



Living Streets Aotearoa

## ***Welcome to the October 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 finalised programme**

We have finalised the programme for the 2025 Walking Summit! You can find it [on our website](#) or [download it as a pdf](#). You can also find [a description of Walking Summit speakers with their photos and bios](#) on our website.

The Summit is less than one month away, so register today to join the conversation about walkability and wellbeing. Summit attendees already include participants from regional and city councils, universities, and government agencies.

Registrants will also get access to recordings of the Summit after the event, so even if you can't

make all or any of the talks on the day, registering will ensure you can watch them at another time.

### Registration

**Member\***

NZ \$110.00

**Non-Member**

NZ \$150.00

Early bird registration ended on 30 September. Prices now reflect standard registration fees.

### \*Membership

Provided you [join Living Streets Aotearoa](#) prior to the Summit, you can register at the Member rate. If you are an existing member, make sure you indicate in the registration form the email address you used to sign up to Living Streets Aotearoa, otherwise you will be notified to either renew your membership or pay the Non-member rate. For further information, please visit the [Membership Page](#) to join or [contact us](#).

## The harms of car dependence

World Car-Free Day happened a few weeks ago, on September 22. As suggested by the name, it is a day that encourages people not to use cars, and instead get around by walking, cycling, and using public transport. But the day is about more than just a change in transport mode, it's about helping us to envision a world without cars where the air is cleaner, communities are safer and healthier, and public spaces are made for people instead of personal vehicles.



A 2024 [academic journal article](#) summed up the many negative effects of cars by using the phrase “car harm”. The authors identified a list of damages that cars perpetuate and grouped them into four main categories: (1) Violence, (2) Ill Health, (3) Social Injustice, (4) Environmental Damage. They write that many of the harms caused by cars are perceived as externalities, meaning organisations that produce cars, the people who make infrastructure and policies that support car dependence, and even drivers are not directly impacted by the negative effects of cars. For example, especially as tall, large cars like SUVs are becoming increasingly popular to drive, pedestrians and cyclists outside of cars are more likely to suffer the consequences of car crashes than their drivers.

Even when the harms caused by cars are brought to people's attention, they were likely to significantly downplay the harms in comparison to other threats. For example, in [a 2024 study](#), participants were asked to agree or disagree with either one of the two following statements:

“People shouldn’t **smoke** in highly populated areas where other people have to breathe in the **cigarette** fumes.”

“People shouldn’t **drive** in highly populated areas where other people have to breathe in the **car** fumes.”

They found that only 2.7% of participants disagreed with the first statement about cigarette fumes, while 57.9% of participants disagreed with the second statement about car fumes. The results of the study speaks to a larger concept that the authors call “motornormativity”, the unconscious bias that leads people to discount and normalise car harm. This way of thinking also makes people react negatively to changes that reduce reliance on cars, like removing parking spots or [reducing car access](#).

And car dependence entrenches the harms of cars even more by making the decision not to drive a car difficult. Car dependence shapes the physical environment, laws, and policies to put private vehicles above people. As co-chair Alex Dyer writes in this piece on ["The inhumanity of car dependency"](#):

“Over-reliance on cars takes a toll on humanity. We have normalised their pervasive presence so much that we now find ourselves living and working in places that do more to serve the needs of cars than of people. Cars demand more of people than the benefits they provide.”

In fact, events like Car-Free Day may show people just how much cars have been prioritised, through how difficult it can be to get around without a car. Of course, it isn’t enough to just have one day a year where people optionally give up cars. The [journal article about car harm](#) also presented a list of interventions that have been implemented to reduce car use like congestion pricing, reducing on-street parking, lowering speed limits, and creating car-free zones.

“These interventions have been successfully implemented in cities around the world. They are ready for implementation in new contexts where they can reduce the human and environmental harm caused by automobility. Such interventions require actions from governments that contradict the current automobility-dominated status quo.”

These interventions and other changes to undo car dependence will not happen in one day, but Car-Free Day can provide the spark for making a safer, healthier, and better future.

## Vote for walkable communities, pedestrian safety, and accessibility

In-person voting for the 2025 local body elections closes at noon on Saturday. After that, we'll find out who our local body representatives will be for the next three years. During the election season, we've seen some candidates put forward a vision for walkable cities and communities, while others have sought votes by attacking projects that create safe, separated footpaths for pedestrians and safe, separated cycle lanes for cyclists.

Living Streets Aotearoa wants to see mayors and councillors take walking seriously, support the development of safe pedestrian infrastructure and other measures to keep pedestrians safe and encourage walking – and follow through on their commitments to pedestrians.

Ōtautahi / Christchurch is one place this issue has arisen, [as this article describes](#). Residents of Spring Grove in Belfast, Christchurch who live near Radcliffe Rd are concerned about the lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure on the road. There are no footpaths on Radcliffe Rd which connects this subdivision to the nearby shopping centre, so pedestrians are forced to walk on the side of the road.

This article profiles Mandy and Gary Uren who live in this subdivision and have waited for years for this issue to be addressed. Since Gary uses a powered wheelchair, he has been forced to use a car any time he wants to leave home. They also are worried for other vulnerable pedestrians and "feared for children, who they said were walking to school on the side of the road, with cars 'brushing' past them daily."

During the last election, the couple took their concerns to Phil Mauger, who at the time was a candidate for mayor. Mauger promised to address the pedestrian safety issues and build a footpath on Radcliffe Road. But in the three years since he became mayor, there is still no footpath in the area.

The issue was brought up again in a recent public meeting in the area. The footpath has been slow to be built partly because KiwiRail requires a level crossing upgrade on the road, before a footpath is built.

Pedestrians need Councils and Councillors who will support walkable communities, pedestrian safety, and accessibility – and follow up their promises with action. If you haven't already voted and you still can, please do!

## Pedestrian Network Guidance

The [NZTA Pedestrian Network Guidance](#) (PNG) has now been fully ratified. The guidance provides planners and designers with information and recommendations to help create safe, walkable communities. You are also welcome to suggest any changes or improvements to the guidance on the website.

And if you're interested in learning more about the PNG, come to the [2025 Walking Summit](#) to hear Patrícia Vasconcelos, Principal Specialist Multi-modal at NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi talk about: "What's new in the Pedestrian Network Guidance?"

## EV chargers on footpaths



The shift to electric vehicles has some obvious benefits in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but there are some downsides too. One of these is that some owners recharge their vehicles on the street outside their homes, laying an electrical cable across the footpath (see photo) to do so. This poses a real hazard (especially at night when recharging is most likely to take place) for pedestrians who may end up tripping over it.

Living Streets Aotearoa has collaborated with other groups in the Footpaths4Feet coalition to alert councils and Auckland Transport to this emerging threat to pedestrian safety and almost all have acknowledged it is a concern. Many councils have bylaws that actually prohibit leaving anything in a public place that may create a danger for people but they have limited powers to enforce this. Mostly, they are resorting to educational letters to property owners.

There are already so many obstructions and obstacles on footpaths, and we really don't need any more. Given the growing number of electric vehicles and more intensive development of urban areas, this problem is going to become widespread if action is not taken now to resolve it. We are continuing efforts to ensure all councils have appropriate bylaw provisions and to suggest ways in which people can recharge their vehicles without endangering pedestrians.

If you know of places where people charge their vehicles in the way described above, please email [accounts@livingstreets.org.nz](mailto:accounts@livingstreets.org.nz) with the details (with a photo if possible). And if you have ideas or would like to help in other ways to nip this problem in the bud, please email us at the same address.

## Do you really need to walk 10,000 steps a day?

Have you heard the oft-repeated advice that you need to be getting 10,000 steps each day? While getting some walking in each day is a good goal, is there evidence that a certain number of steps is the best?

[This RNZ interview](#) with Dr Melody Ding, a Professor of public health at the University of Sydney, suggests that you may not need to walk as many steps as you think to get health benefits. Interestingly, she says the “10,000 [steps] figure came from a stunningly effective marketing campaign in the 1960s for a Japanese pedometer”, so it isn't backed-up with research.

Melody and her colleagues did [an analysis](#) of 31 previous studies looking at the number of steps taken by study participants and the health outcomes. They found that people who walked 7,000 steps were best able to reap the health benefits of walking, while walking more than 7,000 steps



did not make a huge difference in improving health. Overall, they found that walking more steps is better, so that “comparing 4000 steps with 2000 steps, for example, every step counts - 4000 steps was much better than 2000 steps.” Researchers cautioned people not to think of any number of steps as the “magic” amount needed, but to try and walk as much as is manageable each day.

Some other studies indicate that walking speed may be another important factor in improving health outcomes from walking. For example, [walking at a brisk pace has been associated with a decrease in heart disease and an increase in life expectancy](#). Even a five minute walk at a fast pace that increases your heart rate can [improve cognition and working memory](#). Research also shows that [taking a brisk walk after eating can improve digestion and control blood sugar levels](#).

## Speed limit consultations

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

- [Lowering the speed limit to 60 km/h on a 1km stretch of State Highway 3 just north of Hāwera](#). Consultation closes on 29 October.
- [Reducing the speed limit on several stretches of old SH1 from Peka Peka to Ōtaki](#). Consultation closes on 3 November.
- [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.

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 [Bay of Islands Walking Weekend](#) starts today and runs from 9-12 October! Check out [their website](#) for a [full list and description of the 23 walks](#) happening during the weekend. There are a range of walks available, and they are graded depending on difficulty. You need to book to attend the walks and there are limited spaces on most of them, so be sure to register in advance.



[Transport Knowledge Hub](#) (TKH) is putting on an online webinar about “Improving the measurement of mode share and mode shift” on 16 October - 1.30pm to 2:30 pm. The webinar will be focused on presenting research about using a toolkit to measure, analyse, and report data about transport mode share and mode shift. [Register for the webinar here](#).

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](mailto:bridget@bridgetdoran.nz)



## 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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