



Living Streets Aotearoa

Welcome to the March 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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Positive signs ahead of LSA's April meeting with Minister of Transport Chris Bishop

In the February eBulletin, we welcomed the appointment of Hon Chris Bishop as the new Minister of Transport, and said that we thought this was likely to lead to a less rigidly ideological approach to transport policy. Since we said that, there have been further positive signs that the Minister is willing to change his mind in response to public concern and new information, as in these media reports:

Radio NZ, 8 February: [The new Minister of Transport has opened the door for public consultation on at least some of the speed limit changes the government said would be automatic.](#)

Beehive website, 21 February: [Closure of the Ava Bridge Walkway postponed](#)

Chris Bishop has agreed to meet with a delegation from Living Streets Aotearoa in early April. We'll be taking the opportunity to talk with him about the issues that matter most to our members and supporters, including footpath parking, e-scooter regulation, and the vital importance of vehicle speed reductions and better pedestrian infrastructure to improve pedestrian safety and help to realise the Minister's urbanist vision.

You have until Thursday 13 March to submit for safer speeds – please do!

As mentioned above, the new Minister of Transport is taking notice of community anger about the planned speed limit increases – anger which is now [showing up in Auckland](#) and is becoming the subject of [satire](#).

But you can act right now to make the case for safer speed limits. You can say you don't want the speed limit raised on specified stretches of state highway in these regions:

- [Te Tai Tokerau – Northland](#)
- [Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland](#)
- [Waikato](#)
- [Te Moana a Toi-te-Huatahi – Bay of Plenty](#)
- [Tāirāwhiti - Gisborne](#)
- [Te Matau-a-Māui – Hawke's Bay](#)
- [Taranaki](#)
- [Manawatū – Whanganui](#)
- [Top of the South Island](#)
- [Waitaha - Canterbury](#)
- [Southland](#)

The feedback form for each road can be found by following the link for that region.

For each stretch of road, you'll be asked the following questions:

- How often do you use the road
- What your relationship is with the road (e.g. do you live locally)
- What your view is on retaining the current speed limit, versus increasing it
- The reasons for your view

Many of these roads are in rural or semi-rural areas, so your reasons for supporting the reduced speed will need to be appropriate to the specific road. As a prompt for some possible reasons, here are reasons one of our members used for opposing speed limit increases on several roads in the lower North Island:

- very busy road

- no separation of traffic travelling in opposite directions
- limited or no roadside barriers
- narrow road for the speed
- feels safer at 80 than 100
- use as recreational or sports cyclist route
- narrow bridge
- busy intersection with poor safety history
- increasing residential development
- recent fatalities
- prone to sunstrike
- roadside presence of children
- stunning view or other distractor

Safer speeds save lives. Please take this opportunity to tell NZTA why you want safer speeds on roads near you.

You can do more than submit

If you're looking for other actions to take, you can:

1. Write to your local paper in support of these speed reductions, explaining why safe speeds matter
2. Contact your local MP and make sure they know this matters to you and your family
3. Urge your local Council to stand up for speed reductions in your area.
4. Organise with others in your local area who support speed reductions.

We are already seeing the power of this last action in Nelson. [A recent community gathering](#) organised by [Parents for Active Transport Atawhai](#) focused on the proposed increase in the speed limit from 60 to 80 kph on the stretch of SH6 that runs through Atawhai. There are many

students that walk or bike along this road to get to Clifton Terrace School. In the meeting, Parents for Active Transport Atawhai presented their three resolutions to: (1) ask the Transport Minister to officially halt the automatic speed increase and formally consult the Atawhai community, (2) ask NZTA to reconsider the road classification of State Highway 6 at Marybank (from urban connector to peri-urban), and (3) appeal to the Local Roding Authority (Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee).

Additionally, the group has made signs and t-shirts to protest the speed changes, and placed them facing the road and had kids and parents hold or wear them while biking or walking to school. Parents for Active Transport Atawhai also hopes to encourage other parents to advocate for safe, active, independent transport for their kids, especially getting to school.

The Atawhai section of road is included in the [Top of the South Island](#) consultation, and hopefully continued action will help to progress these resolutions.

Right: Signs from Parents for Active Transport Atawhai



Legal action by Movement against the Setting of Speed Limits 2024 rule

Movement supports safe and sustainable transport. This includes the safe speed limits which are now being reversed by the current Government's "Setting of Speed Limits 2024" rule.

If you'd like to support legal action by [Movement.org.nz](https://movement.org.nz) to stop the Government's new speed rule from reversing recently-implemented safer speed limits, you can do so here:

<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/movement>

Movement has lodged a judicial review in the High Court on 16 January 2025 to stop the Government's new Speed rule from reversing the safer speed limits implemented since 2020.

[As Living Streets Aotearoa has consistently stated](#), if we don't act to stop the Government's reversal of safer speed limits implemented over the last five years on state highways, rural

roads, and urban streets (including near schools), then more New Zealanders will die on our roads.

How does the road lobby try to influence transport policy?: An interview with Dr Alice Miller

Dr Alice Miller is a medical doctor and PhD student in public health at the University of Otago. She and her colleagues recently published the paper: [The road lobby and unhealthy transport policy discourse in Aotearoa New Zealand: A framing analysis](#). LSA interviewed Alice to learn more about this research and how advocacy organisations can respond to the road lobby.



Dr Alice Miller, PhD student at University of Otago

The following is an excerpt from the [long-form interview with Alice on our website](#).

What is the “road lobby”?

So we looked at a cross section of trade associations from across the road transport sector, and we included organisations that represent the car industry, businesses related to the automotive industry, the road freight sector, those sorts of organisations. And out of those ones that we looked at, we identified a number that were lobbying for road transport and largely finding all sorts of reasons that New Zealand couldn't or shouldn't do active transport or public transport improvements. So yeah, there were large, well resourced commercial organisations that were undertaking a range of political activities to try and influence transport policies in the interests of their industry members.

What were the main results of this research?

So one of the main things I've mentioned already is that we did identify a number of large, well resourced organisations who are actively out there trying to influence government policy on transport, and they had incomes ranging from sort of hundreds of thousands of dollars to hundreds of millions.

And what we found is that those road lobby organisations argued for policies that promote driving and taking freight on trucks, and at the same time, they either opposed or gave lots of

reasons why we shouldn't or couldn't implement policies that would improve active transport and public transport. So, for example, things like reallocating road space from vehicle lanes to provide safe areas for people to walk and cycle, reallocating some of that transport revenue from roads into different modes of transport, and also things like reducing vehicle emissions that would make the air cleaner for us to breathe. Those sorts of pro-public health transport policies were sometimes outright opposed, but often there was kind of a lot of doubt raised about the effectiveness of the policy, or there was a desire to delay it, and all sorts of arguments given as to why it wouldn't be possible or it wouldn't be a good idea to do that.

One main priority of Living Streets Aotearoa is improving pedestrian safety. So what were their arguments around road safety in particular?

Yeah that was another interesting thing that we found was that the organisations often use the concept of road safety to back up their arguments for more spending on roads and motorways. And, of course, it is important for us to maintain our existing roads well, and that is one element of road safety. But there are many, many other ways that we can improve road safety. Of course, we can reduce the number of vehicles on the road by encouraging people out of their cars and into other forms of transport that then make our streets safer.

But also we felt that they were really distracting from the harms caused by vehicles themselves, by the products and services of those industries. And also the way that road safety was discussed was in a really narrow sense. It sort of referred to injuries and and deaths from crashes, but it ignored other really major health harms from the transport system, like physical inactivity, like air pollution, like climate change, and sort of just diverted thinking towards the idea that we need to upgrade the roads to make them safer, and those other things were really not discussed.

And it's a tricky kind of argument, because it's easy to fall into that trap. But, of course, it is much safer on the roads if you make your cities with multi-modal transport options, with safe places for walking, with safe places for people to cycle or use buses and trains, because then we actually reduce the speeds, reduce the number of cars on the road.

Are there areas where pedestrian advocates can either learn from the road lobby's tactics?

I think it is generally good to keep framing positive, but at the same time, I don't think it's wrong to highlight power imbalances. And anticipating the arguments that will come can be really useful, because in your messaging, you can sort of pre-bunk them, like you can prepare your response with some of your evidence or your research base, or your experience, or what have you. If you know some of these arguments that are likely to come, then you can come back with counters before they've even started.

[Read the full interview with Alice on our website](#)

Parent-centred Urbanism Survey

A research project at Victoria University is studying parent-centred urbanism in Aotearoa to advocate for urban spaces that support the health and wellbeing of parents.

The researchers are looking for people who have children 3 and under to fill out a survey and contribute to their exciting research on parenthood, walking and health:

bit.ly/parent-centred-urbanism

If you fill out the 15 minute survey, you will be entered into a draw to win a \$30 supermarket voucher.

Survey → New Parenthood, Walking & Health

We want to hear your story!

Do you have children under 3 years?

Tell us about your walks with your child/ren and how they affect your health and wellbeing

bit.ly/parent-centred-urbanism

Be in to win a \$30 supermarket voucher
Participate in the 15-min anonymous survey!

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

This research was approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee (#30744)

March Walking Festivals

March seems to be a popular time for walking festivals, and there are three happening across Aotearoa that we want to highlight.

The first is the [Manuwatū Walking Festival](#) which is this weekend, 7-9 March. The walks are guided by a variety of experts including tramping guides, historians, photographers, and conservationists. You need to [book tickets to walks in advance](#).

Then, the [Rotorua Walking Festival](#) is happening the following weekend, 15-16 March. There are [several walks to choose from](#) including a dog walk, family walk, Whakarewarewa Forest walk, and town walk. If you want to join any of the walks, you do need to [register in advance](#).

The final walking festival this month is [Waiheke Walking Festival](#), happening from 21 March- 6 April. Check out the [walking festival programme](#) for details about when and where the walks are happening. The festival aims to provide opportunities for both locals and visitors to enjoy areas of private land that are not normally open to the public. [You need to book walks in advance](#).



Let us know about walking events happening in your area by emailing comms@livingstreet.org.nz.

Are you looking for a tune to inspire your walking? Listen to [A Little Bit Like Magic](#) by King Harvest.

Please keep footpaths clear for those who need them.



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.

