

Living Streets Aotearoa



www.livingstreets.org.nz

President's Report 2003

Exciting national progress

It has been an exciting twelve months since our inaugural AGM. Significant improvement of New Zealand's streets as destinations and as safe thoroughfares looks more likely with the advent of the New Zealand Land Transport Strategy in December 2002 and the subsequent introduction of the Draft Land Transport Management Bill. Living Streets Aotearoa made submissions on both of these items. So, as a new organisation, we have already taken great opportunities for positive influence.

There are more and more planning, policy, design and engineering professionals who share Living Streets' aims. More politicians see the environmental, social, economic and cultural case for Living Streets.

As well as the formal connections referred to below, we have established friendly relations with Te Araroa Trust, TRAFINZ, Living Streets UK and members of the international technical group Walk21.

Representation

We have had national representation on the following groups - Transfund's pedestrian advisory group, Ministry of Transport special consultation on the NZTS, Land Transport Safety Authority's Safety Framework and Safe Routes groups. Next year we aim to increase membership and participation in different regions.

Regional Groups

WalkAuckland is an active group that has links with Living Streets but is not formally affiliated. The key is to share information and strategies, not fret about precise relationships. Hutt valley has initiated a Sustainable Transport group that initially comprises Living Streets, Cycle Aware and Transport 2000. Congratulations on your initiative, Neil Freeman. Hamilton's FEAT is finding its feet and I have been invited to Dunedin and Christchurch to help crystallise some advocacy groups there. Living Streets Wellington is represented on the Wellington Regional Land Transport Committee and the Wellington City Road Safety Reference Group.

Living Streets Wellington have partnered the City Council and erected "Shortcuts to a Degree" signs as a pilot pedestrian map.

Still a way to go

Challenges remain in the way decision-makers make assumptions about pedestrian needs. "Walk21 is too specialised a conference for us to attend. Anyway our transport planners know all about pedestrian needs." is a quote I shall not ascribe but was said quite seriously.

I want to pursue further alliances with public health agencies across the country, given our excellent relationship with Hutt Valley Health, and to press district health boards, primary health organisations and others in the health professions to stand up for living streets in their districts as key to population health. Health professionals make submissions on playground closures but not often on Transport Strategies. We can remind them of the connections. Recreation groups and running groups also have issues in common.

Community constables usually realise the significance of pedestrians as "guardians of the public realm" but may need encouragement to influence Police and Local Government policy.

Most regional councils are at some stage of producing walking strategies (preferably separate from cycling strategies) but it's usually the territorial authorities who need to commit funds to get better maintenance, more imaginative design and safer roads. I look forward to Living Streets communicating these issues to more local government politicians and officers.

We need to include the needs of people with mobility difficulties more clearly. I am currently looking at Shopmobility as a transport solution for those with permanent or temporary difficulties getting around city centres.

Comments like "Thanks to Living Streets Aotearoa for the Shortcuts to a Degree walk posted on the web. I took a group from Plimmer Steps to Salamanca Road and down and it was great. Lovely views." from someone in Porirua remind me our actions are very worthwhile.

Thanks

Some close family bereavement and illness have prevented my maximum involvement in promoting Living Streets and our key issues this last twelve months. Thanks for all the personal support members have given me.

I'd like to thank many Living Streets members and supporters for their work, whether it's planning, organising meetings, taking notes, representing our interests on different groups or ensuring we comply with accounting practices. Our visibility is increasing - for which particular thanks to Penny Tapper for continuing to compile our newsletter and Robert Davies for his timely and accurate input to our website.

Conclusions

I'm pleased to see how many activities we have been actively involved with. 2003/04 will be key for consolidating our organisation, raising our profile, aiming for at least a part-time paid staff person and a national seminar. However, it's all means to the end of many more lovely places to walk, run, sit, play, shop and talk so let's take time to enjoy walking and talking our way to Living Streets.

Celia Wade-Brown