



Living Streets Aotearoa

## ***Welcome to the April 2025 e-Bulletin from Living Streets Aotearoa***

*We want more people walking and enjoying public spaces be they young or old, fast or slow, whether walking, sitting, commuting, shopping, between appointments, or out on the streets for exercise, for leisure or for pleasure.*

In this issue:

- The Living Streets Aotearoa Walking Summit 2025
- Support for Safer Speeds is Growing
- Seeing Streets Differently
- Why separated paths are best for everyone
- April Walking Festivals

### **The Living Streets Aotearoa Walking Summit 2025**

Every two years, Living Streets Aotearoa holds a Walking Summit, where we bring together decision-makers, researchers, walking advocates, and everyone who wants more people walking more often.

Our fifth biennial Walking Summit will be held as a one-day online event in November 2025. In the current economic climate, we decided that an online event was the best way to combine affordability, accessibility, and effectiveness.

This announcement is just the beginning. Watch out for more to come, including a save-the-date email, followed by information on the theme, the programme and speakers, and on how to register. We'll be offering a discount on registration for Living Streets Aotearoa members, so if you have been thinking about [joining Living Streets Aotearoa](#), now's a good time!

You can check out content from our previous Walking Summits here:

- [Walking Summit 2023](#)
- [Previous Walking Summits](#)

And you can find video presentations from the 2023 Walking Summit on the [Living Streets Aotearoa YouTube channel](#).

## Support for safer speeds on our streets is growing

This month we've seen [growing alarm](#) and action in many communities in areas where lower speed limits are being reversed. And the Government is responding to that public pressure: we've seen that [community action can influence changes](#) like the decision to open consultations on some stretches of [State Highway](#) that had previously been slated for arbitrary reversal of recent speed reductions.

[Similar community advocacy](#) is happening in Auckland, in regards to Auckland Transport's proposed approach to implement former Transport Minister Simeon Brown's Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2024 by raising



speeds at one fell swoop on approximately 1500 Auckland roads on 1 July 2025. Transport experts, parents and school principals are calling on the Government to let local communities have a say, and asking Auckland Transport to interpret the Rule in a way which prioritises protecting local communities, including many schools and the tamariki who attend them.



Living Streets Aotearoa has joined All Aboard, Bike Auckland, Brake New Zealand, and Walk Auckland in [publishing a letter calling on Minister Chris Bishop to allow local discretion on speed limit changes](#) that will make streets across Auckland less safe. This group of leading road safety experts and transport advocates

welcomes the Minister of Transport's commonsense move to [invite community views on some State Highway speed changes](#) around the country, and urges him to apply the same reasonable and fair approach to our largest city.

[Read more here](#)

Living Streets Aotearoa supports safe speeds for our streets. Safe speeds are speeds where if a crash occurs death or serious injury is unlikely in the case of a motor vehicle colliding with a pedestrian or other unprotected road user. This threshold is approximately 30km/hr according to scientifically valid studies.

### **Evidence does not support higher speed limits**

[A recent article](#) by Professor Timothy Welch at University of Auckland focused on the Government's claim that higher speed limits increase productivity and save money. He found that data indicates that any productivity gained from the higher speed limits would be significantly outweighed by higher costs from increased crashes and resulting serious injuries and deaths. Conversely, the evidence also shows that lower speed limits lead to fewer crashes and significantly reduce death and injury rates, as well as lower costs. And as Professor Welch points out, these results are often underestimated:

"For example, on the Blenheim to Nelson stretch of State Highway 6, the predicted death and injury reduction was 22%, but the actual reduction was 82%. On State Highway 51, the reduction was 100% compared to an expected 31%."

The evidence on the high economic, social and community costs of the proposed speed increases is mounting up, and community concern is rising. With [legal action also underway](#), and Councils planning to [take action to protect their streets and their communities from higher speeds](#), Living Streets Aotearoa will continue to work to build support for safer speeds, and encourage the Minister of Transport to take heed of both scientific evidence and rising community concern.

## Consultation opens on a further 16 stretches of State Highway

NZTA has opened [consultation on the speed limit reversals for a further 16 stretches of state highway](#), called "urban connectors". The last date for submission is 14 May, so be sure to submit and add your voice to support safer speeds. The wording on the consultation [may be a bit confusing](#), so be sure to read carefully.

## Seeing Streets Differently

Last month, [Blind Low Vision NZ](#) launched their campaign [Seeing Streets Differently](#).

The campaign was launched by Governor-General the Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro, GNZM, QSO, who is the patron of Blind Low Vision NZ, and whose speech to the event is here:

<https://gg.govt.nz/publications/blind-low-vision-new-zealands-seeing-streets-differently>

The campaign highlights [the challenges that people](#)



[who are blind, deafblind, or low vision face when trying to navigate footpaths](#), which often have hazards and obstacles. Footpaths littered with e-scooters, cars parked on the footpath, and branches overhanging the footpath make travelling by foot difficult and dangerous, especially for pedestrians who are blind or have low vision.

Blind Low Vision suggests we can all keep footpaths safe for everyone by:

1. Not parking e-scooters or bikes on the footpath
2. Not putting bins in the middle of the footpath and trying to take them inside as soon as possible
3. [Not parking on the footpath](#) – it's illegal and inconsiderate
4. [Trimming overhanging vegetation](#) back from the footpath

And the campaign's two asks of Government are to:

- Set and regulate enforceable accessible minimum standards to remove barriers on the footpath.
- Amend procurement policy to require accessible design.

Ultimately, Blind Low Vision would like the government to enact blanket regulations and policies that require footpaths to be accessible and deliver a safe journey to everyone in New Zealand. Living Streets Aotearoa agrees, and is delighted that Blind Low Vision has launched this important campaign.

LSA President Tim Jones, who attended the campaign launch at Government House in Wellington on Friday 14 March 2025, says:



“It was great to be invited to attend this launch and to hear the Governor-General’s thoughtful speech, and the subsequent panel highlighting the lived experience of Blind Low Vision NZ members, whose task in navigating obstructed footpaths,

building sites that take over footpath space, dropped e-scooters and other hazards is even more challenging than it is for sighted pedestrians. At the reception afterwards, a number of people I spoke with highlighted the close and productive working relationship between Living Streets Aotearoa, Blind Low Vision NZ and other groups in the Footpaths4Feet Coalition – that was really good to hear, and a testament to Dr Chris Teo-Sherrell and other LSA Executive Council members who have put so much work into building these relationships.”

## Why separated paths are best for everyone

[This video](#) from University of West England Bristol does a great job of explaining why separated paths are best for pedestrians and cyclists alike. Since these two modes of transport have very different speeds, making cyclists and pedestrians use the same shared path can lead to safety issues for both groups. The best design for everyone is to have both a separated cycleway/lane and a footpath.

## April Walking Festivals

There are a couple of walking festivals in April, both during the school and Easter holidays. These events are a great option if you are looking for ways to enjoy getting outside and active during the holidays.

### Christchurch Walking Festival

The [Christchurch Walking Festival](#) is from 12 to 27 April. There are a range of walks in the city and surrounding areas from an Antarctic

Walk to a Public Art walk to Storywalk. Most walks are free, but some need to be booked in advance. Check out the festival [programme](#) and [map](#) to help find which walks you want to join.



## Methven and Foothills Walking Festival

The [Methven & Foothills Walking Festival](#) is from 18 to 22 April. They have a variety of walking events on the calendar including an Easter egg hunt at Awa Awa Rata Reserve, a walk in the [Methven Scarecrow Trail](#), and a Railway tour. Some walks are free and open to do at any time, while others are paid and require [registration](#) in advance. Check out the full [calendar of events here](#).

### Please keep footpaths clear for pedestrians



---

## ABOUT LIVING STREETS AOTEAROA

Living Streets Aotearoa is the national organization promoting walking-friendly communities. You can find out more about us at [www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz).

We send these occasional e-bulletins to keep you informed because we understand you have an interest in walking. You can opt out of this and ALL future emails from us: [Please don't mail me again](#)

Living Streets  
Aotearoa  
PO Box 603  
Kerikeri,  
NTL 0245  
New Zealand

