

# Living Streets Aotearoa



www.livingstreets.org.nz

## New Zealand Walking Conference 2006

*Getting There on Foot in NZ Cities and Towns – Taking the Next Steps*

3 – 4 November 2006

### ABSTRACT FORM

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<b>Presentation topic</b>	<b>A collaborative community project to keep footpaths clear of obstacles for people with visual impairments (the presentation would be a dual one in conjunction with a Rep from the Foundation of the Blind)</b>		
<b>Presentation title</b>	Footpaths R 4 people		
<b>Presentation Style</b>	<b>Presentation</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<b>Interactive Workshop</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Time Required</b>	0-10 mins <input type="checkbox"/>	10-20 mins <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	20-30 mins <input type="checkbox"/>

**Presentation Remit** (500 word maximum)

The Footpaths R 4 People project was a direct result of customer complaints to the Royal NZ Foundation of the Blind and the Auckland city council call centre. It focused on footpaths in the NewMarket area of Auckland where the highest proportion of blind citizens access roads and footpaths.

The project team involved representatives from Auckland city, Foundation of the Blind, Walk Auckland and the Injury Prevention Unit at The University of Auckland.

A pre survey was conducted of the area and 457 obstacles were recorded that impeded safe access of footpaths. Engagement was conducted with the local business association, who placed an article in their retailers newsletter. This was followed by a week long public awareness campaign, which entailed volunteers from the project team organisations pairing up able bodied and disabled. The pairs then walked around the retail and residential areas of Newmarket placing ribbons on overhanging trees and placing a flyer, in the shape of a foot, in the residents letterbox advising them very nicely to think of footpath access and ensure their trees were cut back. The pairs also placed static sticker feet on other obstacles i.e. rubbish bins, vehicles etc which had a message on them encouraging people to think of footpath access for all. Other pairs were involved in engaging with business owners in the retail sector of Newmarket. They discussed safer placement of signage, sandwich boards and café furniture. Each retailer that moved unsafe items were encouraged by being given a foot sticker for their business window which stated they supported Footpaths being for People.

The project also led to an internal project within Auckland city with changes to internal processes in the call centre when someone with a visual impairment rings in. The call centre staff were given disability awareness training. Rubbish contractors were also given disability awareness training to encourage them to place empty bins on the verge rather than in the middle of driveways or in the middle of footpaths.

A post survey was conducted 1 1/2 months after the public awareness campaign and a 70 % reduction in obstacles was seen.

The project has been nominated for two awards, the Auckland Mayoral Community Safety Awards and a Customer Service Award.

The project has been seen to be so effective that funding is being set aside to replicate this in other areas of need in Auckland in the next financial year.

We see this as an example of a collaborative community project which focused on engaging with all sectors of the community in a positive way, to ensure that people in their communities think of others and make their area of footpath safer for everyone to access.