# Prioritising clean air and active travel for schools

The updated Health and Air Pollution in New Zealand study (HAPINZ 3.0) published in mid-2022 identifies that, in 2016 air pollution contributed to the premature deaths of more than 3,300 new zelanders and to over 13,200 cases of childhood asthma. Motor vehicles are the primary contributor to that pollution in many parts of New Zealand.

We know from other research that this air pollution affects our tamariki disproportionately:

* compared to adults, infants breathe in relatively higher amounts of airborne particles and their immune systems are less developed
* pollution levels are up to 60% greater within 1m of ground level so children and infants are more exposed
* studies in the UK have shown that schools closer to busy roads have higher levels of pollution inside the classroom than outside which has been attributed to to outdoor pollution penetrating the buildings. Those schools had higher prevalence of childhood asthma

HAPINZ and the emissions reduction plan give clear direction to urgently decarbonise transport for both for public health and to address climate change. Beyond these significant drivers we know that there are wider benefits to promoting active transport to school, including improved health from building activity into the day, better educational outcomes and improved safety around the school gate. In addition, children achieve greater independence and feel more connected with their community. We also know that ingraining active transport at a young~~er~~ age has the potential to build habits for life.

This presentation will explore existing research and consider whether we should prioritise actions that have greater benefits for children who will be more affected by both air pollution and climate change. It will identify what action we might take, particularly around schools. This fits into the overall mobility theme of the conference and highlights safety, sustainability and designing for people.