

Living Streets Aotearoa



www.livingstreets.org.nz

Annual Report

2006-2007

Living Streets Aotearoa

We are an independent not-for-profit organization that advocates for improved conditions for pedestrians and walkers and promotes walking-friendly communities.

Our Vision

More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places - young and old, fast and slow, walking, sitting and standing, commuting, shopping, between appointments, for exercise, for leisure and for pleasure.

Our Mission

We will energetically and creatively persuade decision-makers, officials and the public of the importance and desirability of walking and attractive public spaces.

Note: Living Streets Aotearoa New Zealand uses 'walking' to mean to go about on foot either with or without assistance such as a wheelchair or walking stick.

Executive Council 2006-2007

Celia Wade-Brown (president)
Mike Mellor (vice-president)
Andy Smith (treasurer)
Graeme Easte (secretary)
Daphne Bell
Roger Boulter
Ralph Chapman
Carina Duke

Staff 2006-2007

Liz Thomas (director)
Lily Linton (administrator, part-time)

Living Streets Aotearoa

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2007 President's Report to Living Streets Aotearoa AGM 27/10/07

1st April 2006 – 31st March 2007

We are now in our sixth year of existence as Living Streets Aotearoa. Recognition of the importance of walking, nationally and internationally, is growing, although this is not always reflected in local transport and planning policy. Human induced Climate Change has reached wide acceptance across sectors and across parliament as a whole. Each report seems to bring more serious news; measurements show greater emissions over the recent past, worse predictions of positive feedback systems and greater likely temperatures. It's urgent to move from acceptance to action.

Therefore, making towns and cities more walkable is one of the most important things we can do. We also need research that specifically shows that more walkable cities reduce carbon emissions rather than just improving our quality of life. Behaviour change is difficult to measure so we hear of challenges to the cost-effectiveness of "soft" interventions. Rather than dismissing these critics as ideologically driven, it's important to frame a strong argument based on quantitative as well as qualitative evidence. Longer timeframes and lower discount rates will also favour sustainable transport solutions.



Our Executive Council members have worked constructively together and I'd like to thank them all for their contributions. Wendy Everingham is standing down and I'd like to thank her for her unfailing responses, ideas and community sense. We shall miss her at a national level but I'm sure she'll keep working with the Banks Peninsula Community and Living Streets Canterbury. The hour long (and occasionally longer) phone conferences are pretty draining but some advice on meeting prioritising has helped us spend more time on the important parts of our agenda. Thanks also to people's responses by email when necessary. Mike Mellor has overseen employment and legal matters with his usual attention to detail, as well as leading the Wellington branch. Jackie Bell has successfully taken on the editorial role for Footprints. Thanks to Daphne for work on the Walking Charter's promulgation. Sincere thanks also to our Auckland duo, treasurer Andy Smith and secretary, Graeme Easte. We generally distinguish between governance and management well and don't micro-manage.

Andrew Macbeth has considered walking and cycling matters in Land Transport NZ's research reference group. Several members have ably represented us on the Walking and Cycling National Advisory Committee and its Implementation Initiative Working Groups. Many local groups are emerging and I'd like to thank the enthusiasts that lead them.

The Living Streets Aotearoa website usage and content has continued to grow. Our voluntary Webmaster, Robert Davies, deserves considerable credit. It includes local and international links, events, maps, suggestions of who to consult and all our minutes and reports. In 2007/08 we will re-evaluate what is held on www.livingstreets.org.nz taking into account a new Communications

Strategy and any development of the Information Centre. Its existence has led to several productive contacts.

This financial year contained the successful 2006 Walking Conference and our considerable contribution to the Melbourne 2006 Walk21 International Walking Conference.

Sometimes a small organisation can find bureaucracy overwhelming but I am pleased that the individuals within the different transport agencies we work with are helpful and supportive of walking as an important mode of transport. They recognise our role as advocates, a nexus for shared ideas and information and a useful ability to lobby at a range of levels. We've begun the same journey with the Public Health policy people but at a relatively informal level so far. The Health Sector seems a more complex structure than Transport.

Next year I look forward to our AGM being closer to the end of our financial and planning year i.e. sooner after March 31st 2008. Since this year's AGM and annual report are occurring well after the end of March, I would like to make a few remarks covering subsequent months.

I'm delighted we were able to send our director to Toronto for the 2007 International Walking Conference and look forward to maintaining our links with Walk21, International Federation of Pedestrians and other groups.

Post March 2007, I would like to mention that the Next Steps Review, combining Land Transport NZ and Transit and reviewing the NZ Land Transport Strategy has occupied public sector staff so that our walking concerns have not been at the forefront of activity. Also, a focus the Implementation of the NZ Land Transport Strategy has resulted in amendments to the Land Transport Management Act. Nevertheless, we have achieved the handover from Health Sponsorship Council contract to a direct contractual relationship with Land Transport NZ. The new relationship includes a three year contract, with a clear framework of objectives and reporting that integrates very well with our Strategic Plan. While the processes of large organisations are cumbersome at times, the individuals we've dealt with have been supportive, intelligent and committed to sustainable transport.

Our organisation has taken considerable strides with four employees who share a passion and commitment to walking. Thanks very much to Lily Linton, Fiona Whero, Louise Cheetham and above all, Liz Thomas!

Greater involvement with the Auckland mega-city (in area, if not population) is our next big challenge and having this 2007 AGM and next year's conference and AGM north of the Bombay Hills sets the scene well.

I would also encourage us to remain separate from, but well connected with, Cycling Advocates nationally and locally. We have taken on some joint projects and initiatives with a variety of work-sharing and can learn from each other's organisation and experiences. It does seem to me that the breadth of age, ability and socio-economic status for people who could walk more is much greater than for cycling and the infrastructural needs are different. Let's support each other, especially in terms of land use planning, slower speeds and taxation issues while being strong on our different messages for different audiences. Joint groups or committees can often find cycling dominating because their issues are more specific while walking's needs and attractions are more

diffuse. We need to ensure we are not purely preaching to the converted but adding new voices and ears to our debates and dialogue.

While I remain passionate about the value of walking, I believe it's time to hand over the role of President soon so it doesn't become exclusively identified with one individual. A constitutional amendment to the allowable term would be one mechanism I'd like us to discuss before next year's AGM.



Celia Wade-Brown

Director's Report

Reporting Period

The annual report presented at the Annual General Meeting in November 2006 covered activities during the period December 2005 – November 2006. To bring the activities report in line with the financial report, this annual report covers activities during the period April 2006 – March 2007. This means there will be some overlap with last year's report on activities. The 2008 Annual General Meeting will be held earlier in the year, in July 2008, and the Annual Report will cover activities during the period April 2007 – March 2008.

Membership and newsletter

Living Streets grew during the year with the number of members rising to over a hundred. The newsletter Footprints was revamped and a new volunteer editor took over from Regional Public Health, who had previously provided a staff member to produce the newsletter. The newsletter now comes out on a regular quarterly basis.

Contract with Health Sponsorship Council

Living Streets was sub-contracted by the Health Sponsorship Council (HSC) to run several projects covered in the contract for walking and cycling between HSC and Land Transport NZ as part of the "Getting There" strategy. The contract between Living Streets and HSC was renewed in July 2006, and the Cycling Advocates' Network (CAN) was also contracted by HSC for a cycling network development programme during the same period.

In order to make best use of both organisation's limited resources, CAN moved into the office Living Streets was leasing from HSC, and a Memorandum of Understanding between the two

organisations was drawn up covering arrangements for sharing the office and equipment. This proved very beneficial to both parties and working together resulted in synergies.

Walking User Group Network Development

During the year the existing groups in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch were supported with visits, information and advice. Contact was made with people in other centres about setting up walking groups, and groups were formed in Hamilton and Taupo. A handbook for Walking User Groups was developed and distributed to the existing and the new groups. The local groups worked with their local Councils on walking plans, wrote submissions and raised awareness about walking through campaigns and events such as local fairs. Living Streets worked with CAN to set up the Christchurch Active Transport Forum which had its first meeting in February.

Community Street Reviews

The second set of three trial community street reviews were carried out in April 2006 with revised rating forms. A survey of local authorities and the methods they use to measure walkability was also carried out. The final report on the project was delivered to HSC. A workshop was held at the New Zealand Walking conference in November, when groups went out and used the rating forms, and gave feedback and discussed them. Land Transport NZ now have the final report and we are liaising with them over printing of a user handbook.

Living Streets was contracted to run six community street reviews with vision and mobility impaired participants as part of a Land Transport NZ research project to develop a database of walkability that includes pedestrian ratings of routes as well as measurement of physical and operational characteristics.

WalkIT

The WalkIT resource database of information on walking was launched in December. One of the initiatives under the “Getting There” implementation plan is to set up an information centre for walking and cycling. Until it is decided how WalkIT will fit into the larger information centre, promotion of WalkIT has been kept low key, through agency newsletters and other publications, and information given out at the Walk21 International Walking conference in Melbourne and at the New Zealand Walking conference. Living Streets has been contracted to maintain WalkIT in its present form until decisions about the larger information centre are made.

Walking Maps

The Newtown Walking Map was launched in October 2006, and HSC ran workshops around the country on how to use the Walking Maps Toolboxes to assist community groups and schools develop their own walking maps. Living Streets was approached by several councils and groups interested in developing walking maps for their communities.

“Getting There – on foot, by cycle” implementation

Living Streets worked with other agencies on the “Getting There” national committee to develop the “Getting There” implementation plan which was launched in July. Living Streets developed a three year walking network development plan as the basis for a contract with Land Transport NZ to carry out implementation initiative 8, Strengthening the User Groups Network, from 2007 - 2010. Living Streets is represented on the National Advisory Group and the four Working Groups set up so far to under the Implementation Plan.

Community Partnership funding

The Community Partnership funding programme administered by the HSC was expanded this year to include walking projects. Seventeen organisations were given funding of up to \$1000 for walking projects including production of walking maps and school and community walking events.

Walking Conferences

The second New Zealand Walking conference was held in Christchurch, with over 130 delegates from health, recreation, transport, local government and advocacy organisations. The Minister of Transport, Annette King spoke at the conference. Feedback from conference delegates was very positive.

Submissions

LSA sent in submissions to the Select Inquiry on Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes, and on the draft NZ Energy Strategy and draft NZ Energy Conservation strategy. In addition, local groups have made submissions on various proposals and plans in their communities.

Walk Wellington

During the year Walk Wellington increased the number of regular guided walks from four a week to every day, with two evening walks a week during summer. In addition to the daily walks, specific personalised walks were run for tour groups, schools and cruise ship passengers. Over one thousand people were led on guided walk by a team of fourteen volunteer guides, trained and supported by volunteer co-ordinators. Walk Wellington is referred to in the New Zealand editions of world-wide publications such as Lonely Planet, Rough Guide, and Fodors Guide.