# Let’s breathe easier now

|  |
| --- |
| Air pollution is now the biggest environmental risk for early death. Our on road transport is responsible for a large proportion of our city’s emissions but also contribute to other harmful pollutants from vehicle exhaust and brake and tyre wear. These include carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, PM10, PM2.5, and volatile organic compounds. Particulate matter levels in Christchurch are currently just sitting on the maximum allowable standard set by the World Health Organisation – however, we still need to improve. Recent research indicates that there are no safe levels, especially in respect of fine particulate matter.  Global studies have indicated that physical inactivity negatively impacts mental and physical health problems. Our transport system contributes to this problem - 75% of residents drive or are driven to work and the increased use of motorised transport has been associated with declining levels of physical activity.  Physical inactivity increases the risk of many chronic diseases. In Canterbury 31% of the population are obese, 13.7% have high blood pressure (medicated) and 11.4% are minimally active, which can lead to significant health problems. Eleven percent have been diagnosed with asthma. The 2019 University of Otago report states that 50% of New Zealanders are physically inactive with a 30% increased chance of morbidity.    Our transport system needs to urgently respond and plan for these issues. Our future demography is changing and our elderly population is set to grow. Our neighbourhoods and cities should advocate for clean air where people choose to travel sustainably when they can. |