

## Public Health Association of New Zealand

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### Transport plays major role in the wellness of whānau

A major new study has revealed a clear link between transport and the health and wellbeing of Māori whānau.

Auckland University Research fellow Kimiora Raerino interviewed 19 Māori stakeholders who have a major interest in transport, from January to April this year as part of her research. The group included kaumatua, kuia, students, Māori healthcare providers and Māori representatives from organisations like the Auckland Regional Council, the Manukau City Council and Te Puni Kokiri.

“We wanted to get a perspective on how transport impacts whānau wellness,” Kim told the Public Health Association’s annual conference in Ngaruawahia today.

“So we asked participants for their reflections on issues like reliability and safety. Safety is a big issue with public transport.

“Māori have a historical connection to travel. Seasonal travel was part of our culture. We moved where the food was, and this meant we needed to move and travel a lot.

“In order to analyse our findings from the interviews we used Te Pae Mahutonga (Professor Mason Durie’s framework for understanding Māori wellness) to frame our analysis of the data. So we were able to investigate all the components Mason Durie identified with Māori wellbeing.

“What emerged out of the study was that there is a real need for Māori participation in decision making about transport – especially in Auckland. Māori need to write submissions, and have more of an urban voice about transport and how it affects them.”

Kimiora Raerino said that transport can be a barrier to or an enabler of Māori health.

“When public transport is unreliable Māori don’t go to the places where they can access services. Planning authorities must take account of the communities they serve, because if public transport was better Māori would use it more.”

The evolution in modern transport has supported Māori development however.

“Car use is high amongst Māori and that means that we are better able to access the Māori world. We can go to places where we can learn te reo Maor ; things that are about Māori wellbeing.

“Whānau are also responsible for transporting our old people. They are the transmitters of our knowledge and culture. We really need to look at the transport needs of our old people.

“A couple of people said that we need to consider how we can better use our waterways. Water-based transport was well used during pre-contact times. This mode of transport could be used more – and it has the additional benefit of physical exercise.

“Quite a few participants talked about wanting healthier whānau. At the moment our lifestyles don’t encourage walking, and this is not always possible with urban design.”

The project will focus on the following priorities as a result of the study:

- **Representation in transport planning:** *Representation of Māori at multiple levels in both the development of regional transport strategies and local implementation of those strategies.*
- **Sustaining Mauriora:** *Policies that limit affordability of car ownership should be carefully mitigated to ensure that socioeconomic inequities are not widened, and Māori activities to exercise tino rangatiratanga and sustain mauriora are enabled rather than curtailed.*
- **Innovative transport solutions:** *Incorporation of Māori knowledge in both the development of regional transport strategies and local implementation of these strategies.*

- **Access to employment for tane:** *Illegal driving is an important issue for tane due to education barriers to licensing, leading to a vicious cycle of illegal driving and barriers to employment. Strategies and programmes are needed to assist tane to attain their full driver's license and thereby access employment.*
- **Tensions between exercising kaitiakitanga and mauriora:** *Further research and discussion is required to explore ways in which urban design and transport planning can realign the rights of Maori to exercise kaitiakitanga with other well-being goals.*
- **Whanau Ora and Active Transport:** *Develop measures to increase whānau ora activities (cycling and walking) in communities, including making communities safer (from crime).*

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