



Living Streets Aotearoa

## **Welcome to the September 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 draft programme announcement**

We're excited to present the draft programme for the Living Streets Aotearoa 2025 Walking Summit, happening **online 6 November 2025**:

#### **Keynote speaker announcement: Dr Eva Neely**

We're thrilled to announce our second Keynote speaker, Dr Eva Neely!

Dr Eva Neely is a senior lecturer at Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington. Her research sits at the intersection of mother/parenthood, place, embodiment, and health. She is especially curious about the experiences of parents in cities, and how walking with children can reveal both the challenges and opportunities of sub/urban life.

At the Walking Summit, she will share the emerging research platform of [Parent-Centred Urbanism](#) (Facebook link), showing how paying attention to parents' walking journeys and use of sub/urban space can help us imagine more welcoming, accessible, and caring cities for everyone.

Check out the [item about Parent-Centred Urbanism](#) to learn more about Eva's research.



### **Walking Summit 2025 draft programme**

Below is an updated draft programme for the summit with descriptions for each workstream session, some of the speakers in the workstreams and topics they will be exploring (note that they are subject to change).

### **Keynote speakers**

Dr Alice Miller, University of Otago Wellington. *Corporate political activity and walkable streets – what we learnt about the road lobby*

Dr Eva Neely, Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington. Topic: Parent-Centred Urbanism.

### **Workstreams**

**Walking for Wellbeing: Walking is important to wellbeing because it can improve physical and mental health, enrich community connection, and is a resilient and sustainable mode of transport. Speakers will talk about the many health and wellbeing advantages of walking and how walking can be better encouraged and supported for all of its benefits.**

- Dr Anna Stevenson, public health physician, National Public Health Te Whatu Ora. *Walking for wellbeing – a public health perspective.*
- Rosie Woods, board member, Geraldine Community Board, Geraldine Licensing Trust, Geraldine.nz. *The Geraldine Sculpture Trail.*

**Pedestrian-centred design: Pedestrian and urban design are key features that enable or impair the ability and choice to walk. Panelists will share best practice and guidance from all stages of pedestrian-centred design and examples of improving existing design to prioritise the needs of pedestrians.**

- Patricia Vasconcelos, Principal Specialist Multi-modal, NZTA Waka Kotahi. *What's new in the Pedestrian Network Guidance?*
- Dr Catherine Knight, environmental historian, author. Topic: Walkability and the urban village concept within the planetary crisis.

**Creating Walkable Streets: This session will highlight the work that councils, transport organisations, and community groups are doing to make streets more walkable. Whether it be through infrastructure, policy, or community engagement, these panelists will discuss examples of changes that put pedestrians first and make recommendations about how to improve walkability in Aotearoa.**

- Vida Christeller, Manager City Design, Wellington City Council. *Creating good environments for walking is key to delivering on WCC's vision: Pōneke - the creative capital where people and nature thrive.*
- Dr Caroline Shaw, Associate Professor, public health medicine specialist and epidemiologist, Otakou Whakaihū Waka, Pōneke | University of Otago Wellington. *Health and equity impacts of decarbonising transport in Aotearoa.*

**Making our streets safer for walking: Making sure our streets are safe and feel safe is essential for all pedestrians, and a critical factor in more people choosing to walk. This stream will feature experts in road safety research, policy, and implementation. The panel discussion will focus on features that improve safety and the perceptions of safety for pedestrians on our streets.**

- Dr Angela Curl, Senior Lecturer, Department of Population Health, University of Otago Christchurch. *Where do falls happen? Auditing the urban environment for pedestrian falls risk.*
- Glen Koorey, Director, ViaStrada. *Hidden Harm – Walking Injuries from Slips and Falls*
- Dr Timothy Welch, Senior Lecturer, University of Auckland.

**Changemakers: The Changemakers session will celebrate community advocates and campaigns that put walking first. Community advocates, opinion leaders, and everyday walking champions will share their**

## experiences and inspiration to advocate for walking.

- Dr Bridget Doran, independent transport engineering consultant. *A survivable future: from What to How.*
- Femke Meinderts and Emily Osborne, co-leads, Parents for Active Transport Atawahi. *Keeping it 60: How a community fought to retain safer speed limits to protect active transport initiatives.*
- Simon Wilson, Senior Writer, NZ Herald.

## Early bird registration for the 2025 Walking Summit ends this month

[Register today](#) to save your spot at the best rate:

Registration	Early Bird Registration (payment on/before 30 September)	Standard Registration (payment after 30 September)
Member*	NZ \$80.00	NZ \$110.00
Non-Member	NZ \$120.00	NZ \$150.00

\*You can become a Living Streets Aotearoa member to get the Member rate:

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 Summit 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](#).

## Parent-Centred Urbanism: An interview with Dr Eva Neely

LSA interviewed Dr Eva Neely to learn more about Parent-centred Urbanism and the early findings from this research. If you're interested in learning more, be sure to [register for the Walking Summit](#) to hear Eva's keynote.

The following is an excerpt from the interview. [You can find the full piece at our website.](#)

### Q: Can you tell us about the Parent-Centred Urbanism Aotearoa project and how you came to do this research?

Mirjam Schindler (the co-leader of this project) and I first met through a cross-university programme. She was working on healthy and liveable cities, while I was focused on motherhood, parenthood, and the links between place, health, and wellbeing. At the same time, I was running another project on first-time motherhood. From those conversations, it became clear that place really matters — for example, whether there are spaces to rest or stop on a walk makes a real difference for new parents.

We are also both parents ourselves, with the lived experience of navigating cities with babies and young children. That shared background led me to ask Mirjam: *What if we put in a grant to explore the intersection of space, health, and belonging in sub/urban environments for new parents?*



### Q: You mentioned some reasons already, but why is walking important for new parents?

Walking nourishes both the body and the mind. It's a simple parenting tool that offers a break, a chance to get outside, and an opportunity to explore together. For parents, it's also a form of gentle exercise. After a caesarean, for example, the body can feel really rough, but walking is often something people feel they can manage.

What makes walking so valuable is its accessibility. You don't need special equipment — you can literally step out the door and begin. It's also flexible: a five-minute walk can be enough to reset, while longer walks offer more sustained benefits. That adaptability is really important for busy parents who have very little time for structured exercise.

And then there are the mental and emotional health benefits. Walking provides what I like to call an “affective release.” All the built-up emotions — frustration, anger, resentment, boredom — can really eat away at you. Even a short loop around the block can help shift that weight and bring a sense of relief.

**Q: What were some of the preliminary results from your research?**

One big theme was the way relationships between people, places, and things are woven together through walking. As researchers, we might notice a beautiful scene, but parents often pointed to places that held meaning for them in different ways. For example, one participant described a big tree where her toddler and dog loved to play with the branches — a spot that embodied joy in the relationship between the tree, her child, her pet, and herself.

Another key finding was the importance of shared, inclusive spaces. Too often, urban spaces are designed for a single purpose and end up being exclusionary. Parents valued places that supported both children and adults, where nature, play, and social connection could coexist.

**Q: How can this research inform the work of city planners or urban designers?**

Urban planning often treats walking as a way to get efficiently from A to B. But parental walking challenges that logic — it’s often non-linear, circular, repetitive, and sometimes without a clear destination. Recognising this different rhythm is crucial for designing cities that truly support parents.

We also learned that small, everyday places matter just as much as big-ticket infrastructure like parks or libraries. Parents found joy in modest spots — a shady tree, a quiet corner, a stretch of path. That suggests cities don’t always need multimillion-dollar investments. Sometimes smaller, low-cost interventions can make a real difference for families.

A reminder, that you can find [the full interview with Eva on our website](#).

**A shared path is a step backward for pedestrians and cyclists in Christchurch**

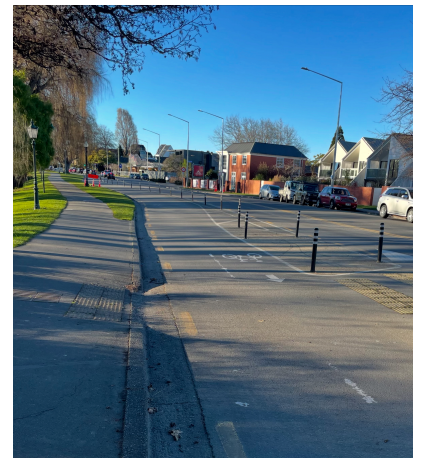
Living Streets Aotearoa released the following statement in response to the [recent proposal by Christchurch Mayor Phil Mauer](#) to remove an on-street, protected cycle lane on Park Tce and replace it with a shared path:

Living Streets Aotearoa does not support shared paths as conflict between users can arise due to the different speeds of pedestrians and cyclists, space constraints, and the unpredictable behaviour of some users. Cycling speeds may average as high as 30km/h compared with an average of 4-5km/h for walking. Since these two modes of transport have very different speeds, making cyclists and pedestrians use the same shared path can lead to safety issues.

Having to share a path with cyclists can also make pedestrians feel unsafe and deter them from using shared paths, particularly older people, people with young children and those with disabilities. Since New Zealand has an aging population, the need to provide appropriate infrastructure for the changing population is becoming urgent. A survey of older people in Sydney found that 39% of people aged 60 or older identified people riding bicycles on shared paths as a constraint to their walking. Safe, separated footpaths are necessary for an age-friendly city.

"Living Streets Aotearoa supports safe, separated footpaths for pedestrians and safe, separated cycleways for people using bikes, e-bikes and e-scooters," says Living Streets Aotearoa spokesperson Carina Duke.

In the case of the Park Tce cycle lane, the current infrastructure is a separated cycle lane and a dedicated footpath, and it is working well for pedestrians and cyclists. There is no need to spend \$300,000 making a shared path that doesn't suit either group.



Both pedestrians and cyclists agree that removing the separated cycleway along Park Tce in Christchurch and making it a shared path isn't a good option for anyone. [This Stuff article](#) features pedestrians, cyclists, and representatives from LSA and Spokes Canterbury who all agree that the separated cycleway and footpath should be maintained. LSA Spokesperson Executive Council Member Carina Duke was also interviewed about this topic on [RNZ's The Panel](#) (segment starts at 5 min).

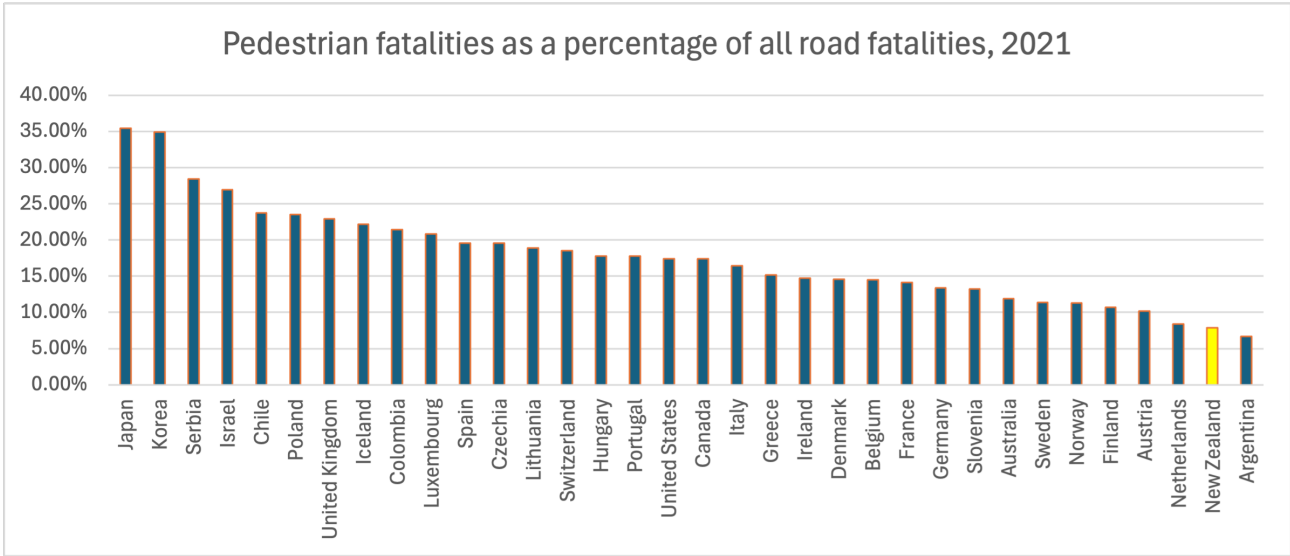
**How does Aotearoa New Zealand rate internationally on pedestrians killed in road crashes?**

By LSA Executive Council member Bill Frith

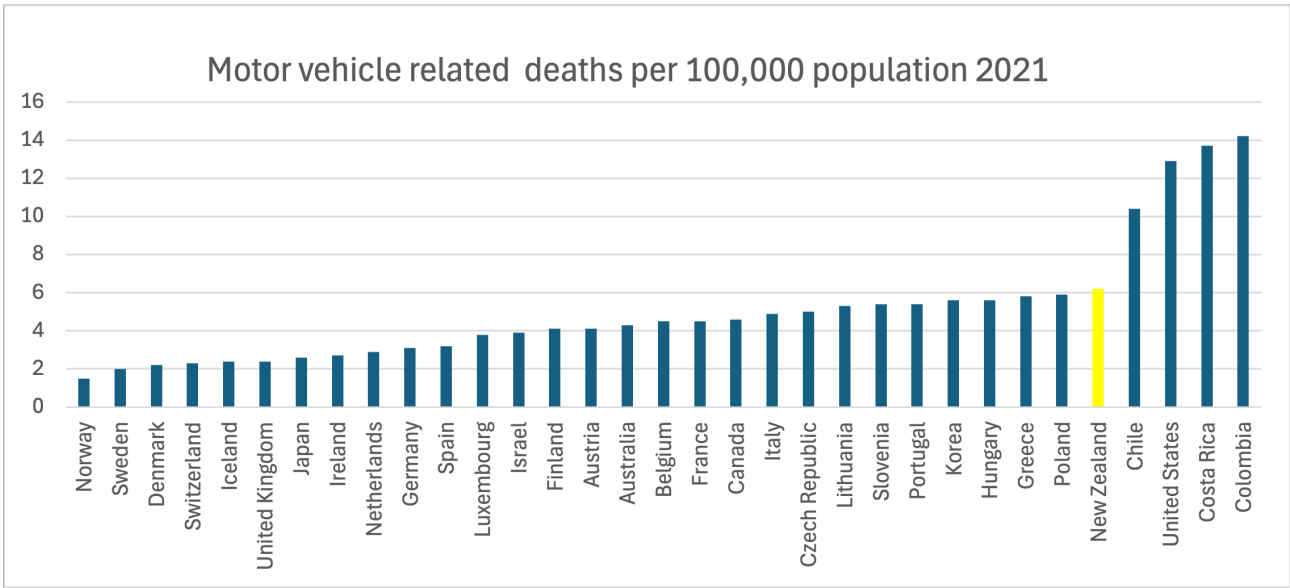


To evaluate how well we're doing here in Aotearoa New Zealand, our performance in various areas is often compared to those of other countries. For example, the [Prime Minister has described the "shocking" state of maths achievement after "years of drift and decay"](#) and announced a new primary school maths curriculum modelled on that of Singapore and Australia will be introduced.

However, we seldom hear anything about our place in the world in regards to road safety. Thankfully, the International Transport Forum (ITF) collects and compiles data that can be used to make this comparison. The graph below shows that in New Zealand pedestrian fatalities as a percentage of all road deaths is relatively low:

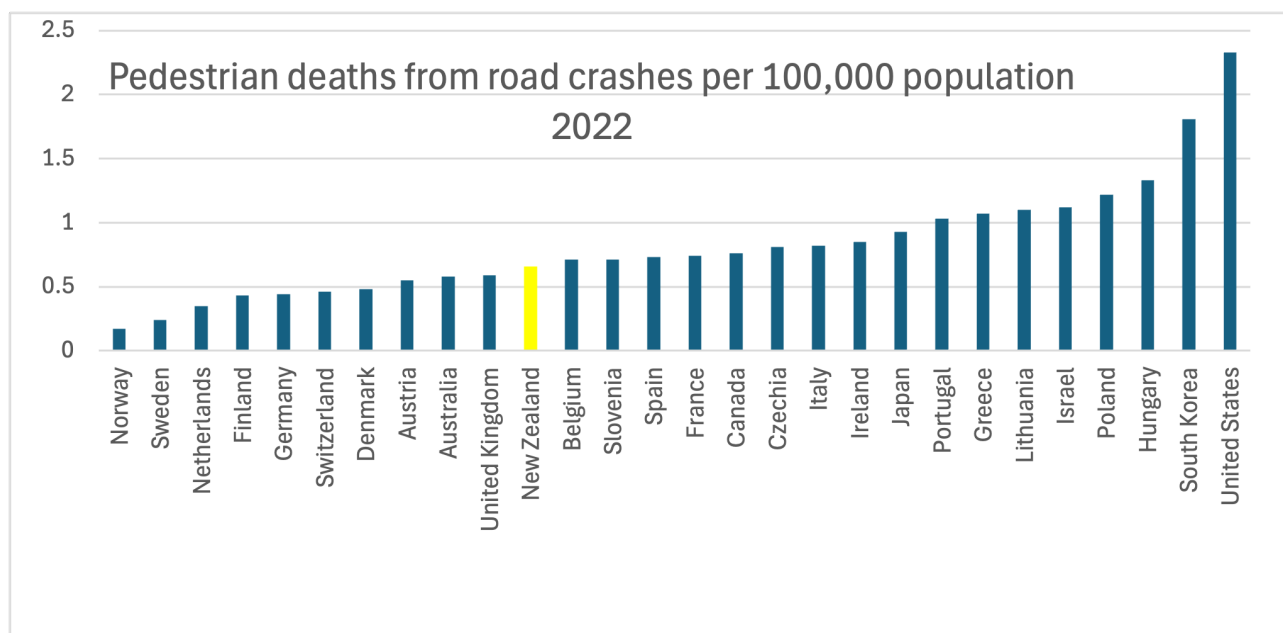


However, if we look at per capita road crash deaths (total road deaths per 100,000 people), things look a lot worse:



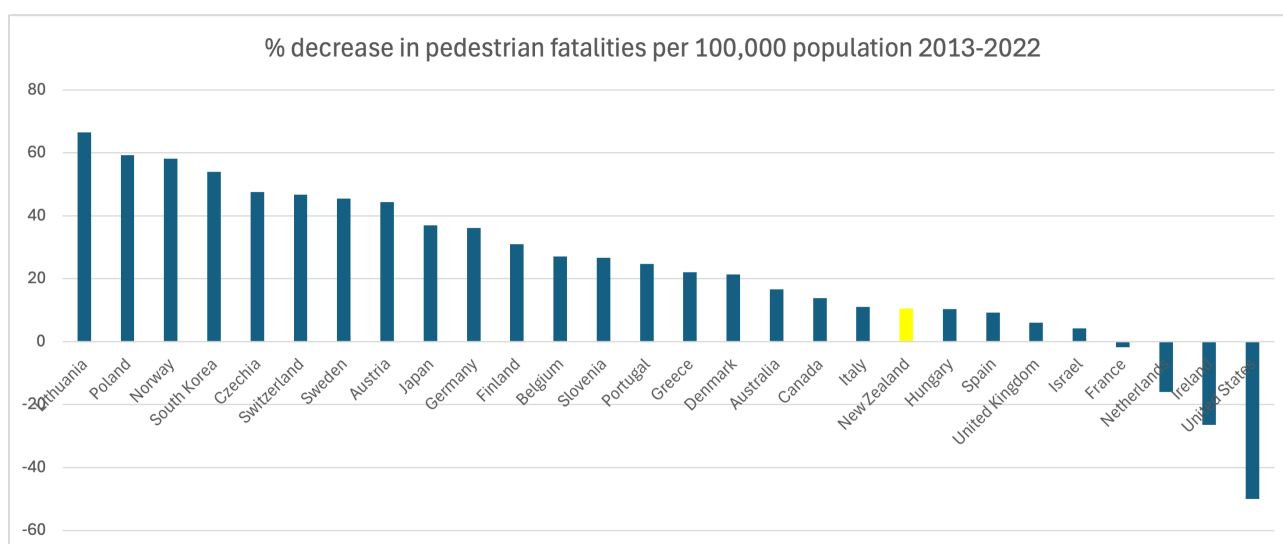
Of the 34 countries that provide data to the ITF, New Zealand has the fifth highest per capita pedestrian road crash deaths, exceeded only by the United States, Costa Rica, Chile and Colombia. This means that although 7.9% of all road crash deaths are pedestrians, this is a relatively large absolute number when compared to other countries because the number of *total* road crash deaths in New Zealand is high.

So to get a better handle on how vulnerable pedestrians in New Zealand are to being killed in road crashes, we need to look at New Zealand's per capita pedestrian deaths from road crashes:



This chart shows that New Zealand has fewer per capita pedestrian deaths than 50% of countries in the ITF database. This is a lot better than NZ's road safety as a whole.

What about our recent progress? The following chart shows the change in per capita rates for countries between 2013 and 2022:



This graph shows that there has been some decrease in pedestrian fatalities over this time. But NZ has made less progress than many other countries, where the percent decrease in pedestrian fatalities is higher.

What does this mean? New Zealand's overall record for road crash deaths does not compare well internationally. Our pedestrian road crash deaths are better in comparison to other countries, but recently we have made only minimal progress. If we are to move meaningfully closer to a safe land transport system and the goal of zero road deaths by 2050, we need to be doing more to make sure pedestrians and all road users are safe.

## Acknowledgements

All the above data comes from the International Transport Forum, either directly or via the Australian Federal Government and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## Petition to add noise emitters to electric vehicles

Josaiah Fue is a blind New Zealander, and he recently had a close call when an electric vehicle driver clipped him while he was crossing an intersection. He was inspired by this experience to create a petition to make sound emitters mandatory on all electric vehicles to warn blind pedestrians.

[Josaiah was interviewed on Middy Report about his experience and this petition.](#)

Living Streets Aotearoa backs Josaiah's call and we encourage our followers to sign this petition: <https://petitions.parliament.nz/8b70bf69-2e54-4e55-89ce-08ddcfc45c03>

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.

## Support safer speeds under the 2024 Speed Rule

NZTA has announced several [speed reviews under the 2024 Speed Rule](#). So far, there are consultations open for roads in [Waikato](#), [Otago](#), and [New Plymouth](#). Each consultation has a different deadline, so check the date to get in your submissions for safer speeds!

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



## Roundup of walking news from abroad

The following is a roundup of walking news from abroad to highlight what other countries doing and what we in Aotearoa can learn from them:

First up, [the city of Helsinki, Finland has gone an entire year without a single traffic-related death](#). This amazing milestone was the result of hard work and a combination of several changes, rather than one big initiative or campaign. For example, the speed limits outside schools were lowered to 30 km/h and now more than half of the city's roads have that safer speed limit. They also have more speed enforcement of vehicles through both automated speed cameras and more traffic officers. Additionally, in the past few years the city has invested a lot in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, which was added on top of an already robust and well-connected public transport system.

Paris, France has done an impressive job [transforming a number of the city's streets into car-free, pedestrianised areas](#). This [video from Streetfilms](#) has a good explanation of how the Paris School Streets campaign has improved streets, not just for children, but for everyone. The streets allow school communities and neighbourhoods to gather safely and spend more time in the streets. City planners have also been able to introduce new elements to these car-free streets like more green space and gardens, colourful pavement art, and places for children to play.

[Low traffic neighbourhoods \(LTNs\) in London have been hugely successful at reducing road injuries and deaths](#), without causing a subsequent increase in car traffic on nearby roads. LTNs are designed to limit the speed and volume of vehicle traffic to improve safety and experience for all road users, especially cyclists and pedestrians. Researchers from the University of Westminster and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine found that LTNs were associated with a 35% reduction in all injuries over that time, as well as a 37% decrease in deaths and serious injuries.

## 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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