



Living Streets Aotearoa

Welcome to the October 2024 eBulletin from Living Streets Aotearoa

We want more people walking and enjoying public spaces be they young or old, fast or slow, whether walking, sitting, commuting, shopping, between appointments, or out on the streets for exercise, for leisure or for pleasure.

In this issue:

- What it's like walking with a guide dog - Carl Lintott shares his experiences
- Rental e-scooters under scrutiny in New Zealand and Australia
- Setting of Speed Limits Rule revised – what does it mean for pedestrians?
- What's your view on automated vehicles and their impact on walkability?

What it's like walking with a guide dog - Carl Lintott shares his experiences



Carl Lintott from Christchurch was part of the panel discussion at our Walking Summit last year. He talked about the challenges of being a deafblind pedestrian with a white cane. These challenges included interactions with cars, scooters and cyclists, vegetation blocking footpaths, the location of parking meters on footpaths & roadworks. (You can see the video here – from 5:35 to 12:40 mins: [Walking into the Future - Pedestrian Perspectives.](#))

Since the Walking Summit, Carl has been matched with a new guide dog, Michael. We asked Carl how having this dog has changed his daily walking activities.

Could you tell us about your new guide dog?

My new guide dog is Michael, a two-year old yellow labrador. He is my fourth guide dog. He arrived in October 2023 and we graduated as a guide dog team in early 2024. Michael has

quickly become my best friend. When he is not working, he loves to run zoomies outside or play with his squeaky toys. We also share a birthday.

How has having a guide dog helped you with walking in Christchurch?

Michael has made things much easier for me. He knows to slow down and lets me know when we will be walking over rough, broken or uneven paths. He lets me know about hazards on the path, and also stops me when cars come out of driveways. Electric cars are very quiet and hard for him to hear. He also tries to walk me safely around overhanging trees when the footpath is wide enough.

How does having a guide dog compare with when you walked with a cane?

Using a cane was slow and I had to really concentrate. In strong winds I would get blown off course but with Michael, he keeps me grounded and on the right path. I still need to focus on Michael, but now I trust him to keep me safe.

People used to push me out of their way on shared paths when I used my white cane. They are much more respectful when they see my guide dog. Cyclists and people on scooters now slow down and give us more room. When it's very sunny or windy, my eyes don't work at all. Before I would get scared in case I got lost, but I know Michael will help me get to where I want to go. Using a white cane was much more scary for me.

What are the challenges of walking with a guide dog?

A new challenge in my area is the new shared paths. They are fantastic to walk on, nice and wide, plenty of room for walkers and cyclists. But when I am on the footpath on the roadside and need to cross the shared path exit, the give way warning for cyclists is painted at the road kerb, not before they get to the footpath. It's scary when the cyclists don't slow down, and don't see Michael and me. Michael always stops me, but the cyclists are sometimes so close that I can feel the wind as they fly across the footpath in front of us.

There are other hazards we encounter that could hurt Michael. For example, broken bottles,, karaka bushes that drop toxic berries, dogs that are aggressive and very friendly dogs whose owners let them race up to Michael when he is working. Michael is very obedient. Through his harness I can feel him reacting to things around us. I can control him when this happens, but I can't control other people's dogs.

I also still struggle with road and footpath works where workers put up signs. Michael stops me, but we can't read the signs and there's nobody around to help us.

How do people react to you and your guide dog?

People are much more respectful when I have Michael with me. When I was using my white cane, people saw me as blind and maybe a bit stupid when they realised I was also deaf. But with my guide dog they take time to listen to me.

Most people understand that when Michael has his harness on he is working and they leave us alone, or they ask if they can say hello to him. Sometimes people do rush up to Michael. I am very lucky that he usually ignores them. If people don't ask before they say hello to Michael, I will growl at them for distracting him. He needs to focus on me to keep me safe.

What would you like to see change to help people like yourself with walking in their town or city? Do you have a message for city councils?

I would like to see better footpaths, with less holes and bumps. Also, better path maintenance to clean up broken glass and other hazards.

I would like drivers to not park their cars across driveways and footpaths, making Michael and I need to step onto the road to go around them. If the road is busy, we have to give up, turn around and go home.

Vehicles should be kept off the shared paths in the central city, or at least slow down to a walking pace. Cyclists should have speed limits on shared paths. I'm sure some cyclists go as fast or faster than cars.

People using the shared paths that cross other footpaths need to slow down and give way to pedestrians on the footpath as well as the cars on the road. Maybe the Give Way markings should be before the footpath not at the road edge.

All working dogs, like Michael, need to be safe while they are working. For this we need much better dog control rules and dog owners need to learn what to do around working dogs.

Setting of Speed Limits Rule 2024 comes into effect on 30 October

Minister of Transport Simeon Brown has replaced the previous Setting of Speed Limits Rule, which enabled significant speed reductions, with a new Rule that makes speed reductions much harder to put in place.

The evidence shows that slower speeds save lives, in particular pedestrian lives. [As we said in our submission on the draft new Rule](#):

“Speed limit reductions have been shown to have significant safety benefits. One of the most effective means to lower speeds is to have lower speed limits. Anything that makes it harder to set lower limits, as this proposed set of rule changes appears to do, works against making a safe land transport system and is something we do not support. “

To get more people walking more often, pedestrians need to be safe – and to feel that they are safe. Therefore, Living Streets Aotearoa supports safer speeds, and [we have consistently opposed this new Rule](#).

[According to the Ministry of Transport](#), the new Rule:

- requires speed limit reductions on certain types of roads made since 1 January 2020 to be reversed by 1 July 2025, with certain exceptions.
- requires variable speed limits on roads outside school gates during drop-off and pick-up times by 1 July 2026 (with some exceptions) and allows schools with electronic variable speed limit signs to put them on for up to 10 minutes at other times when there's significant activity outside the school.
- strengthens consultation requirements, with an associated requirement to include a cost-benefit disclosure statement for each proposed speed limit change.
- sets a new binding speed limit classification schedule, specifying speed limits for each road type.
- enables speed limits of 110km/h and 120km/h on expressways built and which will be maintained to safely support this speed.
- makes speed management plans optional and removes regional speed management plans.

Each Road Controlling Authority will need to consider the details in the new Rule and consider how it applies. We will be encouraging and supporting Road Controlling Authorities to take the necessary steps to make pedestrians, cyclists – and drivers and passengers - safer on the roads they control. The safety of pedestrians isn't a "nice to have" – it's an essential feature of a thriving society.

We'll continue to cover the many factors that contribute to pedestrian safety in future issues.

Rental e-scooters under scrutiny in New Zealand and Australia



Several cities are banning rentals. In our last e-Bulletin we reported that all Beam e-scooters had been removed from Auckland streets, following a Council decision. The e-scooter hire company was said to be exceeding the number of permitted scooters operating at any one time.

Authorities in Wellington, Canberra, Brisbane, and Townsville have now also ordered the Beam e-scooters off their streets for the same reason.

In Melbourne all e-scooter rentals have been banned from the streets, with authorities citing safety concerns. Lord Mayor Reece said: "The safety of Melburnians is being constantly jeopardised by riders doing the wrong thing – riding on footpaths, double [riding], riding without helmets and riding under the influence. E-scooters are thrown across our footpaths, parks and public spaces – creating trip hazards. Residents, visitors and traders have had enough."

Melbourne was the second biggest city globally to ban shared e-scooters, following Paris' decision last year. Like the French capital, private e-scooters are still permitted.

What is Living Streets Aotearoa doing? Whilst we are not against the use of e-scooters in towns and cities, we do not want them used on footpaths. We will continue to encourage the New Zealand Government to change the law so that e-scooters are taken off footpaths, and instead make it legal for them to be used in cycleways (they aren't currently). [Our policy statement is here.](#)

We are also adding our voice to the call for Waka Kotahi (NZTA) to allow Ario to continue reparking its e-scooters by remote control. The recent decision by the New Zealand Transport Agency to make the Ario e-scooter company turn off its remote reparking feature has drawn criticism from disability groups.

Chris Teo-Sherrell from Living Streets says any measure which makes e-scooters more pedestrian friendly is worthwhile and remote parking is one such feature.

[Read our news release here.](#)

What you can do. Check whether your Council has a decision on renewing, or allowing, e-scooter licences coming up soon. You can remind them about the many problems with e-scooters. Implore them to ban e-scooters from footpaths or, at the very least, require that they are only parked in designated areas and be ridden at no more than 10km/h if on footpaths.

What's your view on automated vehicles and their impact on walkability?

Living Streets Aotearoa is a member organisation of the [International Federation of Pedestrians](#), and they're conducting a survey on a very important topic:

"One day, automated vehicles could be fully able and responsible for all driving on all roadways. How do you feel about this? To preserve and enhance walkability, the International Federation of Pedestrians (IFP) has partnered with Pedestrian Mobility Switzerland to conduct a public opinion survey about automated vehicles and their possible impacts. Thank you in advance for taking 10 – 15 minutes to respond!"

<https://tinyurl.com/PedMobilitySwissSurvey>

The survey closes on 1 December - it would be great if we had a good selection of responses from Aotearoa.

Ways to connect with Living Streets Aotearoa



ABOUT LIVING STREETS AOTEAROA

Living Streets Aotearoa is the national organization promoting walking-friendly communities. You can find out more about us at www.livingstreets.org.nz.

We send these occasional e-bulletins to keep you informed because we understand you have an interest in walking. You can opt out of this and ALL future emails from us: [Please don't mail me again](#)

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