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Living Streets Aotearoa is shocked that the Coroner has said “ the girl killed by rubbish truck should not have been walking to school without adult”

It is a child's right to walk to school safely and its the Government's job to make sure it was safe to walk to school or to play.

Walking for a child is a part of growing up, a part of being independent and part of being out in your community. We need to encourage walking and walking to school as it a way to bring people the physical and mental health. We humans are designed for walking.

Children are OK to walk on their own when their parents think they are. The parents are the ones who know best. It might be when they're five, it might be when they're fifteen. It depends on the individual child. It's not the police, the school or the coroner who should be dictating that. There are hundreds of thousands of children walking to school every day.

Living Streets would like to see a strong response from the government in response to this coroner's ruling. We don't know if coroner's can be censured, but this one certainly needs to be. It's a clear case of victim blaming.

Footpaths are for feet and not vehicles. The rubbish truck in questions should have been fitted with enough mirrors and sensors to see the child on the footpath. A person in a wheelchair is the same height as a child and we do not expect them to be run down by vehicles on the the footpath.

The streets need to be safe places to walk and play and the government is now making that happen with slower speeds in residential roads and around school. The coroners decision is out of step with these policies.

Living Streets look forward to working with the Government to improve conditions for pedestrians to attract even more people to make walking a regular part of their day.

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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

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