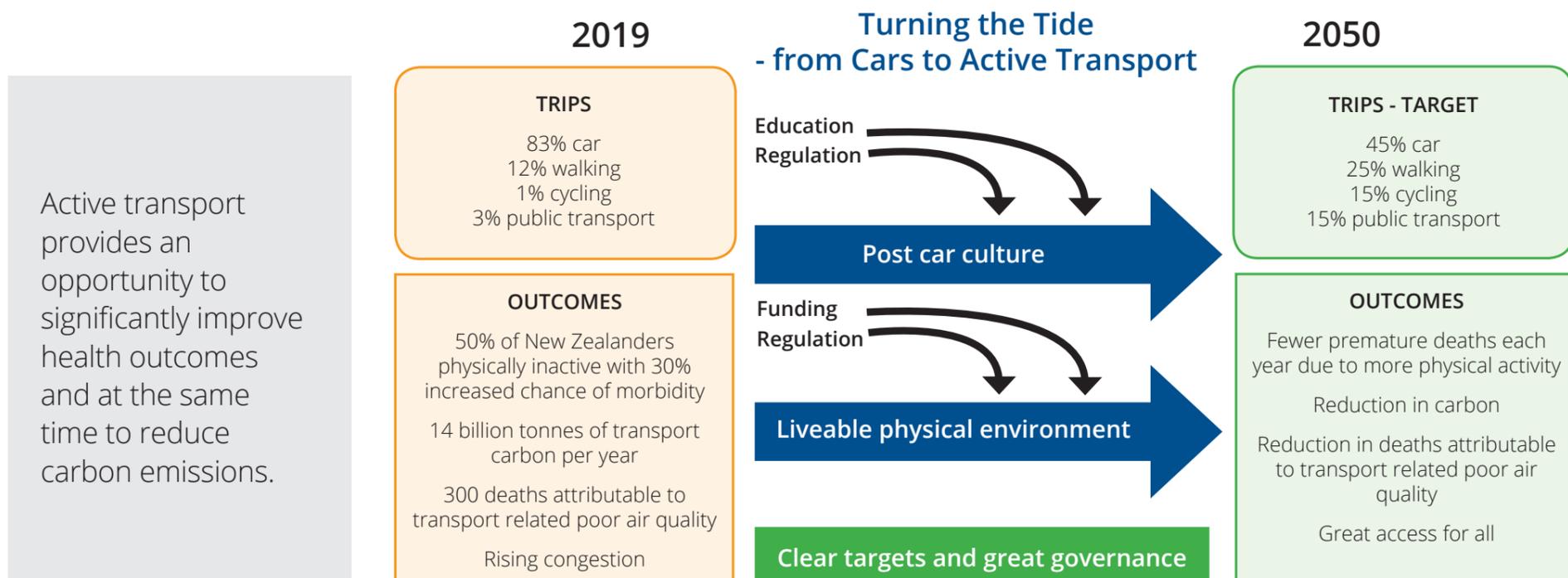
As humans we create and use tools to achieve new things and make our lives easier. This is evident in the world of transport. Since the first sail and the first wheel, new forms of transport have created opportunities and made it easier for us to get from A to B.

On land, the advent of the motor car was the pinnacle of this development, allowing us our own comfortable and easy way to get around. The motorcar age has shaped the development of the places we live in and how we live. Furthermore, the alignment of business interests with a product that provides such personal convenience has been and remains a powerful force of change.

The car was the only mode of transport that increased its share of trips in New Zealand between 1988 and 2004 (according to the Ministry of Transport’s travel survey).

This natural pressure to use our cars over other means of transport continues with rapid growth in the number of kilometres driven by New Zealanders since 2013.

While cars bring convenience and can provide superb access, they also come with costs. The most obvious challenge is the ever increasing congestion in our urban centres. There is also the tragic loss of life on our roads, which is moving ever closer to 400 fatalities a year. In addition, there are the less obvious costs, literally the “slowburn” costs - as we destroy our environment with 14 billion tonnes of carbon a year. Finally, the negative effects of motorised transport on our physical and mental health is the least discussed, but perhaps the most pervasive. Specifically, our automobility-focused land use pattern and transport network means that New Zealanders on average walk for transport less than 10 minutes per day.



Active transport provides an opportunity to significantly improve health outcomes and at the same time to reduce carbon emissions.