



DOUBLE THE FEET ON THE STREET

NZ Walking Conference 2008

4-5 August, Auckland

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Presentation title	Smart driving and parking to liven up Blenheim, increase average travel speeds, and benefit from emissions trading.		
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>Blenheim with a population of 28,000 is lucky to have few congestion problems, no traffic lights, short travel distances, and a sunny climate. However, increasing traffic and travel costs are reducing average travel speeds, and threatening the liveliness of the town.</p> <p>Smart driving means driving at 30 kph rather than 50 kph on most Blenheim streets to reduce number and severity of accidents, make streets safe for children to walk and bike to school, reduce traffic noise, reduce acceleration and braking, reduce fuel use, reduce waiting time at roundabouts and intersections, and make driving less stressful.</p> <p>Smart driving also means increasing the life of both engines in the car - the one under the bonnet and the one in the driver's body. Many trips around Blenheim are less than 2 km which is bad for the car's engine as it barely warms up. Drivers need at least 30 minutes moderate exercise per day to make their engines work efficiently. This can best be done by walking or cycling short distances rather than driving. Lack of exercise can shorten the body's engine life by 5 years.</p> <p>Blenheim is the sunshine capital of New Zealand and the bright sun can cook cars. The best place to park the car is at home in the garage. The next best place is under a tree at the many sports grounds and public places within 10 to 20 minutes of work places. The worst place is in an exposed car park right next to the work place. This is bad for the car and also bad for business as it makes it harder for clients and customers to access that business.</p> <p>During the 1970's, Ivan Illich pointed out that the american driver averaged 5mph when all vehicle and parking costs are included, and the time spent working to pay for those costs. Many Blenheim drivers now only average 8kph but this can be substantially increased with more walking and cycling, and by deducting exercise time from travel time.</p> <p>A New Zealand emission trading scheme (ETS) is proposed to include forestry starting this year, and transport starting next year. Trees soak up CO2 and are a cost effective way of tackling climate change. Marlborough has 300 forest growers, some of whom could donate 1% of ETS income to provide incentives for smart driving and parking. This would encourage more tree planting and highlight the multiple benefits of trees for storing carbon, providing shelter, and enhancing the landscape.</p> <p>Marlborough has many businesses keen on reducing carbon footprints. Sponsoring smart driving and parking would help achieve this. It would also improve the health and safety of their staff.</p> <p>Smart driving and parking will reduce a wide range of costs and should attract local and central Govt sponsorship.</p> <p>A proposal is being developed to reward smart driving and parking with substantial weekly spot prizes. This should make a substantial difference to traffic volume and speed, and get more people on the streets to liven up Blenheim.</p>		

Author Profile

I have taken an interest in energy efficiency since the 1970's and in tackling climate change since 1989. I have been farming for 40 years and tree planting for the last 15. I see tree planting as a great way to remove CO2 from the atmosphere, and solid wood buildings to store that carbon.

I now live in Blenheim and enjoy getting around by walking, cycling, electric scooter and hybrid car, in that order. Marlborough, and several organisations which I belong to, have a strong interest in sustainability and reducing carbon footprints.