

# Living Streets Aotearoa



[www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)

## MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 24th June 2020

### **Select Committee to hear about petition to get e-scooters off footpaths and keep pedestrians safe**

A petition, presented to Parliament in December 2019 asking for e-scooters to be banned from footpaths, will be the subject of a presentation to the Transport and Infrastructure Select Committee on Thursday, 25/6/2020 at 9.10am (Committee Room 1, Bowen House; time may change).

The petition was organised by Footpaths4feet, a coalition of 13 member organisations from across New Zealand, representing walkers, people who use mobility aids, older people and people with a range of sensory or cognitive impairments.

Coalition convener, Dr. Chris Teo-Sherrell says "The petition has become even more important since the absurd proposals allowing anyone to ride e-scooters and a wide range of other personal transport devices on footpaths was revealed in the Accessible Streets Package."

"Just last week we learned of an elderly man dying in Brisbane after being struck by a bicycle while walking on a footpath<sup>1</sup>, demonstrating that fears of serious injury and even death are justified.

"The Associate Minister, the GPS for Land Transport, the 2020-2030 Road Safety Strategy and the Accessible Streets consultation document all say that everyone should be safe and should feel safe when moving about their communities. Allowing e-scooters and other

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1 □ See <https://www.victoriawalks.org.au/news/1672>

personal transport devices on footpaths is contrary to this."

Speaking to the Select Committee will be Dr. Jonathan Godfrey (President, Blind Citizens NZ), Ms. Bronwyn Haines (Policy Adviser, Disabled Persons Assembly), Mr. Peter Matcham (National Vice-President, Grey Power Federation) and Dr. Chris Teo-Sherrell (Living Streets Aotearoa executive member).

Among other points they will make will be:

- the Accessible Streets proposal to allow e-scooters and other personal transport devices to be ridden on footpaths is in breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
- the June 2018 Cabinet paper warned that this might be the case but seemingly no work was done to rectify the situation and almost exactly the same wording was used in the Accessible Streets consultation document released 21 months later<sup>2</sup>.

They will be calling on the Select Committee to exercise its role of keeping a check on the Executive and ensuring that NZ lives up to its international obligations<sup>3</sup>.

ENDS

For more information please contact

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Notes to media:

Footpaths4Feet is a coalition of 13 member organisations, including Living Streets Aotearoa, Grey Power, Disabled Persons Assembly, CCS Disability Action, Alzheimers NZ, Blind and Low Vision NZ, Deaf Action NZ, Association of Blind Citizens NZ, Health Action Trust, Age Concern, Dunedin Pedestrian Network, Retina NZ, Visual Impairment Charitable Trust Aotearoa NZ.

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- 2  Wording of June 2018 Cabinet paper (2nd paragraph, p20) was 'There is a possibility that allowing cyclists and more powered devices on footpaths could be considered inconsistent with New Zealand's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, if it were to result in restricted accessibility. This will be considered as part of consultation.'  
Wording of the Accessible Streets consultation document (p81, paragraph 1) was 'There's a possibility that allowing people on cycles to use footpaths could be considered inconsistent with New Zealand's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, if it were to result in restricted accessibility. We'll consider this as part of consultation.'
  - 3  NZ was instrumental in getting the UN Convention adopted, with Jim McLay, NZ's ambassador to the UN at the time, chairing the committee that drafted the wording of the Convention.

We've come together to express our desire for good quality footpaths that are safe and feel safe to our members and the wider public. We are deeply concerned about personal transport devices such as e-scooters and bicycles being used on footpaths.