

HIKOI KI A MĀTAURANGA - WALKING TO SCHOOL

VISION: TO ENSURE MOST CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS USUALLY WALK TO SCHOOL.

To: Minister Julie Anne Genter, Associate Minister for Transport

*Cc: Ministers and Associate Ministers for ACC, Children, Education, Health, Sport & Recreation, Transport
Prime Minister Ardern and Deputy Prime Minister Peters, Minister Shaw*

Dear Minister Genter

Walking to School is an issue that crosses many portfolios and has huge implications for Child Wellbeing. While we expect you will be the lead Minister on this matter, please consider a cross-Government working party with your colleagues across Ministries and Agencies and external operators to solve the challenges ahead.

Living Streets Aotearoa Inc, the prime non-governmental organisation for everyday walking in New Zealand, held a two-day Walking Summit at the end of June 2019. Attendees included academics, advocates, local and central Government politicians, disability, health and transport professionals. It was hosted by Auckland Transport. We worked with various professionals to come up with twenty-four recommendations to Government to reverse the serious decline in children and adolescents walking to school and reported these at the summit. There are pockets of excellence across the country for regional or city councils supporting Walking to School but a strategic country-wide approach is necessary.

Our most important recommendation is:

Central Government, through its relevant ministries and agencies, actively and consistently supports students walking to school and legislates for targets to be set and monitored at regional, city and district levels.

It's my pleasure to attach more information on the issue, our recommendations, and some suggestions for members of a national Walking to School / Hikoi ki a Mātauranga steering group.

We acknowledge your office wrote to us in March 2019 responding to our request to meet about Walking to School initiative. We have followed up with both the Dunedin Cluster and NZTA staff and lead personnel kindly made themselves available at our recent Walking Summit. The examples in your letter are useful but we think action needs to be more consistent and target-setting far stronger. There is a specific fund for BikeReady which caters for supporting cycling for children and adolescents and we wish to see a dedicated plan and fund to increase walking to school numbers. The position within NZTA regarding Feet First is one of several responsibilities of a single staff member. While a very competent person holds the post currently, this is inadequate to achieve a significant increase in walking. We consistently find that grouping activity and funding for cycling and walking together under "Active Travel" means walking is often ignored.

I look forward to your feedback on the recommendations for Walking to School / Hikoi ki a Mātauranga.

Ngā mihinui mahana | Warm greetings

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National Secretary, Living Streets Aotearoa

Helping more people to walk more often!

Living Streets Aotearoa

