

LET'S TALK ABOUT FLEX

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ABSTRACT

The Auckland Transport Travel Demand Team has been developing a flexible working campaign to encourage commuters to change the time they travel to work, or study or consider whether they need to travel at all. The campaign includes information for both employees and employers including case studies, flexible working statistics and a travel time calculator. The campaign and associated information is available as an A4 booklet or on the campaign website.

A number of central Auckland businesses have been approached to provide initial feedback on the campaign including WSP Opus, MRCagney, Fonterra, Warren and Mahoney, Mott MacDonald and THL. All interactions with these businesses have been positive with support shown for the campaign. In particular, Mott MacDonald and MRCagney employees have completed surveys on the flexible working campaign, which asked staff within these companies the perceived memorability/effectiveness of the campaign.

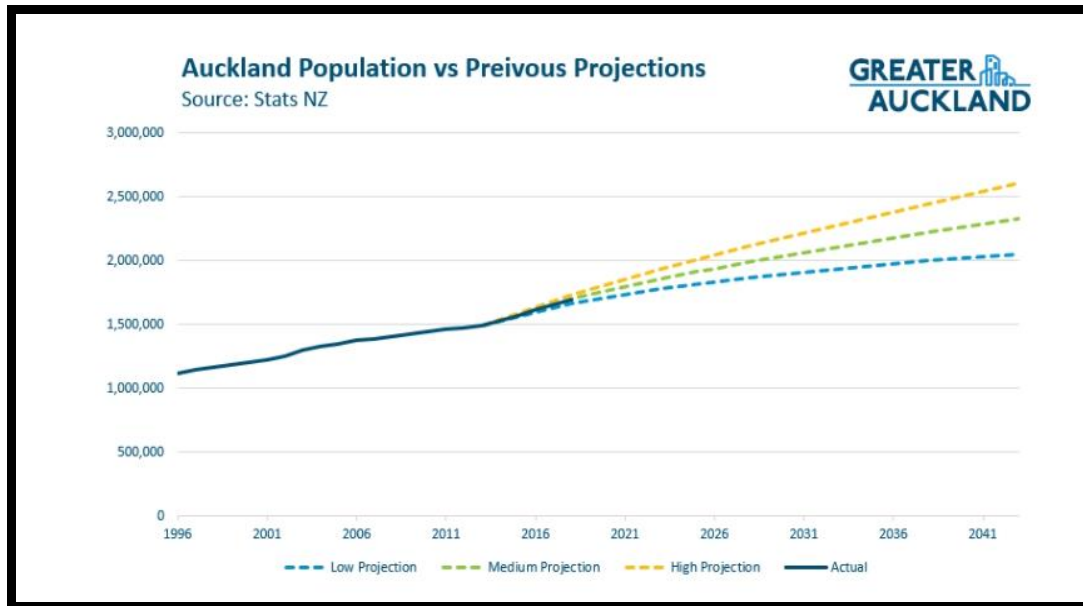
The recommended next steps for the campaign is to be a rolled out to a wider central Auckland area. This may end up being a joint campaign with the AT Metro Team.

The surveys conducted with businesses have been overwhelmingly positive with 90% of staff at businesses surveyed, recommending that this campaign should be rolled out on a larger scale.

It is envisaged that the wider campaign would begin with posts on flexible-working on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) before using outdoor posters around the CBD and centrally located digital office block posters.

INTRODUCTION

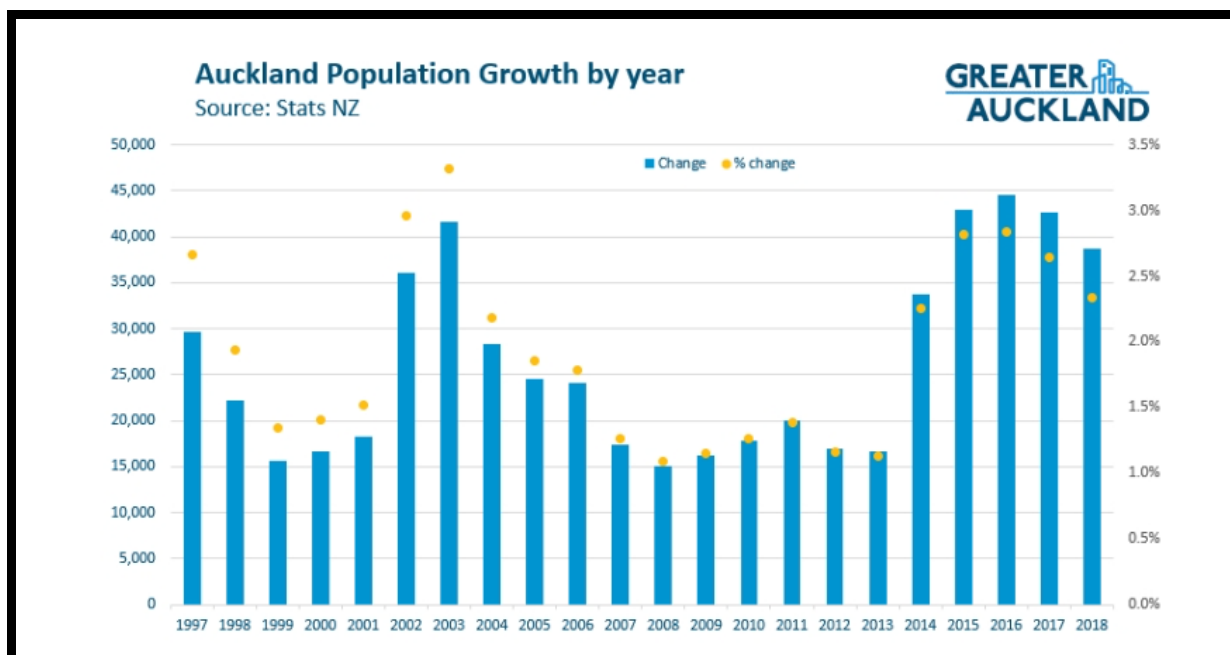
Auckland's population is growing along with the number of cars on the traffic network. In the year to June 2018, Auckland's population is estimated to have risen by just under 40,000 to reach 1,695,900. Auckland has increased by over 200,000 people in just five years and remains the fastest growing region in the country (Greater Auckland Website) and (Stats NZ: Population growth fastest in Northland, Auckland and Waikato).



(Greater Auckland Website)

Furthermore, employees in the city have risen just over 6,000 this year to reach 118,000 people (Greater Auckland Website).

The graph below also taken from the Greater Auckland Website further highlights the Auckland population growth by year.



(Greater Auckland Website)

Even with improvements to public transport, morning peak traffic is also increasing. TomTom’s Traffic Index has shown an extra travel time of 38%, which is a 5% increase from last year. Congestion on the Auckland network equates to an average of 45 minutes of extra travel time per day added to travel time if there is no congestion (TomTom Traffic Index Website - Measuring Congestion Worldwide: Auckland New Zealand).

Network optimisation and resilience is a key transport tool for Auckland Transport and one tool to help alleviate congestion on the network. This includes a focus on route optimisation initiatives, providing real time information and congestion management, focusing on safety improvements, and better integrating active transport into the wider community.

Flexible working is seen as one tool for network optimisation. There is a growing interest by workplaces in adopting a flexible working culture beyond what is required in legislation.

A CHANGING WORKPLACE CULTURE

Human resources staff and professionals are starting to see the advantages of flexible working. A pressing issue for many New Zealanders is trying to balance work with other things in their lives. Research has shown that improving the balance between our lives at work and outside of work can bring real benefits for employers and employees (Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment Website - Workplace policies, productive workplaces, work life balance).

Flexible working can help accommodate this. There are still however barriers to flexible working in many workplaces. Workplace barriers can be both perceived and real barriers and many of these barriers have workable solutions.

An increasing number of employers are adopting flexible working arrangements because they can help:

- Retain skilled staff and reduce recruitment costs;
- Raise staff moral and decrease absenteeism;
- Meet labour market changes more effectively (Employment New Zealand Website).

For employees, the opportunity to work flexibly can help strike a better balance between their paid work and other responsibilities (Employment New Zealand Website - Benefits, Rights and Responsibilities).

PROJECT GOALS

While this project is still in the early stages of its development, we envisage the overarching goals will be as follows:

- Promote flexible working and encourage the general public to travel off-peak if possible;
- Contribute to a reduction in peak time travel;
- Provide information/evidence that travelling outside of the morning peak is a more efficient way of travelling;
- Contribute to a “normalisation” of flexible working within the Auckland workplace culture.

LET'S TALK ABOUT FLEX CAMPAIGN

As previously mentioned, the morning peak experiences a spike in congestion from 7-9am. One of the ways to alleviate this congestion is to encourage commuters to consider travelling off-peak.

The graphs shown below, that were developed for the flexible working campaign show the average time spent in traffic during different times of the day. These graphs focus on the main commuting routes into the Auckland CBD.



(Graphs from Auckland Transport's Let's Talk About Flex Website/Booklet)

As demonstrated in the graphs above, time savings can be made through travelling outside of the peak hours.

The Auckland Transport Travel Demand Team have also developed a travel time calculator available on the flexible working website that uses travel time data to demonstrate how travelling earlier or later can save time on main commuting routes (Hyperlink to travel time calculator <https://at.govt.nz/about-us/campaigns/flexible-working>).



(Travel Time Calculator from Auckland Transport's Let's Talk About Flex Website/Booklet)

Longer term, the plan is to use real time data to update the travel time calculator on a regular basis to demonstrate real time savings.

The flexible working campaign also includes facts and stats, tips for employees and employers and case studies with staff at Auckland Businesses.

Recent studies have uncovered some relevant and important insights regarding flexible working.

17% of knowledge workers* in Auckland have formal agreements with their employers to work remotely one or more days per week

Source: Future Auckland: The Current and Predicted Extent of Flexible Working, NZ Work Research Institute, 2015

34% of knowledge workers* in Auckland will work in some kind of formal flexible work arrangement for one or more days per week by 2020

Source: Future Auckland: The Current and Predicted Extent of Flexible Working, NZ Work Research Institute, 2015

60% of knowledge workers* in Auckland could potentially work remotely one or more days per week

Source: Future Auckland: The Current and Predicted Extent of Flexible Working, NZ Work Research Institute, 2015

69% of organisations in New Zealand have a formal policy, or a programme or initiative, for flexible working of some kind, e.g. flexi-time

Source: New Zealand Diversity Survey, Diversity Works NZ, April 2017

68% of workers would consider leaving their current job if offered a comparable one with greater flexibility

Source: Flexible Work Design: A Strategic Imperative in New Zealand Business, Diversitas, July 2015

88% of professionals in New Zealand and Australia are more likely to consider a role if flexible work arrangements are advertised

Source: Driving and Implementing a Flexibility-at-work Agenda, Robert Walters, 2015

(Flexible working facts from Auckland Transports Let's Talk About Flex Website/Booklet)

THE RESULTS SO FAR

As mentioned previously, a number of Auckland businesses have been approached including WSP-Opus, MrCagney, Fonterra, Warren and Mahoney, Mott MacDonald and THL. All interactions with these businesses have been positive with businesses showing their support for the campaign.

In particular, Mott MacDonald and MRCagney employees have completed surveys on the flexible working campaign, which has asked staff within these companies to provide feedback on the perceived memorability/effectiveness of the campaign.

The results from these surveys are as follows:

Key results from Mott MacDonald employee survey

- 83% of staff said they would consider working more flexibly;
- 60% of staff said this campaign would make them consider working flexibly;
- 60% of staff said the imagery in the campaign was memorable;
- A real positive of the survey is that 90% of respondents think this campaign should be

- rolled out to a wider audience;
- The flexible working resources were also found to be useful:
 - 71% found the travel time graphs useful;
 - 70% stats on flexible working;
 - 70% the travel time calculator;
 - 87% benefits for employees and employer useful and;
 - 87% found the case studies useful.

Key results from MRCagney employee survey

- 75% of staff surveyed said they would consider working flexibly more often;
- 55% of staff said the AT Flexible working campaign information had prompted them to think about working flexibly;
- 73% of staff surveyed said they found the imagery in the posters memorable/effective;
- 100% of staff surveyed said this campaign should be rolled out on a larger scale to other businesses;
- The flexible working resources were also found to be useful:
 - 82% found the statistics on flexible working useful;
 - 82% the travel time graphs;
 - 74% the travel time calculator;
 - 100% the benefits for employers and employees and;
 - 92% found the case studies useful.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is envisaged that the next steps for this campaign will involve the campaign being rolled out to a wider central Auckland (Auckland Central Business District) area. Results for businesses surveyed so far have been overwhelmingly positive with 90% of staff surveyed, recommending that this campaign should be rolled out on a larger scale.

The campaign could begin with posts on flexible working on social media (Facebook, LinkedIn etc.) before using outdoor posters around the CBD and centrally located digital office block posters. The campaign could also involve a joint campaign with Auckland Transport's Metro Team, where possible encourages staff to work travel off peak or work remotely.

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