

Summary of ARTA Carpool Programme Trial

The Auckland Regional Transport Authority (ARTA) undertook a carpool pilot project through 2007 to June 2008 with 12 workplaces. The aim of the project was to establish the feasibility of providing carpool software to support organisations implementing travel plans through the Travelwise Workplace Travel Plan programme. The use of the carpool software was piloted with four individual workplaces, the CBD university cluster (AUT and University of Auckland) and 6 worksites within the Auckland Airport area.

The evaluation of the study concluded that from a technical standpoint, the software trialled by ARTA rated poorly. Customisations required to meet ARTA's specifications took some months longer than expected due to the underestimation of the time for development. Despite customisations, the software had shortcomings in terms of poor matching abilities and its confusing and cumbersome user interface. Rodney District Council, one of the pilot organisations, abandoned the software part way through the trial, switching to different software to trial their community rideshare scheme.

Further, the evaluation concluded that the carpool software added very little to no additional value to the carpool schemes within the four individual workplaces or the CBD university cluster. This was predominately due to the lower numbers of staff at the individual organisations and therefore a low number of matches created through the software. Although some organisations had staff numbers well above 1000, other factors contributing to low registration included proximity to good public transport, a low percentage of car drivers, and a lack of incentives by the employer to encourage uptake.

By contrast, Auckland Airport was more successful using the software in their carpool scheme. Several factors contributed to this such as limited passenger transport to the airport at the time, a high density employment area with over 10,000 staff travelling to the same destination area, a high percentage of car drivers, support measures, a good communications plan and the use of incentives by the employer. In the case of the airport, the software is believed to be vital to their internal carpool scheme to ensure better chances of matches with staff from different organisations.

The project evaluation concluded that ARTA's role in supporting carpooling software for individual schemes is not viable and furthermore that carpooling has little chance of success when there are other travel options available (i.e. passenger transport), there are low number of staff, and where the mode share for car driver trips at the organisation is low.

An evaluation of three other software options was conducted with recommended replacement software identified should ARTA wish to continue to offer carpool software. ARTA has yet to consider its next steps.