

Living Streets Aotearoa



Media release for immediate distribution, 1 July 2019

Living Streets Aotearoa is delighted to see the commitment of the Associate Minister, Julie Anne Genter, and Ministry of Transport to ensuring that pedestrians and other road users are safe and feel safe.

Pedestrians of all ages and abilities have been concerned at proposals to compromise their safety and their feeling of safety by allowing bicycles, e-scooters and possibly other devices designed to be ridden at much higher speeds than walking speed onto footpaths.

"It is reassuring that the Minister and her officials recognise perception of safety as an important determinant of whether people are willing to walk or not", says Ellen Blake, tumuaki tuarua of Living Streets Aotearoa. "Walking is the important glue of the transport system that connects all the other modes. Walking is good for your health, the economy, social interaction and the climate too, so it makes an important contribution to several of the Governments goals".

In its recent brief on the draft Road Safety Strategy 2020-2030, MOT has said

We also know that travelling on our roads and footpaths can be stressful for many people at times, and we can do more to make this safer and more pleasant for all of us. A safe road transport system ensures that people feel safe to walk or bus or bike, and ensures we design our towns and cities as places people want to be in, not just to travel through.

And on June the 7th, at the opening of Palmerston North's new pedestrian and cyclist bridge and path - He Ara Kotahi - the Minister said that she believes both cyclists and pedestrians should be able to feel safe as they move about their towns and cities.

"These are reassuring words for all those people who depend on footpaths to get about safely. The absence of vehicles together with the low speed of pedestrians on footpaths make them suitable for everyone to use with confidence," Ellen said.

"We commend the Minister and officials for indicating that they intend to keep footpaths for feet and people with genuine disabilities. They can only do this by ensuring that modes capable of markedly faster speeds than pedestrians are kept off footpaths. Living Streets supports safer speeds on roads, or that dedicated space on the roadway is provided, so that cyclists and similar vehicle users feel safe."

Living Streets and the Footpaths4Feet coalition look forward to working with the Government to improve conditions for pedestrians to attract even more people to make walking a regular part of their day.

ENDS

About Living Streets

Living Streets Aotearoa is New Zealand's national walking and pedestrian organisation, providing a positive voice for people on foot and working to promote walking-friendly planning and development around the country. Our vision is "More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places".

The objectives of Living Streets Aotearoa are:

- ! to promote walking as a healthy, environmentally-friendly and universal means of transport and recreation
- ! to promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities
- ! to work for improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrians and runners including walking surfaces, traffic flows, speed and safety
- ! to advocate for greater representation of pedestrian concerns in national, regional and urban land use and transport planning.

For more information, please see: www.livingstreets.org.nz

Contact

Andy Smith, President Living Streets Aotearoa

021 474 740