

# Living Streets Aotearoa



## 2005 President's Report to Living Streets Aotearoa AGM

*E nga mana, e nga reo, e nga iwi. Tena kotou, tena kotou, tena kotou katoa.*

### Introduction

2005 has been an amazing year for walking in New Zealand. February saw the launch of the first New Zealand Walking & Cycling Strategy from the Ministry of Transport. Our members had made significant contribution of ideas and examples during its formation.

2005 has seen a close working relationship develop between the Health Sponsorship Council, now known as HSC, and Living Streets Aotearoa. It began with our "walking expertise" input into a funding bid to add walking initiatives to a resuscitated "Bikewise + Walking" bid over summer 04/05.

This led to achieving MoT/ Land Transport NZ funding in the current government budget for several walking initiatives, some of which Living Streets Aotearoa has contracted to deliver. These include national networking, pedestrian map development, community street audit methodology review and the production and marketing of a walking promotion resource database.

Earlier this year we agreed our Strategic Plan for the next ten years, with some ambitious targets.

### National office and staff

In June, we agreed with Health Sponsorship Council to rent a pleasant office from them. Since then we have set up phone, fax, computer, a new accounting system and office furniture. Such internal matters have taken up considerable time.

In September, we employed Kate Shuttleworth, first part time and then fulltime on a temporary basis. Her role was to set up the national office and its systems and to contribute to the Community Street Audit project. Kate is off to fulltime study next year but I am confident she will remain active. Thanks for sorting out so many administrative issues, Kate!

Liz Thomas began as Director in October and is already making a great difference to our planning abilities and coordination with other agencies. Her enthusiasm, reality focus and personal warmth are a delight to work with. I appreciate the time taken by all the other candidates for their applications and sharing their ideas. Mike Mellor and HSC staff deserve recognition for working through the lengthy appointment process involving a large number of interviews.

Inevitably in this set up phase, external communications have been quieter while we have got systems in place for our new activities.

Such a rapid increase in activity led to increased pressures on our treasurer. I'd like to say farewell to Jane Loughnan, who has been treasurer since our incorporation. Jane succeeded in getting us GST registered. Thanks for keeping our records together and for handing over to Kate. We have confirmed our charitable tax status and therefore had a refund of bank fees. We are developing effective office financial management systems so the new treasurer won't find the role onerous.

### New activities

This year saw Living Streets Aotearoa adopt/ absorb WalkWellington, which has been revamped as a not-for-profit group running general and specific walking tours, mostly for visitors, by volunteers. Napier and Christchurch already have Trusts which do these things but we decided to “umbrella” Sue Chamberlain’s dream-child. November 2005 saw a successful relaunch of the brand WalkWellington.

Projects begun this year include a research programme to refine and evaluate the Community Street Audit way of assessing walkability, with the aims of making it repeatable, useful for “receiving” councils, easy and effective for participants.

We have begun scoping the work for the Resource Database and met with a competent community ICT agency.

### Examples of regional activity

Living Streets Canterbury members have worked with local Community Boards to do several community street audits.

Living Streets Wellington has made a number of submissions on regional and city transport policy and operational matters.

Our Tuesday Civic Lunchtime Walks (“back with in the hour, you don’t need a shower”) have continued – originally designed for March 2005 promotion, Stepping Out, the regular participants insisted we carry on in April and we are still going. Thanks to Ron Ross for keeping the email list and being there punctually. We keep finding new routes and combinations of new routes. When time and money permit, a second 5 Lunchtime Walks brochure will result.

A demonstration of how problematic many pedestrians find cars parked on footpaths attracted excellent media coverage and strengthened the case for stronger parking enforcement and supporting education/ publicity.

WalkAuckland remains a separate but affiliated organisation and has been active in Auckland City.

Palmerston North members have made submissions on local Strategies.

Dunedin members are part of Active Otago.

### Walking becoming a serious topic

Public Health, Urban Design, Recreation, Climate Change, Peak Oil, Transport – all these areas of interest are converging on walking as an indicator of social, physical, economic and environmental health for individuals and populations.

Attending the **NZ Cycling Conference** in Lower Hutt confirmed the appropriateness of running alternate conferences since many aspects of travel demand management, transport sector reorganization, funding allocation frameworks and assessment of strategies is common to these two active modes.

The audiences at **TRAFINZ** and the **National Nutrition and Physical Activity** annual conferences were certainly made up of different sectors but both warmed to Living Streets Aotearoa presentations I made on the relevance of walking and how easily both its benefits and needs are overlooked.

Urbanism Down under was the largest gathering of urban design professionals in Australasia so far. Many speakers stressed the walkability of environments but there were few attempts to quantify levels of service.

Andy Smith from Walk Auckland and I attended Walk21 in Zurich. It was full of fascinating ideas and people. The random art and cards walk was a highlight! Many technical, motivational international speakers held my interest. We shared many many ideas and I was delighted to visit Living Streets UK office for a short visit after the conference. They have a large office with a range of staff offering consultancy services as well as their

membership and advocacy arm. Living Streets Aotearoa is working with Kinect Australia to make the Melbourne Walk21 a success and to maximise its value to NZ advocates and professionals.

2005 was also declared the NZ Year of the Built Environment. Whatever one's views on royalty and republicanism, Prince Charles is an admirable speaker on pedestrian rights and human centred design. He launched the Urban Design Protocol to which many organisations of all sectors are signatories, including Living Streets. Some quotes:

*We need to put the pedestrian at the centre of urban design.*

*Unsustainable development patterns have swept the globe for the last fifty years. Wherever we go we are confronted with drab homogeneity.*

*The question is how to make walkable, liveable, well-mannered, beautiful communities where one doesn't need to use 2l of petrol to get 1l of milk.*

#### Not the proclaimed sustainable transport solution...

A disturbing trend has been to see Segways on the footpaths of Taranaki St. While these may be amusing devices in some recreational areas, most footpaths are simply not wide enough for their co-existence with "real pedestrians".

#### More thanks!

Staff at the Health Sponsorship Council have generously shared time and ideas as we all grapple with shared responsibilities and new initiatives. I'd like to acknowledge Iain Potter, Brent Skinnon, Wayde Beckman, Thomas Stokell and Debbie, the HSC administrator, for their support in this period.

Newsletters continue to produce nice mix of local info, activities and odd snippets re walking that give pause for thought. Thanks to our secretary, Debs Moir, and to Hutt Valley Regional Public Health for their support.

Our website is a terrific list of resources and inspiring links. It is a great foundation for further development. As an administrative repository, it has been invaluable in keeping "incorporated memory" from being lost. A big thanks you to Robert Davies, web manager. On the office ICT side, thanks are due also to Tim Jordan. Our site is hosted for free on the Wellington Community Net system.

Finally, thanks to Executive Council members for being flexible – a mixture of phone conferences and email decision-making. I look forward to Executive Council members getting together face-to-face next year. Special thanks to Wendy Everingham and Andy Smith for their unfailing presence on phone conference calls.

#### Next year

Three areas we need more focus on – publicity and media, increasing memberships and spreading the load of active membership. With our talented, committed and well-connected staff, members and supporters, I am confident we can achieve even more in 2006.

Kia kaha

Celia Wade-Brown