

Cycling Research

INITIAL CENSUS 2001 TRAVEL INFORMATION AVAILABLE

Were you one of the 40,000 NZ'ers who cycled last March 6? The first detailed data from the 2001 census has come out; check it out at www.stats.govt.nz. Here are some travel-to-work statistics for you (only national figures available so far):

Main Means of Travel to Work on Census Day	Census Usually Resident Population Count	Percentage of those who Travelled to Work
Worked at Home	166,731	-
Did Not Go To Work Today (e.g. sick)	195,576	-
Drove a Private Car, Truck or Van	831,978	63.8%
Drove a Company Car, Truck or Van	164,667	12.6%
Passenger in a Car, Truck, Van or Company Bus	76,605	5.9%
Motor Cycle or Power Cycle	17,304	1.3%
Public Bus	52,167	4.0%
Train	15,111	1.2%
Bicycle	40,665	3.1%
Walked or Jogged	92,541	7.1%
Other	12,630	1.0%
Not Stated	61,290	-

So at least 83% of people rode in a Car, Truck, Van, or Motorbike. Meanwhile, the 10.2% of pedestrians and cyclists could grizzle about their relatively small recent government funding increase, compared with that for the 5.2% of public transport users!

Comparison with the 1996 census data suggests that the cycling proportion hasn't really changed (also 3.1% back then). However it will be interesting to see some of the regional comparisons; expect those in the next few months.

The census definition of "Main Means of Travel to Work" is *"the method by which the respondent travelled the longest distance to their main employment on 6 March 2001."* One problem with this is that it doesn't account for trips to work that involve a number of travel modes. For example, bike/drive to the train station, walk from the bus terminal, etc.

The 1997/98 LTSA Travel Survey overcame this hurdle by using travel diaries to record all trips taken by survey participants. In this way they could get a more accurate picture of overall trip patterns, although admittedly this is based on a much smaller sample (~14,000 people nationally). The table below shows the breakdown of all trips to work estimated from that survey:

Travel Mode (Trips to Work - main job)	Estimated Annual Trips Nationally (millions)	Percentage of those who Travelled to Work
Drove a Motor Vehicle (Car, Truck, Motorcycle, etc)	414.4	68.6%
Passenger in a Motor Vehicle	48.8	8.1%
Bus	10.3	1.7%
Bicycle	13.6	2.3%
Walked	109.4	18.1%
Other (incl. Train, Ferry, Plane)	7.6	1.3%

Walking is clearly a big winner when examined this way; many trips to work have a walking component in them. Interestingly, cycling trips outnumbered bus trips in the 1997/98 survey, perhaps evidence of the recent success in getting people onto public transport. Having said that, the proportion of cyclists appears to have gone up slightly too (even when ignoring the effect of walking trips), so maybe our recent advocacy efforts haven't been in vain in reversing the declining trends of old...

The LTSA Travel survey data also contains information on trips made for other purposes too, e.g. education, shopping, recreation. At the very least, it would be nice too if in the future Statistics NZ also found out how students travel to school or tertiary institutions on census day!

Some online references:

- Statistics NZ Census 2001 website: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/census.htm?open>
- LTSA 1997/98 Travel Survey:
http://www.ltsa.govt.nz/research/travel_survey/research/travel_survey.html