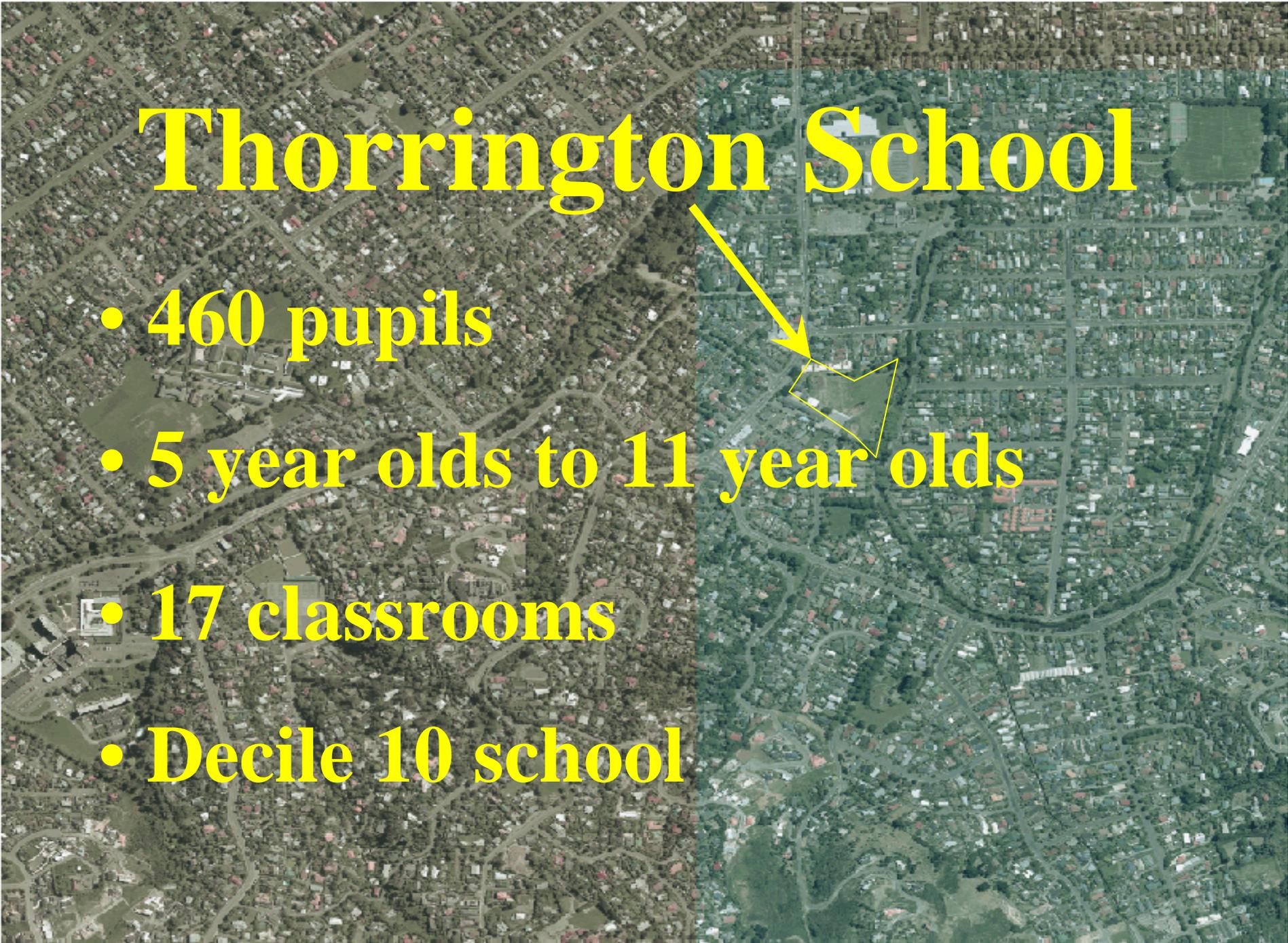
An aerial photograph of BOT Thorrington Primary School. The school buildings are white with dark roofs, arranged in a U-shape around a large green field. A paved path leads from the field towards the school. In the background, there are residential houses on a hillside under a clear blue sky. The text "Why walking provided our school with a traffic safety solution" is overlaid in yellow on the top left of the image.

Why walking provided
our school with a traffic
safety solution

by Rob Dewhirst
BOT Thorrington Primary School

Thorrington School

An aerial photograph of a residential area with a grid-like street pattern. A yellow arrow points from the title 'Thorrington School' to a specific building in the middle-right section of the image. The building is surrounded by greenery and other residential structures.

- 460 pupils
- 5 year olds to 11 year olds
- 17 classrooms
- Decile 10 school

Issues of children getting safely to and from School

- Very busy, vehicles & pedestrians, at the main school entrance on Colombo Street.
- Vehicles regularly driving through the pedestrian crossing even with the school patrol operating
- Problems with crossing Centaurus Road



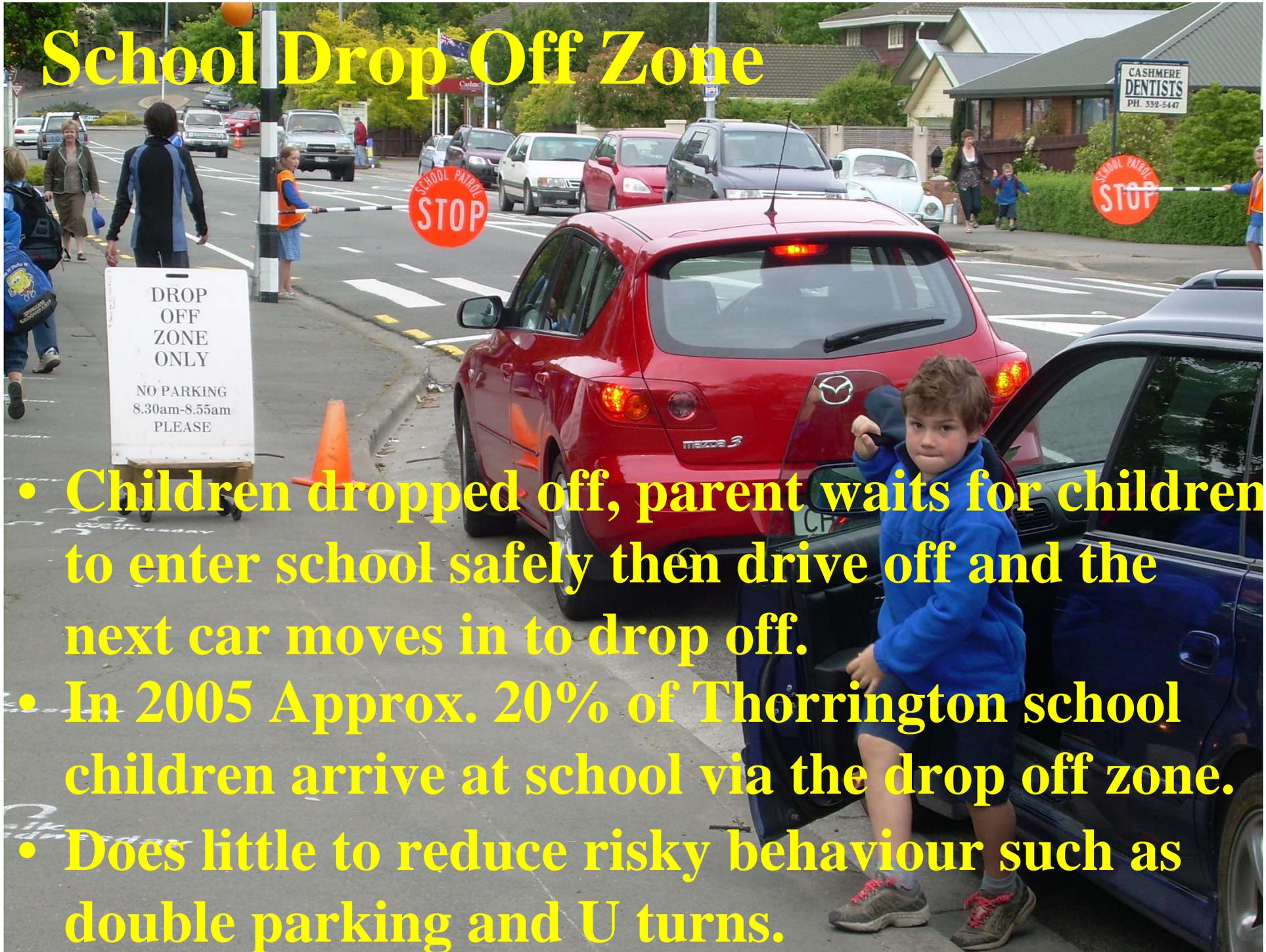
Symptom Driven Solutions

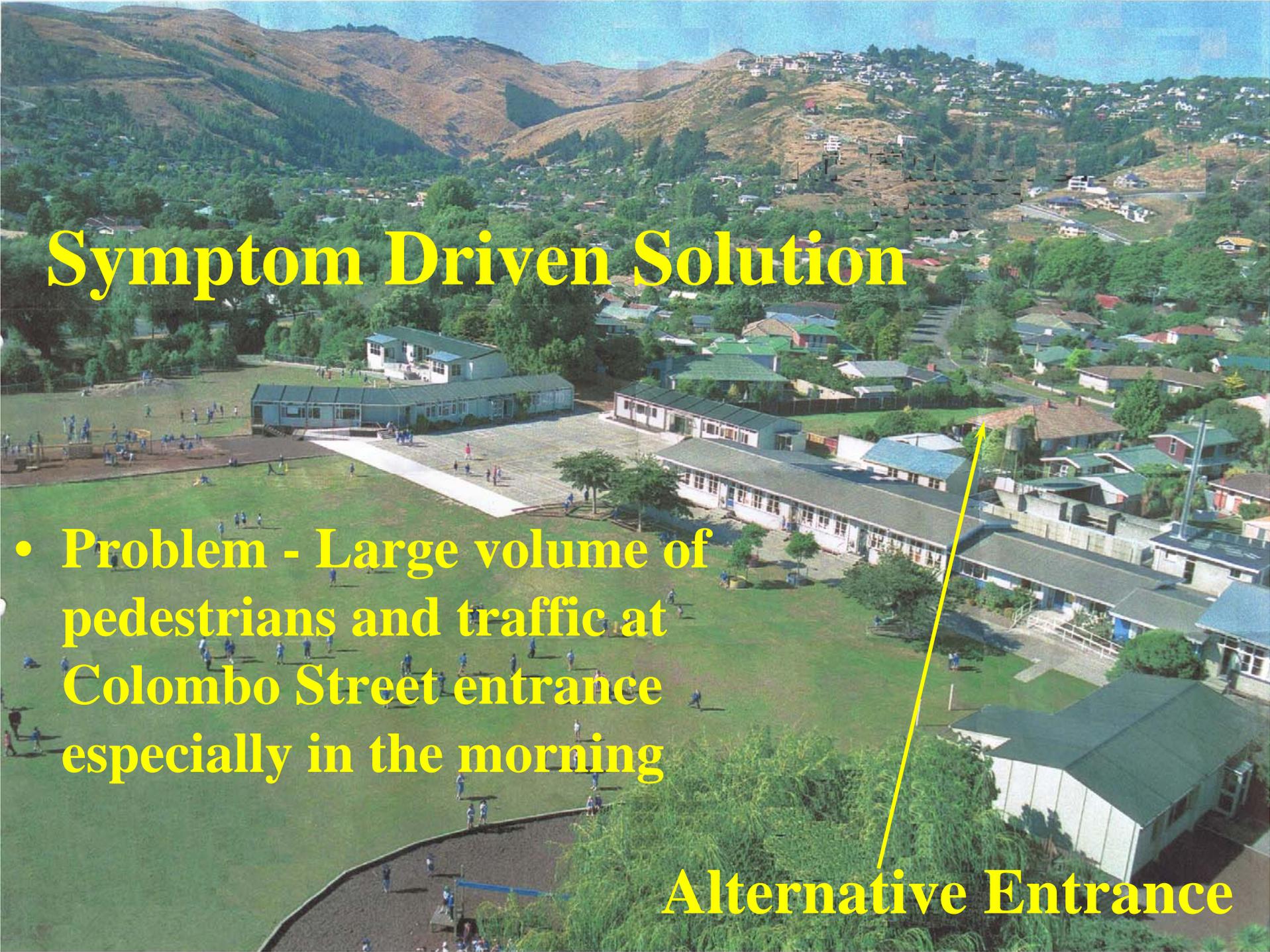
- Problem - Parents want to park as close as possible to school to drop children off often on the way to work.



School Drop Off Zone

- Children dropped off, parent waits for children to enter school safely then drive off and the next car moves in to drop off.
- In 2005 Approx. 20% of Thorrington school children arrive at school via the drop off zone.
- Does little to reduce risky behaviour such as double parking and U turns.





Symptom Driven Solution

- **Problem - Large volume of pedestrians and traffic at Colombo Street entrance especially in the morning**

Alternative Entrance

Great idea ! ! !

Additional entrance to the school via Remuera Ave

- **Should reduce pressure on Columbo Street entrance**
- **Nice quiet street with better drop off parking,**
- **Options to increase parking at school,**
- **but...**



The Idea Bogged Down...

- Resource Consent process confrontational:
 - Initially obtained support,
 - At subsequent meetings a vocal opposition group stifled the initiative....

“Even if a trial was successful we would oppose the new school entrance”

It took six months to go from a good idea to being quashed by the local neighbourhood community.

.... And we still didn't know if either of these solutions actually made it safer for children to get to and from school?

Alternative Solution

Walking

Enthusiasm did not role over to the next year

School Buses

New families did not become involved,

Attrition occurs and school buses die off.

However, walking buses can reduce traffic, provide pedestrian discipline, and improve safety.



Our approach to improving the safety of children coming and going from school had been piecemeal and not focused enough!

We talked with other schools
about what they were doing and
decided.....

We needed a traffic safety
strategy for Thorrington School
children.

We obtained funding from the
“Community Fund - Small
Projects”

We engage Steve Abley, a
Traffic Consultant, to prepare a
Traffic Strategy for Thorrington
School



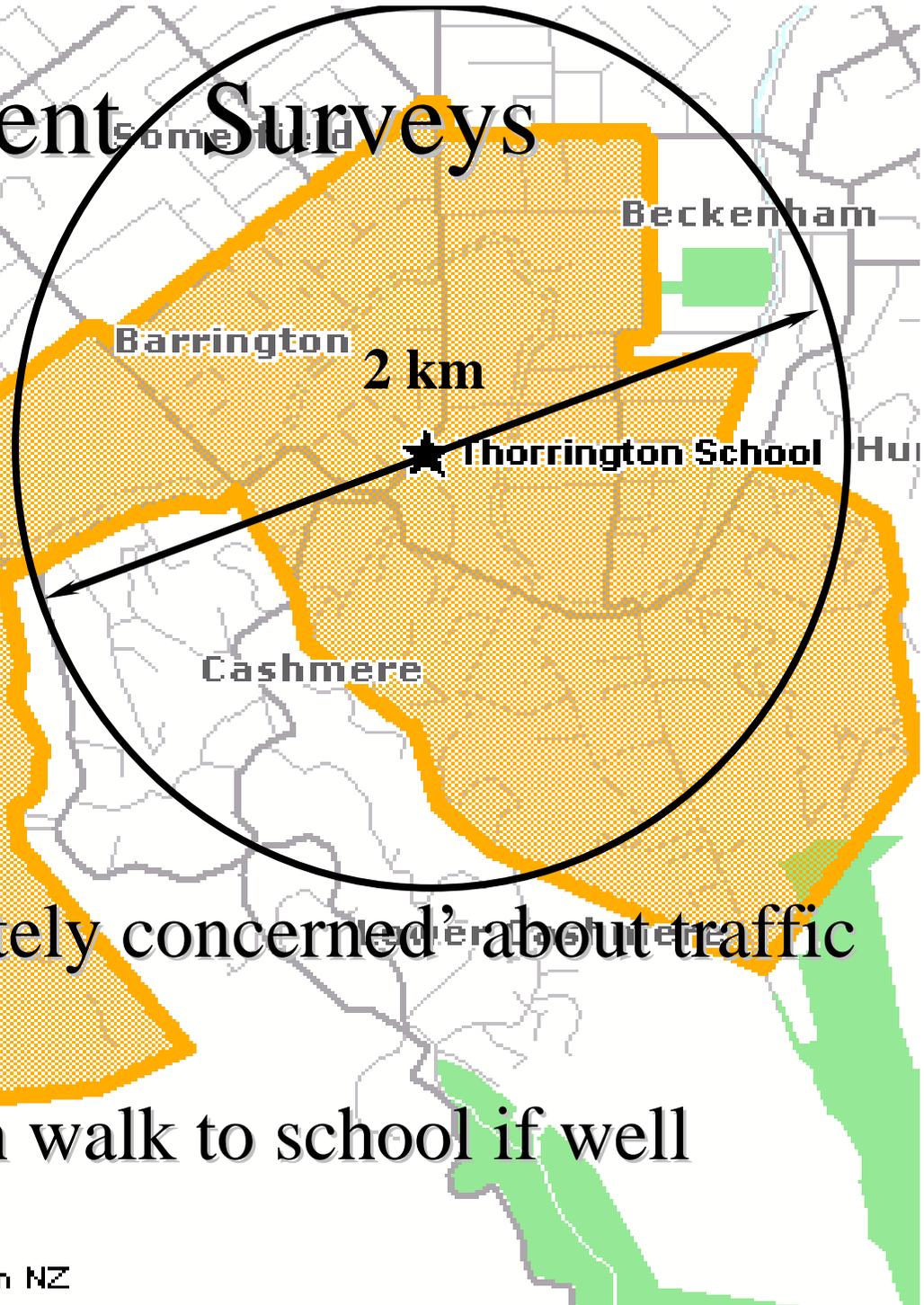
- Steve Abley provided:
 - a review of traffic policies,
 - A description of the existing road environment, including the road and the users, and
 - An outline of future traffic issues.
- Surveys prepared by Abley were undertaken, and
- The School Principal undertook a survey of hazards on local roads “through the children’s eyes”

Outcomes

- **Provided the big picture:**
 - **Local & Central Government policies encourage sustainable transport modes.**
 - **Columbo Street - 17,000 vehicles a day - growing by 3% pa.**
 - **More students travelling by car increase traffic congestion & accident risk.**
 - **Sustainable transport modes reduce traffic congestion.**

Parent & Student Surveys

- 60% of students live within 1km of school
- 58% of parents think 1km is a reasonable distance to walk
- 78% of parents 'absolutely concerned' about traffic safety
- Parents will let children walk to school if well managed





Hazard Survey Through the eyes of Children



Visibility along
streets obstructed by
road geometry
and/or vegetation



Footpaths
obstructed
by
vegetation



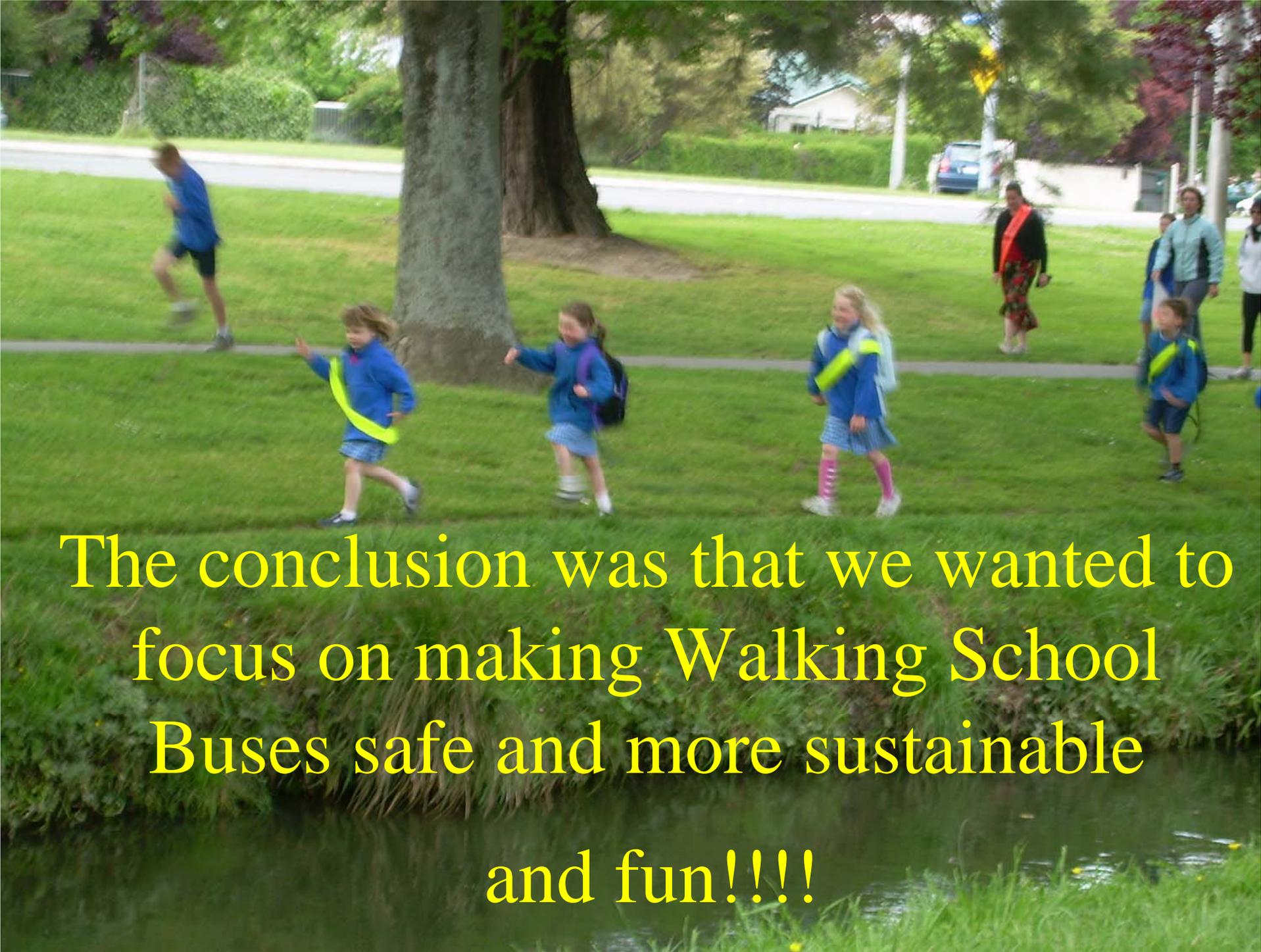
Footpath surface uneven



Intersections
difficult/confusing for young
pedestrians and cyclists



Cars not slowing when
approaching intersections
especially roundabouts



The conclusion was that we wanted to focus on making Walking School Buses safe and more sustainable and fun!!!!

Second Funding Round

We applied and were successful in
obtaining funding for a walking
School Bus Co-ordinator Pilot
Project

Achieved to Date



- **Motivation of children at School Launch by Communities Leaders**
- **Walking School Bus interest Survey (300 of 460 surveys returned)**
- **Guidelines for sustainable Walking School Buses are being prepared**



We are working with the CCC
and the community to improve
safety on footpaths for children



Target: 50% of children walking to school in Terms 4&1

- Walking School Bus database established
- 150 independent walkers
- Previously 18 children in 4 buses
- Now 75 children in 8 buses



Thank You