

# Summary of Student Travel Survey: Wanaka Primary School

## February - March 2017

### Background

Wanaka Primary School is one of eight primary schools in the district implementing travel plan activities with the support of Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC). The aim of school travel planning is to increase safe travel choices for children with the help of the school community and to address road safety issues where possible. Wanaka Primary School is co-located with other educational facilities in the area such as Holy Family School, Mt Aspiring College and the Montessori Early Education Centre.

When surveys began in 2010, Wanaka Primary School had a roll of 364 students. This compares to a current roll of 622<sup>1</sup>, indicating growth of around 41% over the last 8 years.

In 2017, students were asked how they got to and from school over a five day period (27 February – 3 March). In this report, student survey data is summarised in the following way:

1. How students currently travel to school – a breakdown of travel choice for 2017
2. Travel choice comparisons – comparing travel modes over time, comparing active with motorised transport, and comparing actual with desired travel modes. Data from the last eight surveys is given (ie April 2010, March 2011, February 2012, Feb-March 2013, May 2014, February 2015, February 2016 and Feb-Mar 2017)
3. Travel choice by year group
4. Changes in travel choice
5. Opportunities

### Methodology

For this survey, teachers collect data by asking students each morning how they travelled to and from school. We try and encourage teachers to oversee data collection, but some classes with older students elect a student to record this. We asked that rainy days and school trips are noted on the survey sheet. No wet days were recorded during this week.

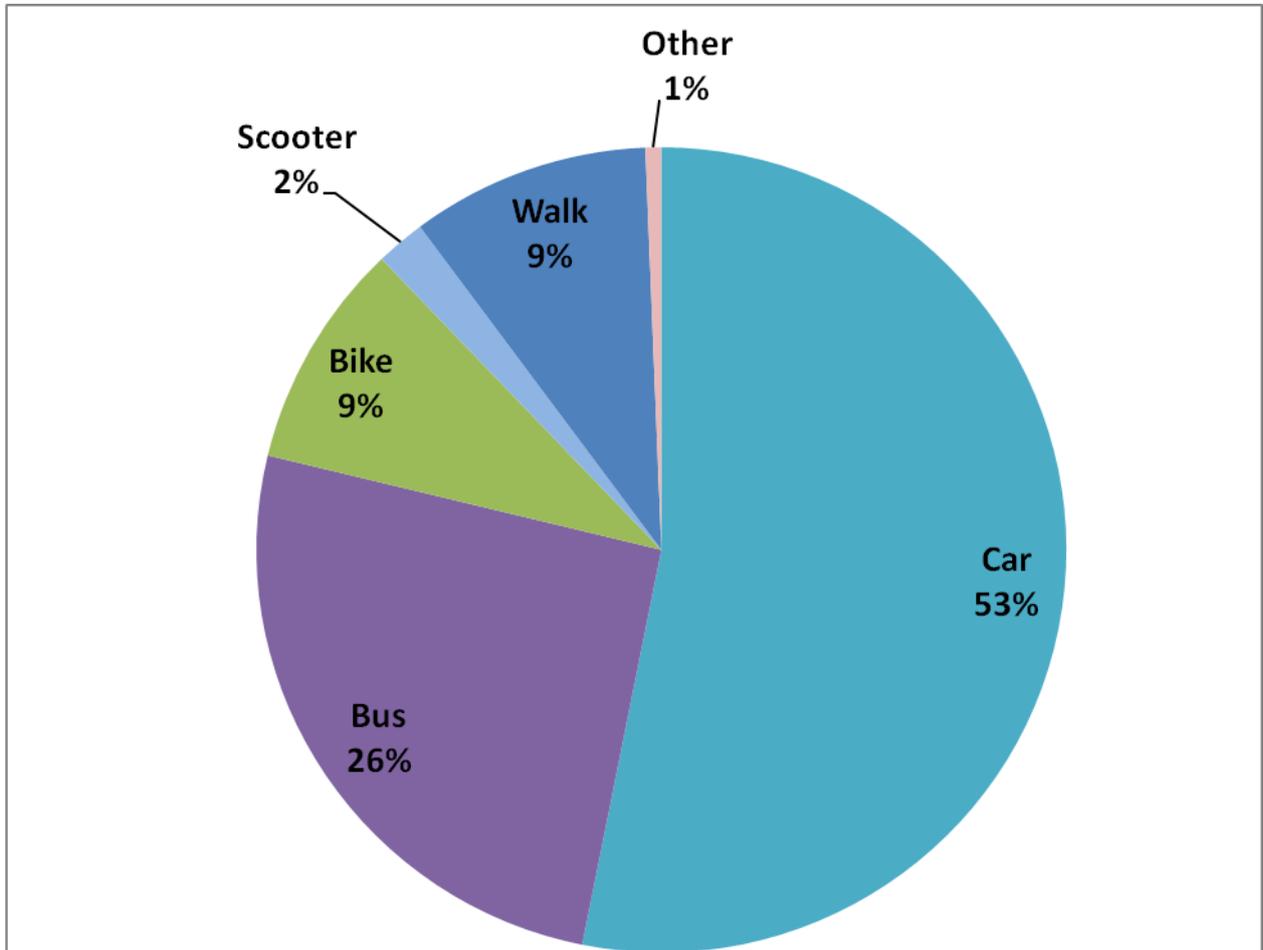
Generally participation rates are high for student surveys, with nearly all children present in the classroom having their answers recorded and most classes taking part. Data for 2017 showed that on the day with the highest response, there was a participation rate of 95% (with a school roll of 622) which is the same as last year's response rate. All 24 classes submitted data with just 1% having incomplete data.

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on figures provided to QLDC from WPS for term 1.

# 1. How Students get to and from Wanaka Primary School

February – March 2017

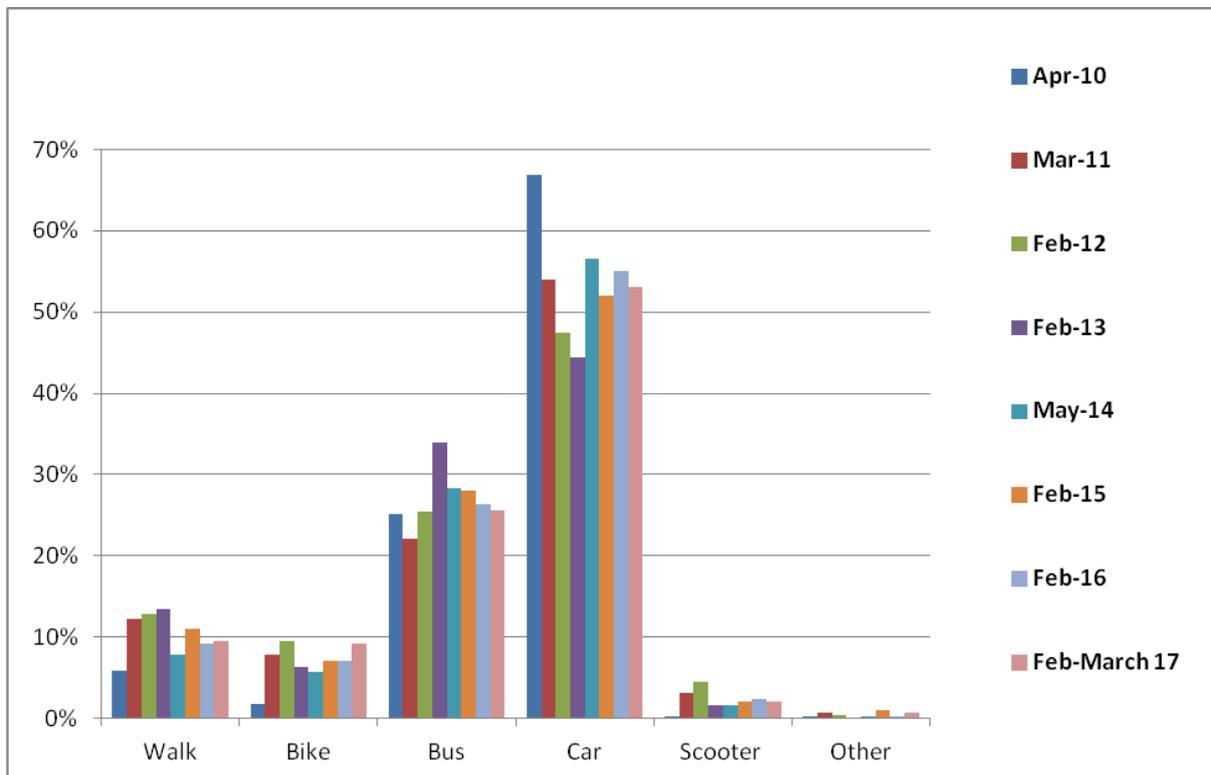


**Figure 1: How students are travelling to and from school (data taken over five days)**

Figure 1 gives a breakdown of travel modes for students over the five day period in February – March 2017. Just over half of all trips students take are by car, with around a quarter by bus and the remaining walking (9%) biking (9%) and scootering (2%). “Other” kinds of transport include motorbike and skateboard.

## 2. Travel Choice Comparisons

### (a) Annual Travel Mode Comparison



**Figure 2: Annual travel mode comparisons from 2010 to 2017**

Figure 2 shows how travel modes have changed between 2010 and 2017.

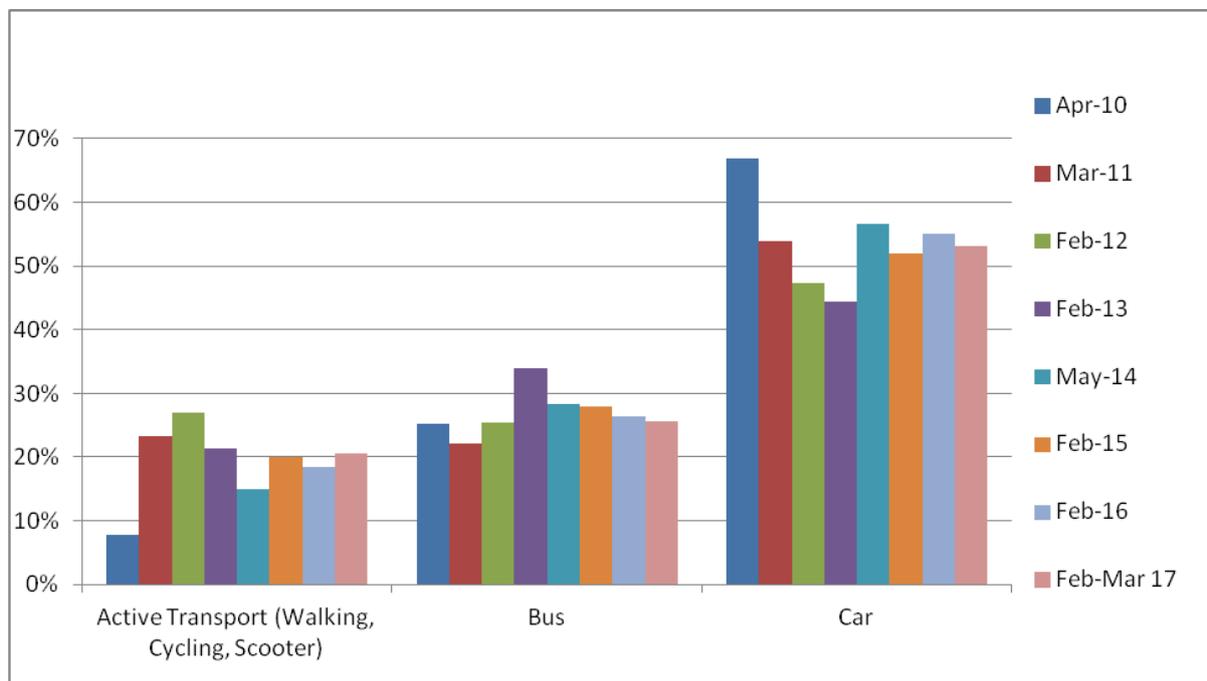
Walking numbers have ranged between 6-13% since 2010, while biking is similar at around 2-10%. Scootering has varied little over the last 5 years and reached 2% of trips in 2017.

The number of bussing trips students take to/from school has ranged between a quarter and a third of all students, with 2017 figures being similar to the previous year. However an overall decline in bus use can be seen since 2013.

The three surveys carried out after Wanaka Primary moved to its Scurr Heights location (in Term 4, 2010) showed a steady decline in the number of driving trips to school. However, since 2014 the number of car trips has risen to a range of 52-57%.

Other factors influencing changes in travel choice are discussed in more detail on page 7.

### (a) Annual Travel Modes (Comparison of Active and Motorised Travel)



**Figure 3: Annual travel mode comparisons between active and motorised travel 2010- 2017**

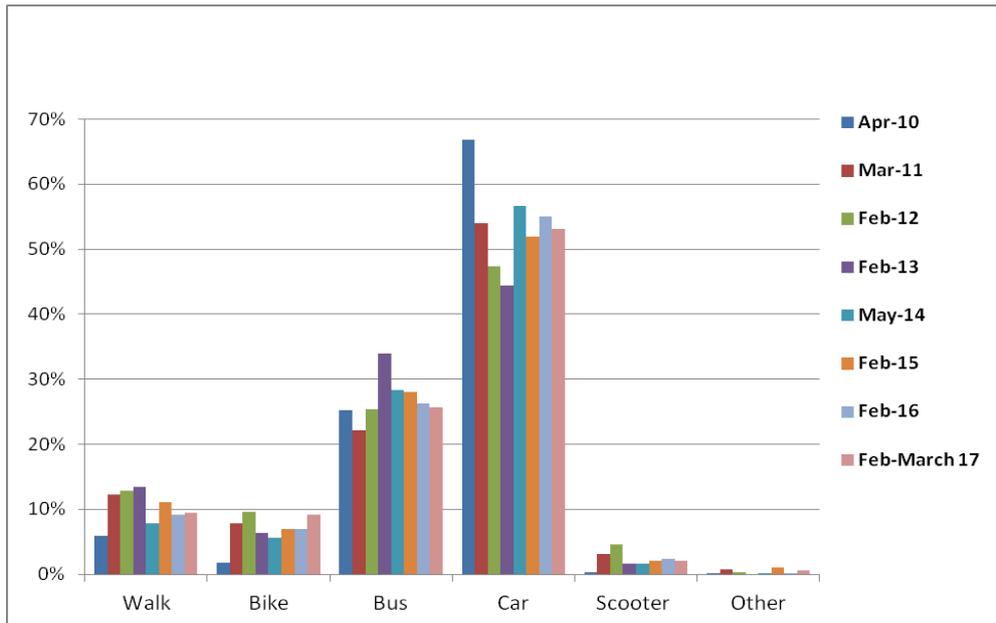
Figure 3 groups together all active transport modes (walking, cycling and scootering) comparing these with motorised transport such as the bus and car.

Active transport figures are higher after 2010 when the school moved from its Tenby Street location. The average rate over the eight year survey period is about 19% but if the 2010 data is excluded, it rises to around 21% of the total mode share.

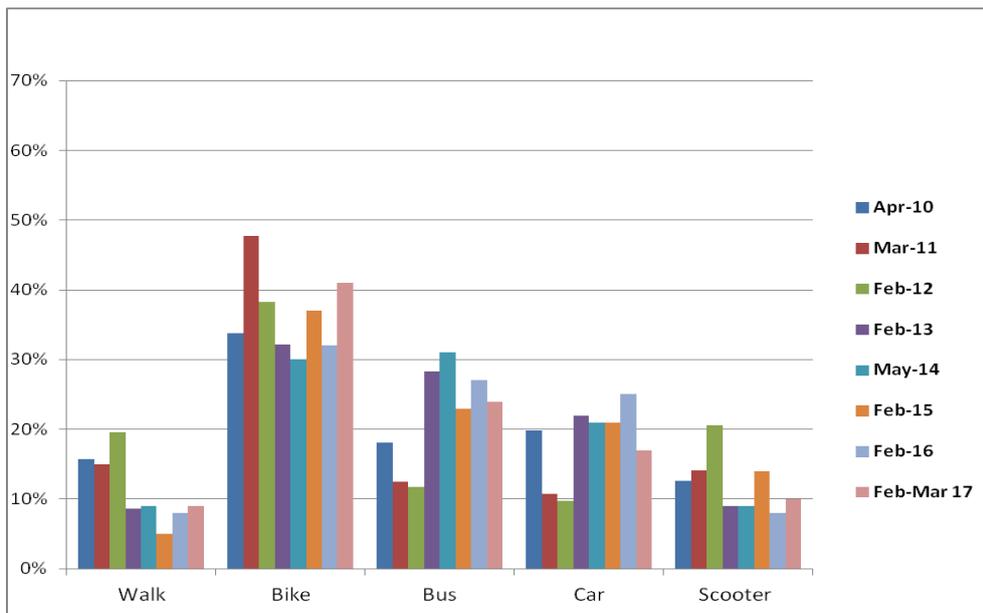
The numbers of bussing trips to/from school has been the most constant of any travel mode especially over the last four years. The lowest driving rate over the survey period was recorded in 2013, when there is also a peak in the number of bus trips.

The 2010 survey was taken when the school was at the old location and timed in late April with some recorded wet days. In contrast, all subsequent surveys have been run in mid summer and with much lower driving rates. It is likely the 2010 driving rate of 67% is an aberration and noteworthy that the 2012 and 2013 surveys show the lowest driving rates overall. Factors influencing travel mode change are discussed on page 7.

## (b) Comparisons of Actual and Desired Travel Modes



↑ **Figure 4: Actual travel modes comparisons from 2010 to 2017**



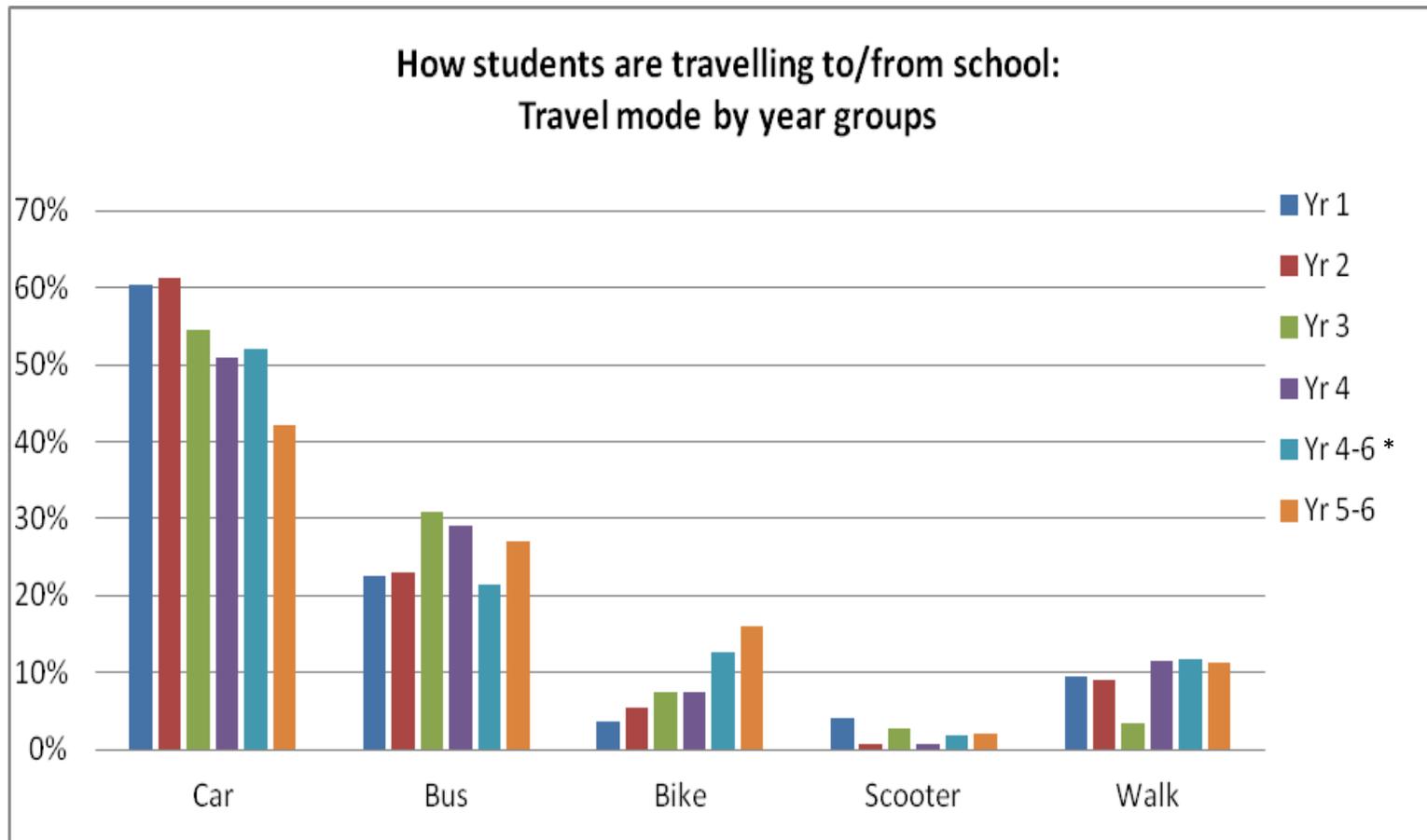
↑ **Figure 5: Desired travel mode comparisons from 2010 to 2017**

Figure 4 shows how students *actually* travelled to school over the period 2010-2017 while Figure 5 shows *preferred* travel modes over the same period. This information can be used to identify potential opportunities for future sustainable school travel.

Over the survey period 2011-2017 the number of walking trips (8-13%) is slightly lower than the number who would *like to walk* (5-20%). When it comes to biking however, the numbers *actually* biking (6-10%) is significantly lower than the numbers who would *like to bike* (30-48%). Similarly those wanting to scooter are much greater than those actually using this mode, with around 2.5% on average scootering over the last seven years and 12% *preferring* to scooter if they had the choice.

Being driven to school is the leading travel mode (44-57% excluding 2010) in contrast to the numbers of students who would *like to be driven* to school (10-25%).

### 3. Travel Choice by Year Group



**Figure 6 - Travel Modes by Year Group 2017:** The increasing number of trips where students are bussing, biking and walking to/from school tends to correspond to a decrease in the numbers being driven to school as the student’s year group rises. Higher numbers of children being driven to school amongst younger students is a feature consistent with many other schools in the district.

**\*Note:** The category of Year 4-6 is primarily made up of Year 5-6 students with a smaller number of Year 4s in each of these classes.

## 4. Changes in Travel Modes

### Active Transport (walking, biking, scootering)

In the past, cycling rates have always been slightly less than walking rates but for the first time the number of cycling trips equalled the number of walking trips during survey week in 2017. Scooter rates have remained relatively constant over the last eight years.

If figures are averaged across all surveys, the number of students using active transport is approximately 19% of the total mode share. However, if given the choice up to 60% of students would *prefer* to bike, walk or scooter to school if they could, a figure that is higher than the average number of students currently being driven to school so far (54%).

### Driving and Bussing to School – Changes between 2010-2017

The survey taken in 2010 shows the highest driving rate, together with moderate bus use and the lowest walking and cycling rates over the eight year survey cycle. Factors influencing these results will include the timing of the survey (late April instead of February) recorded wet days and the fact that it was taken at its Tenby Street location with less walking and cycling infrastructure.

Surveys in 2012 and 2013 saw lower driving rates than later years and the highest active transport rates over the survey period. There is also a correlation between driving and bus use, with bus use at its highest when driving rates are at their lowest. After this time the school roll continued to rise and increasing numbers of people were relocating to Wanaka after the Christchurch earthquake. We can see car use climbing up again to around 50-55%. Bus use is declining gradually over this period, but apart from 2013 has remained fairly constant over the survey period.

Since 2010, WPS has had a roll growth of 41%<sup>1</sup> and over the last four years, driving rates have hovered around 52-57%. It is possible that an increase in the school traffic volume discourages some from walking or biking, especially if parents notice there is more congestion and therefore feels less safe. Another important factor is the increase in the numbers of new entrants enrolled each year. This increase of around 30%<sup>2</sup> may have an impact on the overall travel profile for the school because as Figure 6 shows, the younger the student, the more car trips and less biking, walking and bussing trips overall. Busy lifestyles also have a role to play with children enjoying multiple after-school activities combined with changes in parents' expectations around how students get to these (less walking or biking). Pressures of time are also a big factor for parents. The convenience of the car – even for short trips – is hard to ignore when it so easily overcomes time constraints.

---

<sup>1</sup> Based on MoE figures in annual mapping surveys provided to QLDC

<sup>2</sup> Personal communication, Wendy Bamford, May 2017.

## 5. Opportunities

- Biking to school has grown in popularity this year with a slight increase in the numbers using this mode. Wanaka Primary students also *prefer* this mode over all others in every survey except 2014 (when choosing to take the bus was more popular by just 1%). Not all schools favour cycling in this way, and figure 6 shows the potential for senior students to choose this mode more often when getting to/from school.
- Safety programmes which reinforce safe walking, cycling, scootering and bussing are a good match for the transport profile of this school and QLDC will continue to work closely with the school community to implement these where possible.
- A walking school bus from Mt Iron continues to operate in 2017 and a kea crossing was introduced at the Kings/Ironside Drive roundabout in Term 1 2017 before and after school. This has partially eased congestion on Ironside Drive at pick up times enabling parents to meet children further away from the main entrance, with students crossing at the kea patrol first. The kea crossing also encourages students living nearby to walk and bike to school, providing a safe way to negotiate this busy intersection.
- QLDC will continue to programme infrastructure works where possible to address road safety issues or support safe routes to school.

*For more information please contact Kirsty Barr, QLDC's School Travel Plan Coordinator, 03 443 8609, [kirstybarr1@gmail.com](mailto:kirstybarr1@gmail.com) or visit [www.qldc.govt.nz](http://www.qldc.govt.nz).*