

Fully funded PhD position: **Activating Change Through Interventions for Active Travel in our Neighbourhoods (ACTIVATION)**

Applications are invited for a fully funded PhD Scholarship linked to the ACTIVATION project which is co-funded by Healthier Lives and Ageing Well National Science Challenges. The scholarship is linked to case studies being undertaken in Ōtautahi and the research undertaken through this scholarship should be aligned with this.

The design of streets, towns, and cities can promote or undermine community health and wellbeing. Urban design that enables safe and easy walking, biking, and public transport (active travel) access to the destinations of daily life – work, whānau, friends, public spaces, services, and amenities – can support physical activity, social connections, and for older citizens, ageing in place. However, many neighbourhoods in Aotearoa New Zealand are active travel deserts. Built environment and social/cultural interventions are needed, but the best mix of interventions to increase active travel and enhance health and wellbeing is unknown.

Transport mode shift is one of the most promising strategies for responding to the interrelated challenges of climate change, physical inactivity, non-communicable disease risk factors, and social inequalities. Population scale change will require integrated land use and transport planning based on robust evidence. Urban regeneration/retrofit programmes provide an ideal context for engaging residents in co-design and community trials to generate new knowledge of what works (or not) to increase uptake of healthier, sustainable transport behaviours and create socially connected communities.

In the ACTIVATION project, mode shift and social wellbeing will be investigated as people move to higher density central city environments, with a broader range of transport options, including shared mobility and personalised residential travel planning. Additionally, the research will identify the regulatory changes and service provision needed to accelerate mode shift and enhance resident wellbeing. We are working with the Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust and co-housing developers to focus on daily mobility in relation to residential change and shared mobility. Matapopore, Christchurch City Council, Ministry of Transport and NZTA are also involved as project partners.

There is considerable scope to develop the PhD project in areas of mutual interest to the successful candidate and the wider research programme. We welcome outline proposals from prospective candidates that align with the broader aims of the project. In particular, we invite proposals that align with the following two objectives of the research:

- Investigate Māori design frameworks for city regeneration
- Investigate the mobility experiences of older adults who move to the central city.

Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Lifecourse approaches to understanding the mobility practices of older adults who move to the central city;
- Formal / informal use of shared mobility;

- Shared transport in Māori communities
- Shared transport among the ageing population, including community transport;
- Re-indigenising streetscapes (e.g. embedding mana whenua perspectives and identity in streetscapes/the built environment);
- Intersections between mobility and other aspects of daily life such as social connections, nutrition, affordability, employment.

Proposals of no more than two pages should include a brief literature review, outline of intended methods and research questions. Please send proposals, along with a cover letter, CV and transcripts to angela.curl@otago.ac.nz by **Friday 26th February**.

Proposals should describe how the research will contribute to achieving the mission of each National Science Challenge to:

- achieve equitable health outcomes and reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases in adults through population-level interventions to improve physical activity environments;
- achieve equitable health outcomes through population-level interventions that provide more physical activity, social connection, and intergenerational opportunities for older adults.

The supervisory team is expected to consist of members of the project team: Dr James Berghan, Dr Angela Curl and Christina McKerchar but may include others as appropriate to the PhD project. Those interested are invited to approach members of the project team informally to discuss potential research topics. There will also be advisory support from the wider research team.

The project scope is diverse, and could suit students with a background in public health, hauora Māori, urban design, urban planning, surveying, geography, environmental management transport studies, or geographic information systems (GIS). Applicants from a Māori background are particularly encouraged.

The successful applicant can be physically based in Christchurch (Population Health) or Dunedin (School of Surveying) but will need to travel to Christchurch on a regular basis.

Applicants must meet the University's criteria for entry into a PhD programme. Requirements for admission to PhD programmes can be found here: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/qualifications/phd.html>

The scholarship will cover fees and a tax free stipend of \$27,000 per year for 3 years full time study. If also applying for a University of Otago Doctoral Scholarship, applicants should discuss this with us in the first instance, as a doctoral scholarship may not be held concurrently with any other scholarship/s worth more than half the annual emolument of a University of Otago Doctoral Scholarship.

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