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Walking Advocacy Group Welcomes Climate Change Commission's Increased Walking Target, But Says We Can Do Even More

Living Streets Aotearoa, New Zealand's national walking and pedestrian advocacy organisation, has welcomed the Climate Change Commission's recommendation of a 25% increase in the share of household journey distance covered by walking by 2030 – but says that target should be even higher.

“Walking is a cheap, low-carbon form of transport,” said Living Streets Aotearoa's climate change campaigner Tim Jones. “But making walking safe and attractive for New Zealanders doesn't get the attention it deserves. Many more people would do trips of up to 2km on foot if footpaths were kept clear of obstructions, well maintained, well lit, and provided with shelter where possible. Yet all too often, Government and Councils do not make walking a priority.”

“We welcome the increased targets for walking, cycling and public transport journeys contained in the Climate Change Commission's draft recommendations,” Tim Jones said. “Walking, cycling and public transport need to work well together so we can reduce dependence on private motor vehicles. We'd like to see the Commission and the Government do more to acknowledge walking as a crucial part of 'first and last kilometre' travel solutions – because making it easier and safer to walk to and from the bus and train will mean that more people take public transport and don't need to depend on a car.”

“While the proposed 25% increase in walking distances by 2030 is good, we think the nation can do better. As the Commission notes, walking and cycling are good for health – which also means they're good for wellbeing, and good for easing the pressure on our health budget. The climate crisis is also a public health crisis.”

“Let's aim to get even more people walking further and more often on safe, separated footpaths,” Tim Jones said. “Let's treat walking as an essential part of the sustainable low-carbon transport system that New Zealanders deserve and the climate emergency demands.”

“Living Streets Aotearoa congratulates the Climate Change Commission on all the hard work that has gone into its comprehensive set of recommendations, and we look forward to working with the Commission and the Government as these proposals are developed and implemented,” Tim Jones concluded.

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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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