



Living Streets Aotearoa

Welcome to the November 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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Living Streets Aotearoa Walking Summit 2025 Recap

The 2025 Living Streets Aotearoa Walking Summit was a huge success! Thank you so much to our speakers, chairs, and audience at the 2025 Walking Summit! We had a fantastic day exploring the many benefits of walking and the challenges and opportunities of creating more walkable communities.

Our speakers gave us perspectives which married the big picture about how action to improve people's wellbeing and reduce emissions happens, and the forces that seek to prevent this happening, with the specifics of how particular decisions in local areas are made and the huge impact that can have on people's lives. They stood up for the rights of pedestrians, the importance of walking, and the vital part that walking plays in personal and community wellbeing.

Here are three big takeaways from the day:



1) Walking matters. Walking has so many benefits from improving physical and mental health to helping us get around in an accessible and sustainable way to connecting us with nature and our communities.

2) Walking is not prioritised or supported as much as it should be. Many speakers talked about the lack of infrastructure, planning, or policy for walking and pedestrians. In many cases, there isn't adequate support for or investment in walking to make it a viable choice.

3) We can and are making walkable communities. Speakers shared so many inspirational examples of planning decisions, walkable spaces, and successful advocacy campaigns that put walking first. While there is still a lot that needs to be modified or created to support walkable communities, many of the participants in the Summit are working for that change to happen.

The Summit helped remind us that we are not working in isolation, but within a community of researchers, professionals, advocates, and individuals collaborating to put walking first.

New Living Streets Aotearoa Website

Living Streets Aotearoa is developing a new website that will go live in a few week's time! While much of the content remains the same, it will be organised in a different way that will make navigation easier. While we will have some redirects from the previous website, if you have bookmarked pages from our current site, you may need to update them after the release.

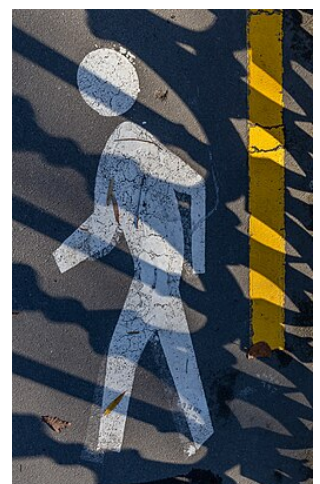
Additionally, the new website brings a modern layout and refreshed design to Living Streets Aotearoa. We are excited for these changes to help bring the site up to date. We will be back in touch closer to the launch with more.

Why walking matters

by Jenni Wiggle BEM, Vice-President of Living Streets Aotearoa

Like others in the walking world, I often find myself in conversation with people who have recently come to realise the role of walking in our everyday lives. For many, the importance of walking, and having enjoyable and accessible places to walk, only becomes obvious when their circumstances or access needs change.

Most recently I was talking with a new mother who was now navigating footpaths accompanied by a pram, whether heading to the shops or just getting out for some fresh air. We chatted about her experience crossing the road, how she was really noticing dropped curbs for the first time and her difficulties with uneven surfaces or narrow footpaths. For the most part the role walking plays in our lives seems to be invisible. Yet walking is our oldest form of transport. It is unique and important, but the positive role it can play in our day-to-day transport is too often overlooked.



Walking offers us so much. It reduces congestion and is pollution and emissions free. Walking is the door-to-door connector for all our journeys. It plays a key role in connecting to public transport, making it unsurprising to see [walking placed as the highest priority by NZTA](#) when providing for typical access to public transport. It is a significant transport mode for children and young people [accounting for 25% of their travel trips nationally](#), and a quick and healthy way for us to move around our local urban areas. And

there is increasing [global evidence of how walking contributes to the retail economy](#).

Alongside the economic benefits from reducing congestion and increasing retail footfall, there are also economic gains from the significant health benefits associated with this active form of transport. Walking is widely recognised as reducing the likelihood and impact of many health conditions such as poor mental health, heart disease and diabetes. Particularly for older people, walking is a form of exercise accessible to everyone and helps reduce frailty and improves strength and wellbeing. All of which helps avoid the need for admission to hospital.

In a world that is full of fitness memberships and miracle cures, our earliest form of transport offers almost all of us a cheap, easy option for [keeping ourselves physically and mentally healthy](#). We can all experience stress or anxiety and our digital world makes it harder to give our brains some space. The link between exercise and mental health is well documented, but we don't need to sign up to a [complex exercise regime to reap the benefits](#). All we need is find ways to build more walking into our day-to-day routines.

Just like in my recent chat with a new mother, or another I had with a colleague recovering from an operation, or seeing local teenagers heading to their bus stop, we all have different reasons for why we need to walk. Several times a week I walk 15 minutes to catch my local train to work. I am not a morning person, but I always feel mentally revived when I get to the station, my plans for the day already taking shape. Most people are unlikely to consciously view their day-to-day walking journeys as part of a transportation system, and for me personally that isn't what matters. Walking is an integral part of our transport journeys and as such it continues to provide us with its benefits.

Safer Walking Initiative



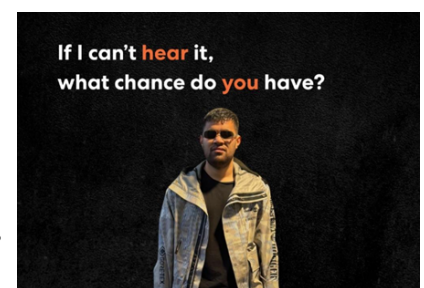
[Safer Walking](#) is a collaborative sector initiative led by Rapa Taiwhenua Land Search and Rescue New Zealand that unites disability, older persons, health and emergency services organisations to connect people and communities with [strategic tools and resources](#) to promote the independence and safety of people with cognitive impairments who are at increased risk of wandering and going missing.

Wandering happens when people with cognitive impairments leave a safe place, often trying to go somewhere familiar, but then can't find their way back and get lost. The Safer Walking initiative is designed to reduce the risk of individuals with cognitive impairments from wandering through the provision of proactive tools and resources and connecting with whānau, carers and communities and services to improve safety before it becomes an emergency.

The resources on the [Safer Walking website](#) support family, whānau and at-risk individuals to remain socially active in their community safely. Caregivers can fill out the [Safer Walking profile form](#), which gives emergency services immediate access to personal history and potential locations for emergency responders, leading to quicker resolutions and a safer return for those who have wandered.

Sound emitters in EVs

A reminder to sign [this petition](#) to make sound emitters in EVs mandatory. The petition was created by Josaiah Fue, a blind New Zealander who had a close call when an electric vehicle driver clipped him while he was crossing an intersection. Living Streets Aotearoa backs Josaiah's call and we encourage our followers to sign the petition.



The good news is that there has already been movement on this campaign. NZTA has recently released [a consultation on additional safety features for imported vehicles](#), one of which is "Acoustic Vehicle Alerting Systems" in hybrids and EVs. [This article](#) gives more details about why NZTA is considering this change and what the rollout would look like. You can [submit on this consultation](#) before 17 December.



The use of electric vehicles for journeys where cars are needed is an important part of decarbonising our transport system – but the risks to pedestrians must be reduced as part of this transport transition.

Footpath rules consultation

We are anticipating that a consultation on new footpath rules consultation will come out sometime early in 2026. Living Streets Aotearoa will get ready to respond with a submission and encourage others to submit as well. Based on the Government's initial announcement, we've already commented that the new rules look like [a mixed bag for pedestrians](#). If you support footpaths being kept as the place for people on foot and using low-speed mobility devices, this will be a consultation you need to get involved in.

In this context, it's interesting to see the [new draft e-scooter rules in NSW Australia](#). The draft rule for e-scooter use on footpaths is that it is prohibited unless accompanying a child (under 16) on bicycle, foot, or scooter or with medical exemption. This is consistent with several international jurisdictions including the United Kingdom, Sweden, Ireland and Germany.

Speed limit consultations

The following are consultations to reduce speed limits on roads around Aotearoa, open for submissions:

- Lowering the speed limit to 60 km/h in Motutere, Lake Taupō on an [0.85km section of SH1 near the Motutere holiday park](#). Consultation closes on 17 November.
- Installing a [variable speed zone at a crash-prone intersection in Brightwater](#). Consultation closes on 24 November.
- Changing the speed from 70 km/h back to 50 km/h on the [Hibiscus Coast Highway through Hatfields Beach](#). Consultation closes on 28 November.
- Decreasing the speed limits on a [couple of stretches of SH26A Morrinsville Road](#). Consultation closes on 28 November.
- Reducing the permanent speed limit [on Aotea Quay in Wellington from 70km/h to 50km/h](#). Consultation closes on 9 December.

If you're looking for a guide to help with submitting, [check out this one](#) we created for previous speed limit consultations.



Upcoming events

The [Wairarapa Walking Festival](#) is happening 14-23 November, which means it starts this Friday! There are 25 guided walks available from farm tracks to wetlands to a StoryWalk. The walks have a range of difficulties from an overnight tramp to short, wheelchair and pram-accessible wanders. There are also a couple of walks for kids and a [blind accessible walk](#). Be sure to [register for the walks](#) and get tickets for the events you want to attend as some are already

sold out!

On Thursday 20 November, Dr Bridget Doran is facilitating the event: “[Walk with me: Accessibility training for transport and construction professionals](#)”. The training will be led by disabled advocates for transport and more accessible streets. Participants and disability experts will meet at 9 am to talk and walk around Auckland, and the course will empower participants to work more effectively with disabled people in transport or construction roles.

BRIDGET DORAN CONSULTING PRESENTS...

WALK WITH ME AUCKLAND

ACCESSIBILITY TRAINING FOR TRANSPORT AND CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS

Join us for a morning of learning from disabled people themselves about transport and disability. We will talk about the importance of disability sector engagement, we'll hear from our disability experts, and we'll go for a walk to see how they navigate Auckland streets. This course will empower you to work more effectively with disabled people in your role as a transport or construction professional.

 **NOV 20 2025**  **9:00AM - 1:00PM**

 **CENTRAL AUCKLAND**

MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION
<https://events.humanitix.com/walk-with-me-auckland>
bridget@bridgetdoran.nz

 **Bridget Doran Consulting**



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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