

# Living Streets Aotearoa



## Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa on Wellington Play Spaces Policy

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### Submission

Living Streets Aotearoa thanks the committee for this opportunity to submit on an important policy area that encourages greater physical activity, more social opportunities, and better use of public spaces.

The revised Play Spaces policy has 5 strategic priorities:

1. a network of play spaces across the city

Living Streets believe play spaces must provide for all – there is a particular lack of spaces for girls to be active in; there are a number of play spaces that cater to boys like bikes/skate/ courts/ kick about areas. Similar spaces need to be provided for girls that are tailored to their needs – especially swings, and, ball and vehicle free space, jungle gyms, climbing trees, somewhere to skip, dance and play in mazes.

An even spread of play spaces is a good first principle but needs to be tailored to where children live and visit and how much play space is already available. Kilbirnie needs more play spaces particularly safe, vehicle free space (it is cut off from its coastline by the barrier of Cobham Drive), as does Miramar, Newtown and Island Bay. Forming relationships with local schools for more play space is a good idea.

There is clearly a need for more play space in the CBD where many people visit and the population is increasing. We should encourage families into the area by making it more attractive for children. Cuba Mall was a small play area which is slowly being squeezed out by commercial activity designed for adults (eg bars). Similarly Glover Park used to be a much nicer children's play area but is now more catering to adults. Victoria St redevelopment did not provide for more play space.

## 2. high-quality, fit-for-purpose play space

Living Streets supports fit-for-purpose space which can be high quality at affordable cost, not necessarily meaning the gold standard. Living Streets does not see a need for car parking space especially as it has been identified that people have indicated they mostly want nearby neighbourhood play spaces. People should be encouraged and facilitated walking to play space. Car parks are an expensive use of public space.

Seating is one aspect that should be provided at all play spaces as it has been shown to be a key factor in allowing children to play for longer, if adults have somewhere to sit.

## 3. community and school partnerships

Living Streets support school spaces being included in wider community play space as appropriate, but this must be well managed to complement school activity. Walk to school routes should be provided to all schools and can easily incorporate play activity along the way. A programme that provides safe walking routes to school should be prioritised.

## 4. citywide incidental play space

Living Streets see this as a key opportunity to promote more play, and use of public space and incidental informal play spaces should be included in all developments. This should be included in the District Plan.

## 5. programming and advocacy for outdoor play

It is not clear what is meant by the three categories of playgrounds. Is there a maintenance, funding or infrastructure level that differentiates these types. How does this relate to less formal play space like our parks and town belt. Will the three playground categories be prioritised ahead of providing informal and incidental play space? Will boys play continue to be prioritised ahead of girls play – eg all public space upgrades to include skate opportunity? If dogs are not allowed in play spaces who will monitor and enforce this? How do inner city beaches relate to play space?

The single most effective way to get children outside more and using public space will be to get them to walk to school on a daily basis. Walk to School programmes should be included in this policy.

We would like to be heard in support of our submission.

### **About Living Streets**

Living Streets Aotearoa is New Zealand's national walking and pedestrian organisation, providing a positive voice for people on foot and working to promote walking friendly planning and development around the country. Our vision is "More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places".

The objectives of Living Streets Aotearoa are:

- to promote walking as a healthy, environmentally-friendly and universal means of transport and recreation
- to promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities
- to work for improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrians and runners including walking surfaces, traffic flows, speed and safety
- to advocate for greater representation of pedestrian concerns in national, regional and urban land use and transport planning.

For more information, please see: [www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)