

TravelWise

thinking transport.

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Walking School Buses in Auckland

Living Streets Aotearoa



A WSB is a group of children who walk to and from school supervised by adults. Like a real bus, it travels at a set time and children join or leave the bus at designated stops.



A Brief History

First established in Auckland in 1999

Set up by local Road Safety Coordinators

Partnership model between Councils, Schools and ARTA

Schools can access funding



- 255 WSB Routes, in 111 Primary Schools
- Transporting over 4,300 children
- Supported by over 2000 adult volunteers
- Saving over 1900 car journeys each morning
- Adding up to CO2 reduction of 163 tonnes a year

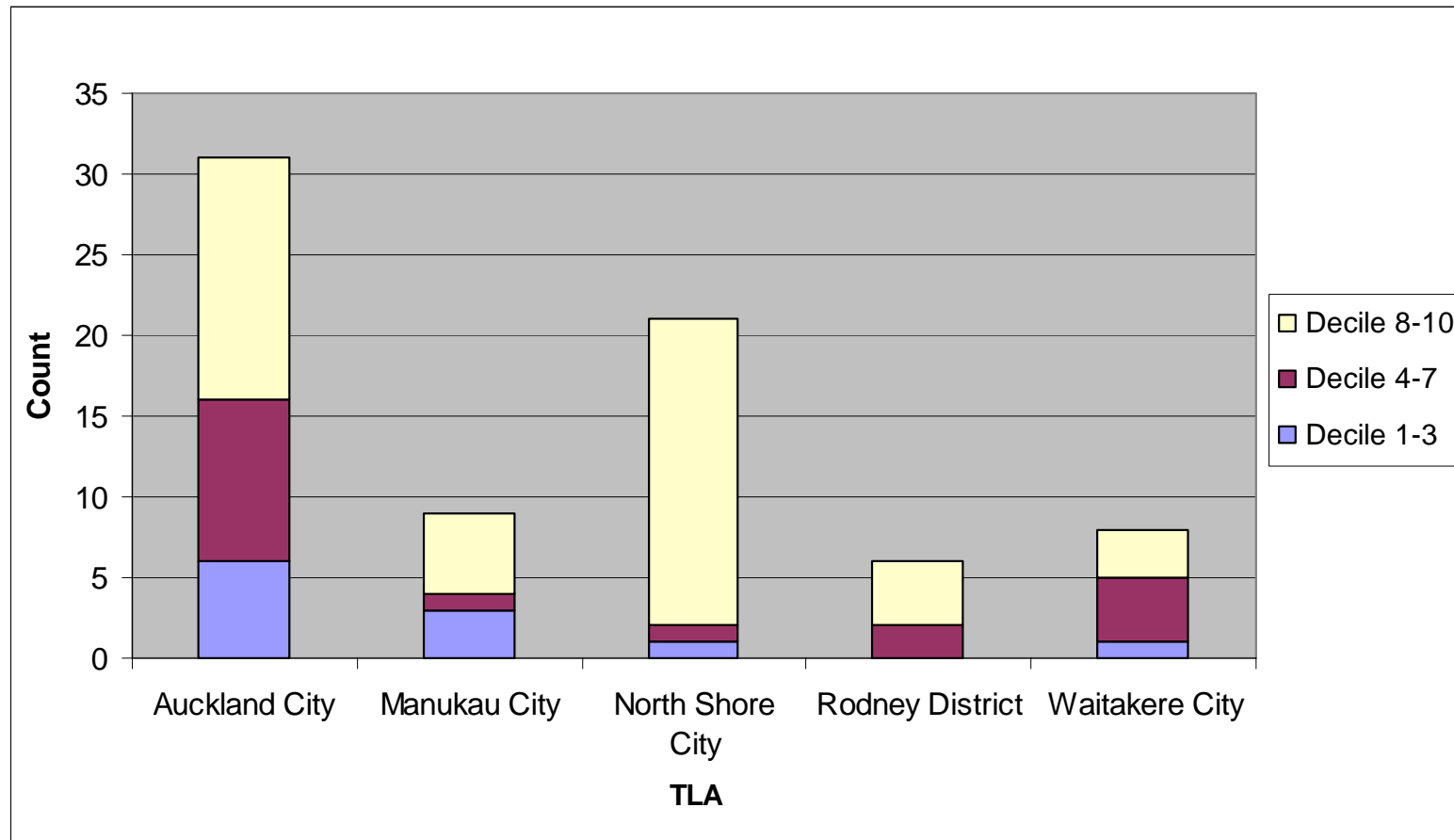


Programme Support Includes

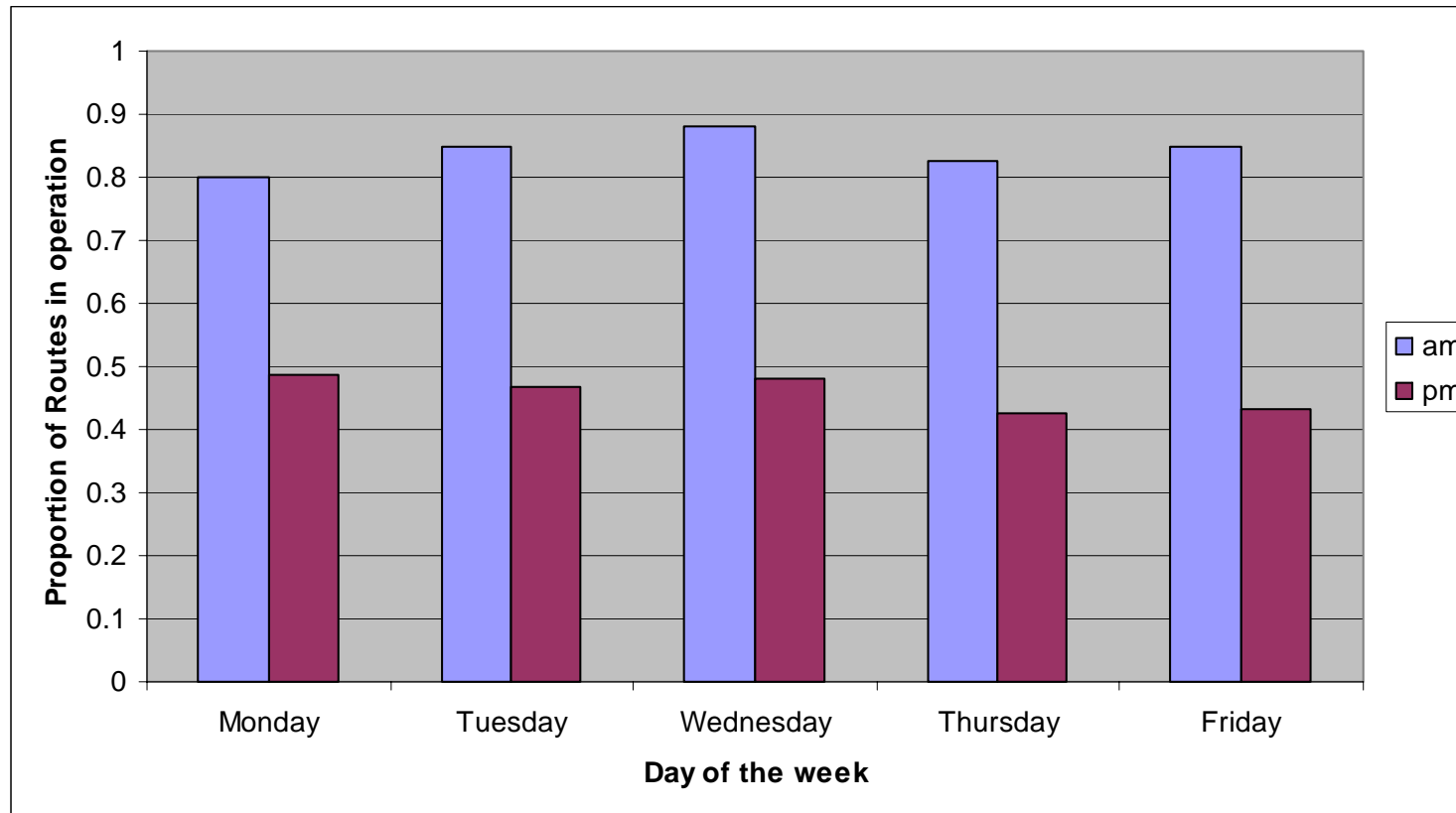
- Grants for establishment and ongoing maintenance
- Regular newsletters
- Quarterly volunteer forums
- Health and Safety training
- Website
- Promotional resources
- Specific campaigns eg WSB Push Play, Men on the Move
- Celebratory events eg WSB Annual Picnic



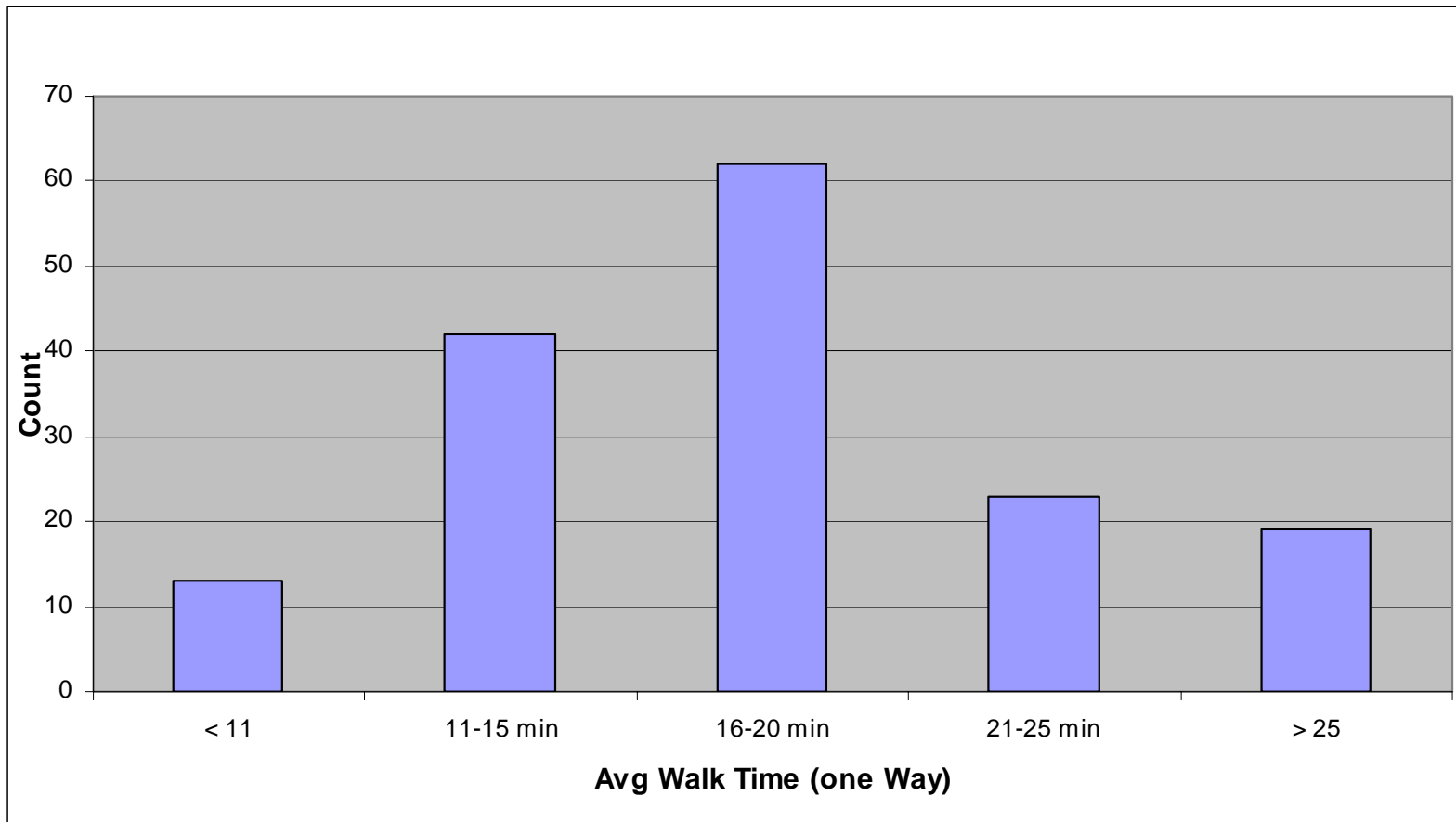
Distribution across TLAs



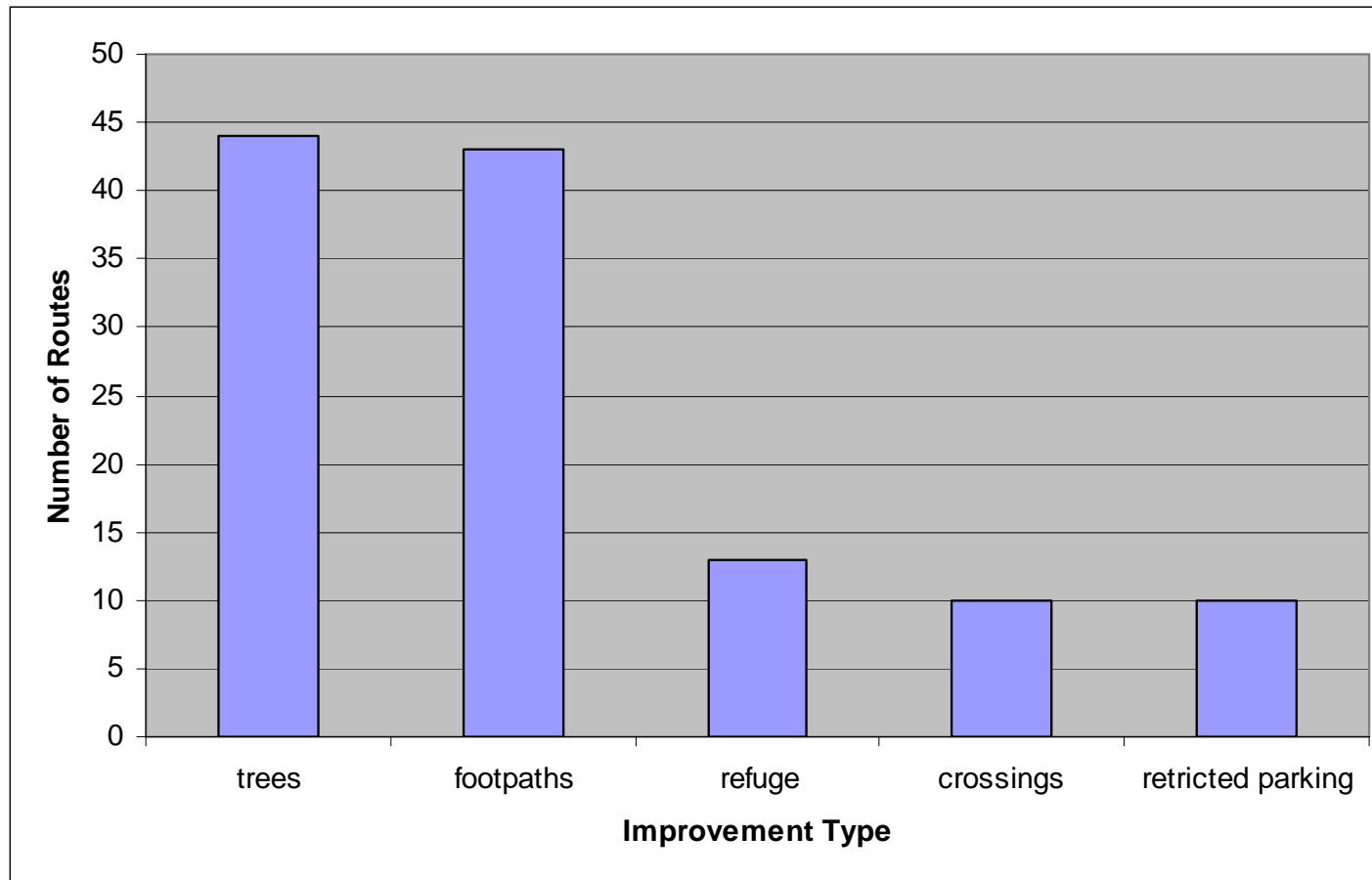
Mornings are most popular



Walking times vary



Common route improvements



Weather affects participation



Less than half the children on any one route (45.2%) will use the WSB on a wet day



Gender balance



Only 15%
of WSB
volunteers
are male



Does the walking habit last?

“Focus group research conducted in 2006 demonstrates that children who graduate from the WSB continue to walk and form other walking structures such as friend based walk to school groups.”



A Strategic Approach – to engage more WSBs in Low Decile Schools in Auckland



A Ministry of Health Funded Project



Based on evaluation, research and cooperation



What are school deciles?

- A school's decile indicates the extent to which the school draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. A school's decile does not indicate the overall socio-economic mix of the school.

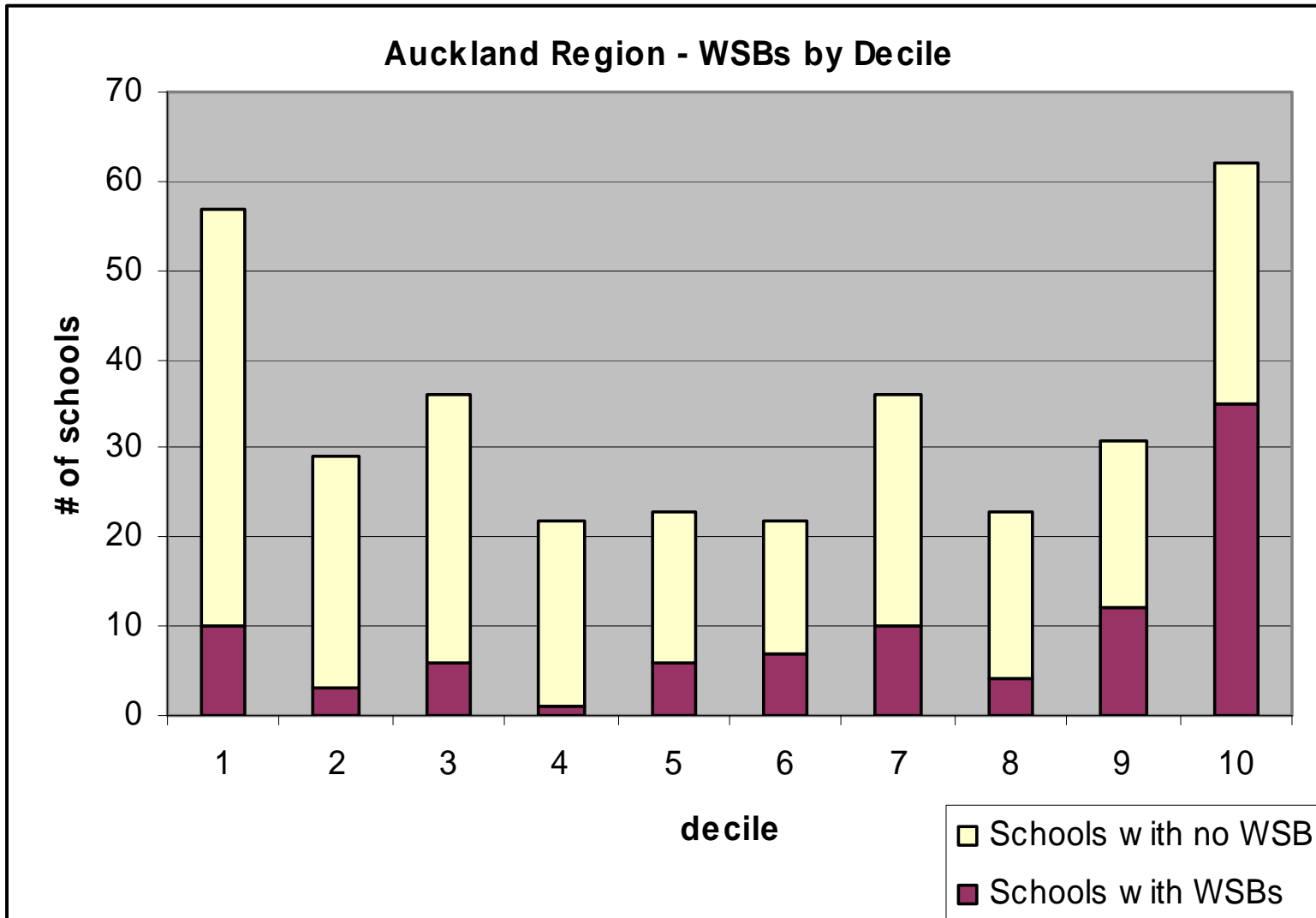
Ministry of Education



Key Findings

- Walking patterns are changing in low decile schools – with increasing use of private vehicles
- Road layouts seem to be more favourable to walking in many low decile communities
- School management staff in low decile schools are very supportive of the concept
- Personal safety issues for children walking to school, should make the WSB concept even more applicable for low decile communities





Low decile schools support successful WSB



Why WSB volunteers are hard to find in low decile school areas;

- High levels of transience
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of what a WSB is and the benefits it offers
- The working and living patterns of many parents make it difficult for them to commit to volunteering on a WSB
- Parents are focussed on other more pressing social and economic issues.



ARTA's approach

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Communicate the WSB concept in a more appropriate way to low decile communities especially potential volunteers

Make it easier for low decile areas to access information and resources

Provide more targeted incentives for parents to volunteer

Look at utilising pools of volunteers other than parents, such as older students

Prioritise and target clusters of schools that are identified as having a higher likelihood of establishing WSBs

Link more closely with other programmes in low decile schools

Take the strategic view – long term commitment and flexibility



Example actions to date

- WSB information translations
- WSB featured in local community media
- Presentations at school and community events
- Incentives and resources
- Website updated to be more user friendly
- Active Schools, HPS, Health Providers, EEOT, ARMS etc
- Activity in the Community WINZ pilot.



2008 the WSB story so far....

- 22% of WSB established in 2008 are at low decile schools
- Decile 2 schools have the highest proportional growth of any decile
- WSB growth continues across all deciles.

