



Submission on the Tasman District Council Draft Walking and Cycling Strategy

7 March 2022

[Parents for Climate Aotearoa](#) is a group of largely parents and wider whānau throughout Aotearoa. We are deeply concerned for our families and particularly the future of our tamariki and mokopuna in a rapidly warming world. Our parents come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, who stand for climate justice, to ensure all children have a safe climate and world to live in. We are very concerned for those already vulnerable, marginalised and whose voices are ignored in our society. They are most at risk of the consequences of climate change and by poorly thought out mitigation measures. Our society's role, led by the central and local government, is to ensure that no one is left behind. Our lack of urgency and action is being felt today with worsening mental health of our tamariki, rangatahi and parents and will be felt by our children tomorrow - many people, particularly women and children are hurting today around the world, from the consequences of global warming.

Early in 2021, we surveyed our members throughout the country on a range of issues covered in the Climate Change Commission Draft Report. We had 21 respondents from Tasman, with a mix of living in rural and urban areas. The survey included respondents' lived experiences, systemic barriers preventing transition and how important meaningful change is for them and their whānau. We have weaved some of their stories and answers from our Tasman respondents into our submission below.

We welcome this strategy, including its goals and purpose. It will make families living in urban environments in Tasman safer, healthier and more pleasant. This strategy is a big step towards addressing what our members in Tasman and throughout Aotearoa consistently state, that improvements to the accessibility and safety of walking and cycling is a key way to help their families reduce emissions and improve their lives, especially their children. The next 8 years are crucial for mitigating climate change and limiting its adverse effects. Transport emissions are key in climate change mitigation AND human health. Transport emissions have been driving New Zealand's emissions upward in recent times. At the same time, reducing and ultimately eliminating emissions from transport is one of the more straightforward (low hanging fruit), when compared to other emission sources.

We see active transport as key to rapidly reducing transport emissions this decade. We regularly submit to the government on this and in our submission to the government's Emissions Reduction Plan last year, we cited this newly released Walking and Cycling Strategy as an example of councils taking leadership in active transport and also asked the government to support this work councils do more:

“While there are still a few loud voices opposing any change, there is a growing number of residents throughout NZ that are supporting their councils to make significant changes. This

is resulting in plans such as the newly released Tasman District Council [Walking and Cycling Strategy 2022-2052](#). The values and purpose of the Transport Policy Statement has helped change the focus and goals for local consultations. This coupled with growing public awareness of the health, climate and equity issues, some councils are trying to do what is needed to enable modeshift and increase wellbeing. The government should help accelerate these plans, by providing more funding to implement them in the first two budgets.”

We also went on so say:

“One of the major barriers to changing infrastructure and road environment in urban areas, is funds for councils to implement them. Many council consultations have long timeframes because of costs. There are many low cost measures that could be done quickly, such as traffic calming and low speed residential streets with temporary structures that would have immediate results in both livability and promoting active transport. Many communities are keen to help these implement projects, which could further reduce costs.”

Councils are the ones who are leading the change in our communities and with that comes with significant challenges. Some of these challenges are funding and resources and crucially, a widespread lack of public understanding of the issues and the need for solutions. Councils cannot do this alone. We encourage you to continue to work with community groups and organisations, such as the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum, for support for enacting this strategy. We will support you by continuing to advocate for more resources, funds and good enabling legislation to facilitate change from the central government.

The following are our recommendations to strengthen the strategy and improve its chances of success.

Health Co-benefits

We recommend in your communications and community outreach to put a strong focus on the many health co-benefits of the strategy. Our young people are aware and worried about climate change and environmental degradation. This is one of our main concerns. A key to help them is to give them agency to contribute to addressing issues AND seeing adults around them lead by example in taking action. Many young primary school age kids are aware and know that how we move around needs to change.

Our parents and caregivers are faced with many challenges in trying to do the right thing for their children and taking action on climate change. It is seriously affecting their mental health too, with most respondents to our survey very to extremely anxious about their future if the world doesn't take rapid action on climate change. This strategy will improve mental health for our families by:

- reducing the structural barriers for families to choose non car travel, especially around safety, including perceived safety
- Leadership: demonstrate the council is taking local and global issues seriously
- Walking and biking is a great way to start the day

While people are very concerned about what might happen with climate change, many of our members are excited about the possibilities of living in a low carbon community as well. They see the many positives and potential to make their families' lives better.

"I would welcome living in a sustainable way. Things might require a bit of adjustment at first, but we can get used to what is needed. There will also be many co-benefits to enjoy"

"I'm excited for it"

Air pollution is a big deal and most people underestimate how harmful it is, especially to our children in Aotearoa. We commend your recent campaign on air pollution "Air Aware" and encourage you to use this in enacting this strategy and further consider partnering/collaborating with other organisations such as the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board to take this further, with a clear focus on the harm and solutions and co-benefits. We have been involved with a global campaign on air pollution and its effects on our children. That experience has demonstrated that focusing on air pollution is a good motivator for supporting change.

Schools and child travel

Our children are some of the most vulnerable street users. This strategy will help in reducing risk and empowering kids and youth to travel with increasing independence. We hear again and again safety concerns and near misses our families have around schools. Many just do not feel it is safe for their kids to walk, scooter or bike to school. Many parents do not feel safe biking themselves.

We recommend prioritising infrastructure around schools as soon as possible. These include increasing the number of crossings on the most used routes into schools, reducing car parking in high risk areas such as adjacent to intersections and crossings and traffic calming that reduces and slows traffic in school zones and those adjacent streets. Wide shared paths on the main routes to schools are ideal for families and groups of kids travelling to school by foot, scooter and bike. Travel planning is good, though many parents and caregivers will not change their travel mode until they see safety improvements. Children's experience of walking and cycling is not the same as that of adults, and parents' and childrens' perspectives should form a key part of the development of these strategies.

Survey quote: "Put in better cycleways and more of them, carless days and stop car drop offs at schools"

Education

While we acknowledge the challenges councils face, councils are leaders in their community and so have an important role in community education. The Tasman District Council has been investing in education across a range of areas and we acknowledge this. We are concerned that this aspect is not currently a big enough focus in this strategy. Education covers a range of issues:

1. starting with why change is needed. This is clearly laid out in the strategy document. It is important that this is translated to regular public communication through a variety of mediums.
2. With the why, the positives and co-benefits need to be clearly communicated.
3. Most people are worried that the solutions to climate change will be worse for them than the impacts of climate change. This is why it is important to keep explaining

how the current situation of increasing vehicle travel is affecting the community, like increasing times to destinations, increasing health effects from pollution and unsafe streets for our kids. And at the same time keep on explaining why the solutions, as outlined in this strategy will make life better for everyone, etc.

Education is a fundamental part of change. The council needs to make public education a focus and partner with its community in a range of ways. People trust leaders in their local communities, as well as friends and family. Studies have shown that one of the strongest climate actions individuals can take is discussing climate change with friends and family. A behaviour change campaign centred around community discussions, rather than individual change, would help to bring more people along on the journey.

Education campaigns also need to work with a recognition that people are in different stages of life, different communities, and different stages of their climate journey. Communication plans could also include differentiated messaging for people already engaged, people firmly against, and people who can be persuaded. Our communities need storytelling and a strong vision, brought to them with creativity and imagination. Rather than technical detail, people need to see a positive vision for the better world we can create together. Minds and hearts aren't changed by facts and figures, they're changed by stories and values and discussions with trusted family and friends.

"Tell the truth and communicate regularly, like for covid, on the nature of the problem, what we don't know, what are the options and what is their plan. My partner needs better a bus system to commute to work. Single occupancy car travel needs to be disincentivised and speeds needs to be reduced."

This education campaign needs the following:

- Multi level and targeted across all platforms based on shared values and vision.
- Partnering with community groups and government agencies.
- Upfront about the uncertainties and what we do and don't know.
- Upfront that change will be hard at times, harder on some than others with a big focus on the win-wins - we need to focus on co-benefits and how our lives can and will be better, like improving community health.
- Education campaigns based on storytelling and vision setting.
- Education on what it will cost socially and economically if we don't act.
- Be culturally responsive and appropriate

Accessibility

There are a wide range of users of our streets. It is important that this strategy has a disability and accessibility centred approach. By designing our cities and transport systems for children, for parents, and for disabled people, we can ensure that our transport systems work for everyone, not just able-bodied commuters. Shared paths and footpaths in particular need close attention with the range of modes and age ranges of users. These paths that have different users need to be wide enough for families and mobility scooters to use safely. Community education will also be important on how to use them. Parking is also a concern

for families with young children and those with lower mobility. We recommend targeting parking close to shops and schools for those with the most needs.

We also recommend communicating how this strategy integrates with regional public transport plans and connecting Nelson City Council active transport strategies. Bus services in particular (like the Richmond ring route) will help improve accessibility, but again needs more public education as the Tasman community is not used to using buses.

Rural Communities

Transport options are a big concern for our rural families. We recommend that in the future this strategy is expanded to include rural areas, particularly the smaller villages and areas around rural schools. Integration with bus and car sharing services is key. Here are some quotes from our survey:

“I live remotely and am unsure how we rural folk will cope” when asked about decarbonising the transport system.

“Make better safer cycling routes from rural areas to towns.”

“Living rurally with a young family, biking is a hard option. Our road is very narrow with no footpath/edge to bike on. The road is very windy with a speed limit of 80kms. I would bike more if it was safer to. Roads need to be upgraded in rural communities to allow for safe travel. If this isn't done before petrol prices rise significantly then I am anxious about being cut off from society due to our isolation vs cost of petrol.”

We would like to see the timeline of this strategy speed up, concentrating first around schools. We acknowledge there is a tension in asking the implementation of the strategy to be speed up and at the same time taking the time to bring the community along with you as much as possible. This is the challenge we face with climate change action and it must be done. Clear communication is key and we hope through empowering the community with a better understanding of the issues and solutions, the community will back you.

Finally, thank you for developing this strategy that will have a long lasting impact on Tasman's urban communities. We urge you to finalise it as soon as possible and get to work.

Ngā mihi,

Olivia Hyatt (Board member) on behalf of Parents for Climate Aotearoa