



Living Streets Aotearoa

Welcome to the July 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.

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Speed limit reversals update

A lot has happened in the past month related to the Government's speed limit reversals. The [2024 Setting of Speed Limits Rule](#) set the date for speed reversal rollouts on 1 July 2025, so there has been a lot of work leading up to now putting up new signs in places where speed limits have been reversed.

In particular, AT has been very busy putting in new variable speed limit signs outside schools. AT has carried out their plan to raise speeds in one fell swoop on approximately 1500 Auckland roads on 1 July 2025. As previously described, the [description of the speed limits on signs is confusing](#), with some like AA spokesperson Dylan Thomsen [likening the design to an vision test](#). Some signs have also been poorly installed and seated, making them trip hazards for pedestrians. Walk Auckland, Living Streets Aotearoa and other groups have jointly written to Auckland Transport to highlight that this further hazard to pedestrians must be fixed.



Brake NZ has recently [released a statement](#) saying that these changes will put children at higher risk.

Speed limits have also increased in other places. For example, [a stretch of road along a tourist-heavy area in Motutere Bay near Taupō has had the speed limit increased to 100 kph](#). Local government officials and residents in the area are concerned about the safety of beachgoers, as well as the high price tag of \$1.9 million to change the speed limits. Also, in a similarly tourist-heavy area along the Hibiscus Coast Highway near Hatfields Beach, [a stretch of road has had the speed limit increased to 70 kph](#). This area is frequented by tourists, pedestrians, and families. In these and other regions in Aotearoa, local communities are concerned that their voices weren't adequately weighted in decisions to increase the speed limit. In other places, communities are pushing to review increased speed limits to change them back to safer speeds, but are being told [this new process could take a year](#).

Results of Consultation on “Urban Connectors”

In contrast, the outcome of the consultation on “Urban Connectors” has largely been a win for road safety and evidence. [Safer speeds will be retained on a majority \(13 out of 16\) of these stretches of road](#), while three roads will have their speed limits increased. LSA is encouraged to see this win and this result is in large part [due to local communities organising in opposition to the speed reversals](#) and [encouraging people to submit to support safer speeds](#).

One community that we would like to highlight is in Atawhai, near Nelson. The group Parents for Active Transport Atawhai put in a lot of effort and creativity to their campaign to “Keep it 60”, on the stretch of SH1 near Atawhai.

Keeping it 60 in Atawhai

By Femke Meinderts

When our local primary school ‘bike bus’ Whatsapp group lit up with messages on 29 January this year, with another week of summer holidays to go, I had a sinking feeling that something terrible must have happened. ‘Rant time!’ a local mum had written. Messages with phrases like ‘automatic reversal’, ‘80km past the school’, ‘no consultation’ and ‘no way are my kids biking along there if it goes back to 80’ followed, furiously typed by concerned parents.

Our local primary, Clifton Terrace School, sits just off State Highway 6 in Marybank, the last suburb of Nelson before the busy main route continues over the Whangamoa hills to Blenheim and the ferries in Picton. A 1.8 kilometre stretch of SH6 joins the much larger area of Atawhai to Marybank. Most of this can be navigated by pedestrians and cyclists away from the highway, but a short stretch forces commuters onto a narrow, slanting path, right beside the highway on a blind corner, and over a complex, busy T junction at Marybank Road. It was along this short section that the government had decided it would reverse a very popular 20kph speed limit decrease, which had only taken effect in 2020, meaning it would increase from 60 to 80kph.

After this announcement, I called my friend, Emily Osborne, who had been plotting with me over cups of tea as ‘Parents for Active Transport Atawhai’ (PATA) for at least a year to try to get some infrastructure improvements on this stretch of the cycle way, particularly for the 100 or so school children who live within cycling distance of the school but can’t avoid SH6.

One of the parents on Whatsapp had messaged: ‘Might be time for a good old fashioned protest’. When I brought it up to Emily, she said: ‘Too right’, probably while clutching her mug of gumboot. That’s how

'Keep it 60' was born. Rapidly we got local MP Rachel Boyack involved and, with a little not so subtle persuasion, Nelson Mayor Nick Smith was on board. We convinced a local journalist of our plight after we took her to see how dangerous the school run is and [some excellent photos were printed in the Christchurch Press](#). A homespun flyer drop alerted residents and invited everyone to a public meeting at the school which attracted 240 people. From here, [the local democracy reporter got involved and we also got interest from RNZ](#).



Our initial purpose was to create enough noise to ultimately reach the Minister of Transport, Chris Bishop, who had the power to approve a consultation process. By getting our community to persistently contact, with phone calls, emails, letters and face to face, local MPs, Nelson City Council representatives and the NZTA, and asking journalists to question the politicians, we were able to convince the government that ignoring us might not be the best look in a democracy. [This initial effort gave us our consultation](#). Now the real work would begin.

Many residents who live in close proximity to State Highways around New Zealand have been appalled at statistics evidencing support for speed increases on their local roads, which are produced by NZTA consultation processes. It seems that those in support of higher speed limits are highly motivated to respond to these consultations. Some governments are more inclined to give, in my opinion, disproportionate weight to these contests, rather than following the advice of their own technical reports and paying more attention to the broader needs of road users –

especially those of children commuting around their neighbourhoods. That said, we knew that by raising enough awareness, we had a chance to show that this consultation would reflect widespread support for what the school community in particular deeply felt was the most appropriate speed limit on this humble stretch of SH6.

We just had to convince our neighbours and friends that it was worth their time to participate in the process. Our strategy involved [a Facebook group](#), supported with excellent media created by parents and a hashtag which was used in comments on wider posts related to cycling safety, signage around the neighbourhood, a second local flyer drop and posters put up in prominent places around wider Nelson with a QR code linking directly to the consultation, [a staged 'crash' scene which attracted more media attention](#), and an 'infographic' with numbers and facts to support our case which was sent to members of the NZTA board and distributed on social media. We also wrote a letter from PATA to NZTA CEO Brett Gliddon outlining our concerns about the consultation process and advising that we would be analysing results through the official information act if necessary.



Ultimately [the consultation result showed 76% in favour of keeping the speed limit at 60kph between Atawhai and Marybank](#). With a massive effort, we got a solid majority of the community to stand up for lower speed limits, benefiting locals, and most importantly, keeping our active transport initiatives alive for

the school children.

At PATA, we can now get back to our cups of tea and our original mission, which was to lobby for an improved cycle and walkway between Marybank and Atawhai. We want the pupils who live within easy cycling and walking distance of Clifton Terrace School, to feel justifiably confident about travelling independently and actively around their neighbourhood, as is their right, and the right of every child in Aotearoa.

New Government transport proposals a mixed bag for pedestrians

Minister of Transport Chris Bishop has announced [a raft of proposed transport rule changes](#).

These changes include proposals first canvassed in the 2020 Accessible Streets package, which could have a very significant impact on pedestrian safety and footpath use. In particular, the implications of Workstream 6 within the Minister's proposals are considerable. That workstream covers:

“Improving lane use and use of traffic control devices, and minor system improvements, which will include enabling e-scooters in cycle lanes and children to ride bikes on footpaths, minimum overtaking gaps when passing cyclists, horses etc, and requiring vehicles to give way to buses exiting bus stops.”

We summarised our initial reaction to these proposed changes [in our media release](#), extracted below:

The good news is that the proposed rules will allow e-scooters to be legally ridden in cycle lanes. That's a change that Living Streets Aotearoa, the e-scooter industry, and a number of Councils have long been calling for, and we're pleased to see it included in this package of measures.

E-scooters don't belong on the footpath. They belong with other vehicles of similar mass and speed, like bikes and e-bikes. We'd like to see e-scooters not just permitted, but required, to be ridden in cycle lanes where those exist. And they must meet appropriate safety standards.

Footpaths are for pedestrians of all ages and abilities, but every year, we experience more and more hazards on them, both moving and stationary. That's why we oppose the proposal to allow all children to ride bikes on footpaths. Currently, only small children on children's bikes are allowed to ride on footpaths – the proposed rule could allow teenagers riding full-sized bikes to ride fast on footpaths, posing a new danger to pedestrians.

Living Streets Aotearoa supports safe, separated footpaths for pedestrians and safe, separated cycleways for people using bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters. That approach helps to keep everyone safe as they travel to school, to home and to work.

LSA's Executive Council is now analysing the Minister's announcement in detail, so that we are best placed to be a strong voice for pedestrians' rights and footpath safety as these proposals are debated and consulted on.

Walking Summit registrations scheduled to open on Thursday 24 July

Living Streets Aotearoa's Walking Summit is held every two years – sometimes in person, sometimes online. This year, our one-day virtual Summit on the theme of "Walkable Communities for Wellbeing" will be held on Thursday 6 November.



Early-bird registrations for the Summit are scheduled to open on 24 July. There will be a discount for LSA members, so if you are not already a member, [join now](#) so you can get the discounted registration rate!

Whether you're a planner, engineer, designer, researcher, advocate, or enthusiast, this event promises to inspire and connect. Join us for a day of inspiring keynotes, interactive sessions, and valuable networking opportunities – all from the comfort of your own space.

We'll be contacting you separately to let you know that registration has opened – please keep an eye out for that message!

Footpath parking in the news



You may have seen or heard about footpath parking in the media the past couple of weeks. This media push is part of our footpath parking campaign to increase attention and improve the response to this issue.

[As was reported in The Post](#): "Illegal parking means Lyall Bay resident Thomas Bryan, who is blind, is often forced to walk out onto the road... Bryan said safety considerations around footpaths have been 'thrown out the window' and that the council was not doing enough to address illegal parking around the city."

Treasurer of LSA Dr Chris Teo-Sherell says: "The problem seems to be increasing and councils we've spoken to say they also think it's getting worse. It's maybe getting to the point where it's normalised – people think now if everybody does it, it's ok now."

Chris also wrote [an op-ed in Greater Auckland](#) about footpath parking, starting the piece with this metaphor:

"You're driving along when all of a sudden there's a truck blocking the road. It's not clear what's happening. Nobody's there to explain what's going on or to direct you safely around the truck or asking you to use a detour. You were already pushed for time and now you'll be late. What a

pain!”

Of course, he's not talking about confusing road delays for drivers, instead describing a situation that pedestrians face all too often when vehicles are parked on or over the footpath. If a vehicle is parked on the footpath, pedestrians have to squeeze by on a narrowed path or have to go out into the street to get around the obstacle. This is frustrating for any pedestrian, but it can be especially difficult and dangerous for children, people who are blind or have low vision, people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters, and people pushing prams.

If you see someone parked on the footpath, the best course of action is to call your council and report the vehicle, giving the property name and street name, car colour, and its registration number. You can also take photos and send them to the council using an app like Antenno or SnapSendSolve, but this will likely take longer to get the issue resolved and some councils don't accept user-generated photos as evidence. You can also place one of [LSA's yellow feet](#) on the windshield of a vehicle parked on the footpath to bring the driver's attention to the issue of footpath parking.



Footpath parking was also covered on [The Panel](#) (5:03 to 12:03), in [Ponsoby News page 9](#), in [Hawkes Bay Today](#) (paywall), in [The Northern Advocate](#) (paywall).

LSA's position on berm planting

Living Streets Aotearoa has just released a [Position Statement on berm gardens and other plantings besides footpaths](#). Here is a summary of our position:

Living Streets recognises the benefits that come from having plants in our urban spaces, including near paths where people walk. However, plantings can also have adverse effects on pedestrians. Our position is that plantings beside footpaths in urban settings should be done to minimise the adverse effects while achieving the benefits as much as possible. We support plantings near footpaths being done in ways consistent with [CPTED principles](#).

Christchurch Conversations: Steps to a walkable Ōtautahi

Steps to a walkable Ōtautahi

Tuesday 15 July

6 – 7.30pm

In person: Tūranga,
Level 1: TSB Space

Virtual option available

Free event, registration required

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A reminder that LSA Executive Council member Carina Duke will be speaking next Tuesday 15 July at a [Christchurch Conversation](#) event where the topic is “Steps to a walkable Ōtautahi”. This Christchurch Conversation is presented by [Te Pūtahi Centre for Architecture and City-Making](#) and considers

how a truly walkable city could make for a vibrant, sustainable and liveable Christchurch.

Te Pūtahi says: "The simple act of walking has powerful benefits. This low-carbon, low-tech, low-pollution activity promotes health, wellbeing and sustainability – and it's free! It is also a great connector – as a form of transport and as a catalyst for social interaction.

How well does Ōtautahi cater to and encourage walking? What needs to change? If more people walked, what savings could be made in our health and transport budgets? What carbon emissions could we avoid?"

The event is from 6:00-7:30 pm on Tuesday 15 July, and is held in the TSB Space, Level 1, Tūranga. [Register to attend here](#). And if you can't join in person, you can [watch the livestream on YouTube](#).

What can cities do to increase walking?

On the topic of making cities more walkable, a [recent analysis](#) from researchers at the University of California provides insight into how cities can increase active travel through infrastructure changes. Active travel is a term that can be used to describe any kind of human-powered transport, but in this study it just encompasses cycling and walking. Since Living Streets Aotearoa is New Zealand's national pedestrian organisation, we will focus on summarising the findings relevant to walking, but as you will see there are some interesting connections between increasing both walking and cycling.

Here are some big takeaways from this study:

- 1) **Walking is a large part of active transport.** Averaging walking data from all of the cities studied reveals the cross-national average that people are walking for ~14.3% and are cycling for ~2.1% of their trips in cities.
- 2) **There are three key factors that increase walking uptake in cities: urban density, high petrol prices, and more bicycle lanes.** Now this last point might seem confusing because cycling infrastructure doesn't directly impact pedestrians, but the study authors suggest that bicycle lanes may be a proxy for pedestrian-friendly design because streets with bike lanes are also more likely to be wider and have pedestrian infrastructure like footpaths and raised crossings.
- 3) **Physical geography and climate factors do not impact walking uptake.** Interestingly, the researchers did not find that steep terrain or increased precipitation influenced walking. This is an encouraging result, because it means that factors that matter the most to promote walking are within our control to change.
- 4) **Local governments can act to make cities more walkable.** For example, governments can act to make cities denser by increasing building height limits and removing parking requirements.

In conclusion, it would be great to see local governments in Aotearoa New Zealand take this study to heart and act to improve active travel and walking specifically.

This is a summary of a [longer blog article on our website](#).

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.

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](#)

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