



Living Streets Aotearoa

## ***Welcome to the May 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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### **Walking Summit 2025: Date and Title Announcement**

In our April eBulletin, we announced that the 2025 Living Streets Aotearoa Walking Summit would be held in November 2025 as a one-day virtual event. Now we can reveal the title and the date:

**Title:** Living Streets Aotearoa Walking Summit 2025: Walkable Communities for Wellbeing

**Date:** Thursday 6 November

Please save the date in your calendar now – it's the walking event of the year, and you will be able to join from wherever you live in Aotearoa.

Soon, we'll start to publicise the Summit more widely and let you know about keynote speakers, the shape of the programme, and how to register. We'll be offering a discount on registration for Living Streets Aotearoa members, so if you have been thinking about [joining us](#), now's a good time!

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

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

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

## Speed Limits: Another Submission Opportunity plus Recent Developments

**We need everyone to submit individually for safer speeds on “urban connectors”**

Recently, NZTA consulted the public on proposals to raise speed limits on various stretches of state highways around the country. On 16 of those stretches which are classified as “urban connectors”, [they are continuing the consultation until 14th of May](#) on whether they should keep the speed limit lower (the level it is now). The sections of road concerned are in:

- [Te Tai Tokerau- Northland](#) (4)
- [Waikato](#) (3)
- [Te Moana a Toi-te-Huatahi – Bay of Plenty](#) (3)
- [Tairāwhiti - Gisborne](#) (2)
- [Manawatū-Whanganui](#) (1)
- [Top of the South Island](#) (2)
- [Waitaha- Canterbury](#) (1)

The page for each region leads to a survey in which you can comment on as many sections of road in that area as you wish. And if you would like to submit on roads in different regions, you need to make a separate submission for each additional region.



**It is critical that you make an individual submission, and encourage others to do the same, because NZTA is counting group submissions as though they come from just one person.**

It's really important to add your voice to those of us supporting safer roads so please fill out the survey mentioned above and get as many other people to do so as well. We know that numbers count in this. Living Streets Aotearoa has created [a guide to make the submission process easier](#).

### Recent Speed Limit Developments

At the end of April, NZTA [released the outcome of the first consultation on State Highway speed limit reversals](#). Of the 49 sections that were up for consultation, 6 will remain at the current lower speed limits and the other 43 will be reversed.

Living Streets Aotearoa is glad that the Government allowed communities to have some voice in the setting of speed limits, but is disappointed that NZTA is not taking into account the evidence that increasing speed limits will lead to more deaths and serious injuries on our roads. The decision of whether or not to reverse safer speeds were made on the basis of public support, while [safety and evidence were not considered](#). The Government instead continues to claim, without evidence, that higher speed limits will improve productivity and save money.



Additionally, when it came to quantifying the support for speed reversals in the consultation, each submission was counted more like a



vote along a spectrum between "for" and "against", so the specifics and substance of submissions was largely overlooked. Consultations didn't give greater weight to submissions from the local community. For example in the [consultation on the stretch of SH between Nelson and Blenheim](#), two-thirds of the local community supported retaining the lower speed, but a slim majority overall (56%) supported speed limit reversal. And submissions made on behalf of a large number of people, like the one made by [Gisborne Cycling Club](#), were only counted as one submission. Many communities are concerned about impending speed limit reversals, especially in [areas where roads are dangerous](#).

While the majority of roads in the first batch of consultations will have their speed limits increased, there were some wins for keeping safer speeds. In particular, [three roads in Rotorua](#) will stay at their current, lower speed limits after members of the local community organised a petition against higher speeds and encouraged people to submit to support safer speeds.

### Auckland Transport Speed Rule approach

Auckland Transport has so far maintained their proposed approach to implement the Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2024 by raising speeds in one fell swoop on approximately 1500 Auckland roads on 1 July 2025.

Simon Wilson [wrote an excellent piece](#) about why this approach will make streets more dangerous, especially for school children. Many school leaders, parents, local government officials, road safety experts, and other community members are concerned with these blanket speed limit increases, especially given that AT previously did extensive community consultations in 2020 to lower the speed on over a thousand streets, many of them near schools.

On 1 July, the speed limit on streets nearby and at schools will go up to 50 km/h, except for certain times in the day, where roads right outside a school will have a 30 km/h limit. This confusing setup is likely to lead to poor driving and dangerous situations:

"Marie Guerreiro from the lobby group All Aboard says this means 'drivers coming from neighbouring 30km/h zones will be encouraged to speed up to 50km/h as they approach the school. They will then encounter a very short stretch of 30km/h at the school gate, but only for brief periods on weekdays.'

Simon also lays out a number of myths about speed and safety, like the belief that people don't want slower speeds. Evidence from AT's consultation shows that when it comes to speed limits: "86% public support for safe speeds around schools". The Government needs to listen to and act in the interests of the community, and the community wants lower speeds near schools.

An [open letter by transportation engineer Bridget Doran](#) focuses on the concerns that the Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2024 "explicitly prohibits" taking into account safety when making the decision to increase speed limits. The letter is a call out to other transport engineers and members of Engineering New Zealand to ask what their responsibility is to protest this disregard of health and safety in the Speed Rule.

Living Streets Aotearoa has been working with a coalition of Auckland-based and national groups ([Bike Auckland](#), Walk Auckland, [All Aboard Aotearoa](#), and [Brake NZ](#)) to encourage Auckland Transport to follow the lead of other Road Controlling Authorities, [notably Hamilton City](#)



[Council](#), and take an approach that protects safe speeds on the maximum possible number of streets – an approach which the Minister himself has supported in the House (see following item). This approach is legally possible, technically possible, politically advantageous, and would be of enormous service to Aucklanders, in particular parents and children.



You can [view the coalition's presentation to Auckland Transport on 29 April 2025](#). LSA has also written to Auckland Transport directly, and been in touch with other Councils. Many of them, working within the Rule, are successfully prioritising the protection of safe speeds – to take one example, [Dunedin City Council](#).

## Meeting with Minister of Transport Chris Bishop

On the 10th of April, LSA Executive Council members Bill Frith, Tim Jones, Chris Teo-Sherrell and Jenni Wiggle met with the Minister of Transport, the Hon Chris Bishop, and officials. The Minister told us early in our meeting: “You can consider the case for walkability made”, and encouraged by that, we moved on to a wide-ranging discussion.

We stressed to the Minister the vital importance and sound evidence base for retaining safe speeds, and the importance of giving local communities a say in what is needed to keep children, elderly people, and all pedestrians safe. The Minister made some pragmatic suggestions about how this could best be achieved within the framework of the Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2024. Though we think that Rule should be amended, we’ve since followed up with a number of Road Controlling Authorities about the Minister’s preferred approach, which aligns with that taken by Hamilton City Council – as he [outlined in the House that same day](#) (see Question 5 from Hon Julie Anne Genter and the supplementary questions).

We were glad to hear from the Minister that the Accessible Streets package will not be proceeding, despite it containing some good proposals. Our concerns with the 2020 Accessible Streets package were that it included a number of measures that Living Streets Aotearoa considers would severely reduce pedestrian safety and the attractiveness of walking, including a proposal that would turn all footpaths into shared paths. Instead, a Rules Package will be developed in its place, and Living Streets Aotearoa is eager to have input into the development of this package. We stressed to the Minister the importance of safe, separated pedestrian infrastructure and safe, separated cycling infrastructure.

We also encouraged the Minister to support our footpath parking campaign – see elsewhere in this eBulletin for more about that! And we talked about e-scooter regulation, including the increasing danger to pedestrians posed by newer and heavier vehicles that stretch the concept of micromobility to a breaking point, and the straightforward, sensible step of making it legal for hire e-scooters to be used in cycle lanes.

We believe the Minister understands that making it safe and attractive for people to walk in their communities is essential to his approach to urbanism, and to the economic benefits that urbanism brings. That’s a good basis to look for pragmatic solutions to the key barriers to walking, including the high risk to pedestrians from unsafe vehicle speeds.

## Road Safety Week

[Road Safety Week 2025](#) is from 12-18 May. The week is run by road safety charity [Brake Aotearoa](#)





[New Zealand](#) and sponsored by [NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi](#) and [Beca](#). This year's theme is "[Be a road safety hero](#)", by looking out for pedestrians and cyclists on the road.



A few key ways you can take part in road safety week are to: (1) recognise and share stories of road safety heroes, (2) wear yellow or use the colour to highlight road safety week, and (3) use activities like quizzes or games to teach children and the wider community about road safety. Check out their [road safety week action pack](#) for more ideas of how to observe road safety week at your organisation.

The week also coincides with the [UN Global Road Safety Week](#), where the focus is on cyclists and pedestrians. The campaign encourages everyone to think about changes that can be made by governments, international agencies, civil society, businesses and schools to promote these active modes of transport and make them more safe.

## Footpath Parking Campaign



Parking on and over the footpath is inconsiderate and illegal ([Land Transport \(Road User\) Rule 2004 6.14](#)). This year Living Streets is upping its efforts to decrease the incidence of motor vehicles being parked on footpaths—something that happens far too frequently. Our campaign to address footpath parking has three main strands.

First, we are planning to raise public awareness that it is illegal and inconsiderate to park over footpaths, even 'just a little bit' and even for 'just a minute'. Many footpaths are already narrow and people in wheelchairs, using mobility scooters or pushing prams can be forced onto the road or soggy grass to get by. Sometimes it makes it too dangerous or impossible. Children who are forced to go onto the road don't always think to look for traffic so it can be especially dangerous for them. And footpath parking makes it very hard for

members of our community who are blind or have low vision who often rely on certain routes with which they are familiar being obstacle-free. People with cognitive processing difficulties, such as people who have had strokes or suffer from degenerative brain conditions may also struggle to cope.

You can help with this aspect by writing letters to the editor of your local paper or sending LSA a description of your footpath parking experience at [comms@livingstreets.org.nz](mailto:comms@livingstreets.org.nz), so we can feature it on our social media channels. Emphasising the effects that parking on footpaths has on other people is a good angle along with calling for people to be more considerate and for councils to more effectively enforce the law.

And you can also help by reporting motor vehicles parked over footpaths to your local council every time you see it. If they don't know about it occurring, they can't enforce the law. Some councils have apps such as [SnapSendSolve](#), [Antenno](#), and [FixIt](#), that make reporting easy. Even if it doesn't result in a response, it will have raised awareness or reminded people of what the law is.

Second, we are trying to get Councils, the Police and others to remind people of the law concerning parking on footpaths and the reason for it. Most don't put any effort into education about footpath parking except by way of enforcement. A few issue warnings that



sometimes have the desired effect, but people's memories seem short and on-going educational efforts are needed. Porirua City Council sets a good example and has taken a proactive approach for several years. Besides active media work, they also use a team of wardens to visit every street and warn people who park over and on footpaths and fine reoffenders. It has had a positive effect and footpath parking is much less common than it was.



The third strand of the campaign is to try to get Councils to issue fines for parking over footpaths on the basis of photographs sent to them by members of the public. A small number already do so (e.g. Hastings District Council) but most require a parking warden to go to the location of the illegal parking to see it in person. Now that most people carry cell phones capable of taking and transmitting photos with GPS location embedded, there is no need for wardens to have to be there in person. The Land Transport Act 1998 (when cellphones were still like small bricks) simply says that:

139 (1) If an enforcement officer has reasonable cause to believe an infringement offence is being or has been committed by a person, an infringement notice in respect of that offence may be issued to that person by an enforcement officer.

We believe having photos showing the offence and registration plate of the vehicle and meeting certain other criteria is sufficient for parking wardens to have 'reasonable cause to believe'.

Most Councils have too few parking wardens to effectively enforce the law across their whole city. Most only enforce the law during office hours around the CBD, other shopping areas and a few hotspots like near hospitals. Some also have a roving warden to respond to complaints outside those areas. This is inadequate to create an effective deterrent as people know that the chance of getting caught for footpath parking in most regions is low.

Using photos sent in by members of the public would also help solve the resourcing problem. We are hoping more councils will throw off the shackles of tradition and adopt this modern method of managing their infrastructure to make the lives of pedestrians that much better.

## Walking and Health Roundup

Walking is a fun way to improve physical and mental health, and there are scientific studies regularly being published to back this up. In terms of physical health, [one study](#) found that people who were experiencing back pain who walked at least three times a week [had a lower risk of the pain recurring](#). [Another study](#) looked at the benefits of [Nordic walking](#), a style of walking where you use poles to engage the upper body. The study found that for people with coronary artery disease, after doing Nordic walking for 12 weeks [increased their heart function](#) the most compared to others who did different forms of exercise. And while there are many recommendations about the distance you need to walk to see health impacts, [a recent analysis of multiple studies](#) found that walking about 4,000 steps a day [decreased risk of death from any cause](#).

The health benefits of walking can be [particularly important for older adults](#) because walking is a low impact exercise and accessible form of transport that can help manage chronic conditions like diabetes, improve joint and muscle health, and increase mental wellbeing. Plus, walking with others is especially [beneficial for mental health](#). And if you're looking for any more inspiration to start a walking habit, read this piece about [Maureen Baines from Sandspit who walked 1200 km in a year](#) or this one about [Tyler Cashmore, an above-knee amputee, who plans to walk 42 km in a day!](#)

## Please keep footpaths clear for pedestrians



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## 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](#)

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