



DOUBLE THE FEET ON THE STREET

NZ Walking Conference 2008
4-5 August, Auckland

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Presentation topic			
Presentation title	Building an active-friendly New Zealand: The time to start is now		
Presentation Style	Presentation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workshop / Walkshop <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>		
Estimated Time Required	0-10 mins <input type="checkbox"/>	10-20 mins <input type="checkbox"/>	20-30 mins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Abstract Remit	<p>In New Zealand there has been a tendency to place greater emphasis on improving diet ("healthy eating") rather than increasing physical activity ("healthy action") in political and public debate about the prevention of non-communicable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer. To some extent this is because of a strong focus on obesity prevention, and a widespread view that progress can best be made here by changing the food environment. At times the debate can drift towards "either/or", when the evidence is overwhelming that both healthy eating and healthy action are essential for the prevention of both obesity and non-communicable diseases in general. Those who think we should concentrate more on improving diet than on increasing physical activity often argue that this provides better opportunities for making quick progress. They note the difficulties of making effective changes to the built environment in a short timeframe. But as every month passes we continue to build new infrastructure that is unfriendly to active lifestyles. A new housing development based around the car is going to reduce opportunities for physical activity as part of everyday life for many New Zealanders over decades to come. This needs to be addressed not just by local action, but by central government initiatives that change the context in which planning decisions are made. The time to make such changes is now. The Public Health Bill currently before Parliament is one place to start.</p>		
Author Profile	<p>John White is a retired social scientist and public servant who writes on issues relating to making healthy food and activity choices easier through environmental change. Recent work includes two reports analysing the submissions to the Health Select Committee Inquiry into Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes.</p>		