

Research into Walk to School Promotions

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Executive Summary:

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) commissioned this research project to investigate walk to school promotions which have been successfully initiated around the world and to assess which of these would be the most suitable for a national promotion in New Zealand. Relevant activities were identified and analysed according to a variety of assessment criteria including the target audience, timeframe, budget, agencies involved with its delivery, promotional materials used, ongoing requirements and the long term success of the programme elsewhere.

The various initiatives investigated were categorised into three main groups for assessment, dependent on their timeframes. The first of these were one-off promotions held irregularly during the year, such as once or twice a year. The most common example of this type of initiative is International Walk to School Day which is celebrated at schools around the world at the beginning of October every year. This has been expanded to a week in some places to try to achieve a more sustainable shift in travel modes used for the journey to school. These types of events have been used effectively overseas to launch an ongoing initiative by introducing children to the concept of walking to school and generating interest for the more permanent programmes which follow. However, in isolation, one-off events do not appear to have a lasting impact on children's travel behaviour as many families need constant reminders and encouragement to walk to school on a regular basis.

The second category involves regular promotions which are held frequently throughout the year, for example once a week/month. The Walking Wednesday or WoW concept is an increasingly popular example of this type of promotion as it is a simple and affordable method of gradually increasing the proportion of children walking to school on a regular basis for the entire year. In the final category there are ongoing walk to school promotions which are run continuously throughout the year to encourage children to use active transport every day. Frequent Walker Programmes, which reward children for the number of walking trips they make or the total distance they travel, are in this group and can effectively alter the everyday travel patterns of children on their journey to school in the long term.

Overall, two main recommendations emerged from this research which EECA could consider introducing as a national walk to school promotion in New Zealand over the next year. The first of these involves a National Walk to School Day at the beginning of the new school year which is used to launch a regular Walking Wednesday programme that continues once a week/month for the remainder of the year. Similarly, the second option includes an initial week-long walk to school event to introduce children to the concept of walking before launching an ongoing Frequent Walkers incentive programme to encourage children to develop and maintain an everyday walking habit. Both of these promotions have proved their worth in similar situations overseas and, by learning from these examples, EECA could implement either of these programmes in New Zealand primary schools to successfully promote and facilitate the regular use of active travel modes for the school journey.

Introduction:

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) has been actively involved with the national promotion of Walk to School initiatives since the production of the first Walking School Bus kit in 2001. Since that time, EECA's involvement has expanded to include School Travel Plans and the promotion of International Walk to School Day. However, the timing of the latter event is inconvenient for New Zealand as it is scheduled to coincide with the beginning of the new school year in the northern hemisphere, which is near the end of the school year here and often occurs in term holidays, so it is not the best time to start promoting walking to school. Also, because this event usually only consists of a one day promotion, it has a limited impact on the everyday travel patterns of children on the school journey in the long term.

EECA therefore felt that it would be beneficial to stage a national walk to school event near the beginning of the school year. This idea was discussed with relevant agencies at the end of 2004 and although there was support for the concept, it was decided that the possibilities needed to be explored in more depth before such an event could be organised. Hence, EECA has commissioned this research project to identify and evaluate activities undertaken within communities in New Zealand and overseas which promote walking to school and have achieved a sustainable mode shift away from private motor vehicle use. This report will explore relevant promotions that have been successfully implemented elsewhere and assess their applicability to the New Zealand environment before making recommendations on the best option/s which could be considered for adoption in New Zealand in the next year.

Walk to School Promotional Activities:

By examining relevant websites on the internet and contacting school travel coordinators in the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, a wide variety of appropriate walk to school activities were identified and thoroughly investigated. These promotions have been categorised into three main groups for assessment, as determined by their timeframes. These are:

1. One-off events which are held for a day/week irregularly, for example once a year.
2. Regular promotions which are held frequently throughout the school year, such as once a week/month/term.
3. Ongoing promotions which are run continuously, most days throughout the school year.

Each of the possible options in these categories which could be considered by EECA for a national walk to school promotion will be described in more depth and assessed according to the following criteria:

- ◆ the target audience of the promotion
- ◆ the timeframe in which it was held
- ◆ the budget for the promotion
- ◆ the agencies involved with its delivery
- ◆ the promotional materials used
- ◆ any ongoing requirements which are necessary to sustain the programme
- ◆ the long term success of the promotion elsewhere, in terms of an increase in the proportion of children walking/cycling to and from school and a related decrease in private vehicle use on the school journey
- ◆ any other results from previous monitoring of the programme elsewhere.

Following this assessment, recommendations will be made regarding the most appropriate walk to school promotions for the New Zealand context which EECA could consider introducing at local schools over the next year.

1. One-Off Events:

The most common one-off walk to school promotion which has been held at many schools around the world at the beginning of October every year since 2000 is **International Walk to School Day**. In 2004, approximately three million people participated in this event from 36 different countries worldwide. Councils and schools across the globe have found a wide variety of ways to celebrate this occasion. For example, some schools choose a theme for the day and encourage children to dress up accordingly or have celebrities and media along to raise the profile of the event. In other areas, local authorities run competitions between schools, offering a trophy or reward to the school which achieves the greatest increase in the number of children walking to school on that day. The budget for such an event can therefore vary greatly depending on the number of schools involved and how many resources each school wants to use. Some schools or councils have a raffle for all of the children who walk to school and offer grand prizes such as bicycles or sports equipment, which are often donated by local businesses. In many schools, children receive a sticker or printed certificate to reward their efforts and these supplies can usually be provided by a local council or the school itself so require very little funding. Advertising is usually restricted to the regular school newsletters and posters which can be downloaded from the IWalk website and posted around the school grounds and shop windows in the area. Such an event can therefore be staged successfully on a limited budget.

However, as noted in the introduction, the timing of International Walk to School Day is less convenient in New Zealand as it is nearing the end of the school year and often falls in the school holidays, so it is an inappropriate time to try to introduce a new walking initiative. This problem can be overcome by selecting an alternative day to celebrate at a more convenient time. Many local councils overseas hold Walk to School Days on other days throughout the year to mark national or international occasions. For example, in Canada they celebrate Earth Day in April, Move for Health Day in May and Clean Air Day in June which some schools observe with walk to school promotions. Some countries also have National Walk to School Days at a different time of year to remind everyone about the benefits involved. This approach could be adopted in New Zealand by holding a national event near the beginning of the school year, perhaps in March, to encourage families to get into the habit of walking to school for the rest of the year.

It has been acknowledged by many walk to school coordinators that in isolation International Walk to School Day, or a similar one-off event, is unlikely to achieve a substantial shift in travel patterns for the journey to school that will continue in the long term. There do not appear to be any statistics to confirm this fact as most schools conduct surveys to determine the children's school travel mode before such an event is held and again on the actual walk to school day to gauge the success of the event based on the increase in the number of children walking that day. However, this is rarely followed up by another survey a few weeks later to ascertain whether this increase in children walking continued after the promotion, but anecdotal evidence suggests that families return to their usual habits of driving to school soon after the one day event.

In recognition of this sustainability problem the official international event has been expanded to encompass a whole week at the start of October with participating schools encouraged to promote walking to school for all five days if possible. The logic behind this is that families will be more likely to change their travel habits and continue walking after the event if the promotion continues for an entire week, so long term shifts to more sustainable modes of transport are more likely to be achieved. Once again, there does not appear to be any current data to support this assumption as often the areas/schools which are dedicated enough to participate for a whole week are already involved in other walk to school initiatives so it is difficult to isolate the impact of this particular event. In Canada, every province and territory now celebrates this week-long event. All schools that register to participate and fill in a feedback form afterwards are eligible for the National and Provincial Walk to School Awards which recognise the most innovative and successful promotions. Advertising for the event begins as early as May each year with mail-outs, brochures, posters, radio announcements and press releases used to raise community awareness. This has been very successful with participation increasing from just six schools in 1998 to over 2000 schools in 2004 (www.goforgreen.ca). The budget for this event was not available as it is just one component of their broader Active and Safe Routes to School programme. Similarly, there is no data available to support the impact of this event other than the number of schools participating each year and general feedback from schools in which 59% reported an increase in the number of children walking or cycling to school following the event (Ibid).

There is another method which is used to overcome this difficulty of trying to make a long term change with a one-off walking event. Many schools in the northern hemisphere use International Walk to School Day as a launching pad for more regular walk to school promotions which continue throughout the school year and attempt to achieve sustainable modal shifts which will last the test of time. For example, in Manitoba, Canada in 2002 International Walk to School Day marked the official start of the Walking Wednesdays Club at several local schools which were piloting the scheme as part of their broader Active and Safe Routes to School programme (www.asrts@resourceconservation.mb.ca). The one day event was used to raise the profile and awareness of walking in the school community and encourage families to try walking to school, in the hope that they would keep this up at least every Wednesday afterwards. This type of ongoing promotional activity will be discussed further in the following section.

Other schools use a one-off event of this kind to rekindle interest in existing travel initiatives they have operating, such as Walking School Buses. A Walk to School event can provide an ideal opportunity to reward children and parents who have been involved with Walking School Buses for some time, whilst promoting the concept to other families in the school community to encourage them to become involved. Sport Otago in Dunedin successfully employed this approach to sustain their Walking School Bus programme. They staged a one-off Walk to School Challenge in Spring 2004 which involved twelve Dunedin schools for a two week period. Schools were encouraged to promote walking during this time, particularly to families that usually drive, to get as many children walking to school as possible. The school which succeeded in getting the largest proportion of children walking the school journey won \$500 worth of sporting equipment. This was the main expense involved for Sport Otago, other than a few posters which they distributed and the printing of 'travel cards' which were given to the children to record their travel during the challenge. A park and walk scheme was introduced to allow parents who usually drove their children all the way to school to drop them at the starting point of a Walking School Bus route and let them walk the rest of the way with other families (www.iwalktoschool.org).

At Kaikorai Primary School in Dunedin this approach was very successful, with numbers on Walking School Buses increasing from around 15 per Bus to over 50 children on some routes. These numbers have been sustained well into 2005 (Sorrell, pers.com. 01.06.05). Many of these children developed a new walking habit over this two week period and became permanent members of the Walking School Buses, which greatly strengthened the programme. The school was aiming to get all of their 300 pupils walking at least some of the way to school and they were well on the way to achieving that goal with over 200 children walking by the end of this event. Similarly, Victory School in Nelson launched a Walking School Bus programme following their success on International Walk to School Day last year. Local celebrities joined in this one-day celebration and children received small rewards for their efforts. The proportion of children walking to school increased from 59% to 88% on International Walk to School Day. To try to maintain this achievement, three Walking School Buses were started around the area to enable more children to walk on a regular basis (Parfitt, pers.com. 25.05.05).

Another one-off event that has been staged in both the United Kingdom and Canada is a **Guinness World Record Walking Challenge**. On October 8, 2003 the Royal Borough of Kingston and Transport for London, with support from the Metropolitan Police, YMCA and Surrey County Council, set a new World Record for the largest ever Walking School Bus with 1,109 people on board. Four local primary schools were invited to participate based on their geographical proximity to each other and previous commitment to sustainable transport initiatives. Children and parents from these schools gathered together in a local YMCA field and walked along a set route which had been subject to a detailed health and safety report. Staff and volunteers signed in participants and were stationed along the route to ensure everyone's safety. Special guests, celebrities and stilt walkers cheered on participants in a carnival atmosphere and there was wide media coverage of the event (www.iwalktoschool.org).

Transport for London provided £3000 in funding for this event (Ross, pers.com, 14.06.05). This was used to provide every child with a bright orange cap to reward their efforts and enhance their visibility on the streets. This money also provided breakfast for the volunteers, which was an important incentive that ensured there were enough people to help supervise the challenge. These funds also contributed to a clear media strategy to ensure the event was well publicised so everyone in the area was aware of the occasion and maximum participation and impact was achieved.

The main aims of this event were to promote the Walking School Bus programme and encourage families who lived further away to 'park and walk' instead of driving the entire distance to school. A year after the event they had successfully increased the number of Walking School Buses in the district from five to twelve, including more Buses at the schools that had participated in the World Record and new Buses at neighbouring schools which had become interested in the initiative after the publicity of the event. They were also starting a Walking School Bus in the nearby YMCA car park to allow children who lived further away to drive to this point and walk the rest of the way safely to school. This one-off event was therefore successful in achieving its two main goals, although there were no statistics available regarding the actual number of children who walked to school before and after this event to indicate any shifts in modal use for the school journey or any updated figures to analyse its impact in the long term.

A similar event was held more recently in Alberta, Canada. On May 26, 2005 Safe, Healthy, Active People Everywhere (SHAPE), a non-profit organisation concerned with transportation to and from school, partnered by SummerActive and Be Fit For Life centres, encouraged Albertans to participate in a Guinness World Walking Challenge. Although schools were targeted for this event, people from all sectors of the community were welcome to join in from kindergartens to senior citizen groups. Participants registered online prior to the event and had to walk at least one kilometre on the day of the challenge. A total of 79,260 people from 350 different locations around Canada took part in the event, surpassing the old record of 77,500 set in 2001 (www.shapeab.com/events).

The budget for this event was very minimal as it drew largely on existing resources available from the various organisations involved. Every school in Alberta was sent a Healthy Active Schools Resource Book to promote the event and provide schools with plenty of ideas that they could employ to make children more active. This booklet was already produced as part of the ongoing Ever Active Schools Programme funded by the ministries of Alberta Community Development, Health and Wellness and Learning so no additional costs were involved for this event (www.everactive.org). Notices were included in newsletters of schools and interested agencies to promote the event and email lists from these organisations were used to ensure any advertising reached a wide audience for broad awareness of the upcoming challenge. Cooperation between a wide number of agencies was an integral part of this initiative which kept costs down but also required more organisation to coordinate everyone's efforts.

The main aim of this event was to emphasise how easy, convenient and fun it is to walk as a means of transport, especially for children on their way to and from school. There were no travel surveys conducted at the schools involved before or after the event to monitor its impact on the children's travel patterns, and organisers felt that because it was a one-off event it probably did not contribute to a lasting increase in the number of children walking the school journey. However, 375 schools participated in the promotion so organisers now have contacts at all of those schools who they can approach for the next walk to school initiative. The organisers received positive responses from all of the schools involved so they will all be invited to join in International Walk to School Day in October and organisers hope that some of these relationships will be able to be developed further by introducing more regular and ongoing promotions in some areas in the future.

2. Regular Promotions:

The main problem with staging a one-off walk to school promotion is that the increase in the number of children walking can be difficult to maintain after the event. To overcome this issue, some schools hold promotions more frequently, such as once a week/month, to try to get children into the habit of walking on a regular basis, rather than just once or twice a year. One of the most popular promotions of this kind is the **Walking Wednesday** concept which has been adopted by schools in many countries. This is when one day a week is designated as a Walk to School Day to encourage families to slowly break their driving habits and adjust their routines to incorporate walking to school. If Wednesdays are inconvenient, another day of the week can be selected with a similar theme .eg. Marching Mondays, Trekking Tuesdays, Wheeling Wednesdays, Fuel Free/Footloose/Physical Fridays. Some schools find this to be too much of a commitment or do not want to overwhelm parents so prefer to hold this promotion once a month or once a term instead to ease families into walking. Other schools

take a slightly different approach and have a Walking Week once a month/term which includes a walking promotion of this kind every day.

In many schools, children are encouraged to participate in Walking Wednesdays through reward systems. These vary greatly depending on the level of funding and resources available. Some schools offer stickers or other small incentives to all of the children who walk on the given day. In other cases, children have a travel card which they get stamped every time they participate in a Walking Wednesday. Children who live too far away from school to walk the entire distance are able to drive part way and walk the last few blocks to be eligible for a stamp. Some schools have also set up walking tracks around the school grounds which children can walk during their lunch hour to qualify for a stamp if they were unable to walk to school. Once they have filled the card, which may have space for 20-50 trips, the children receive a certificate or prize and go in a raffle draw for a larger prize at the end of each term. This can also be run as an inter-class or inter-school competition with a prize for the class or school that has the highest rate of participation in the Walking Wednesday promotion. Several schools have introduced a Golden Shoe/Boot Award (consisting of an old shoe on a piece of wood, painted gold) which is given to the winning class each month or term. In over 200 schools in Surrey, England the Golden Boot Challenge has become a popular incentive encouraging children to walk every Friday so their class can earn and retain the trophy.

During the fourth term of 2004, five Christchurch primary schools joined in a Walking Wednesday Challenge organised by the City Council (Kingsbury-Aitken, pers.com, 25.05.05). This was tied in with a one-off event as International Walk to School Day was used as the starting date for the challenge at the beginning of the term. Children were encouraged to walk to school every Wednesday for the remainder of the term and a roll call in class each Wednesday morning was used to record the names of the children who had participated each day. At the end of the challenge, every child who had joined in was awarded a certificate to acknowledge their efforts and the class with the highest proportion of walkers at each school received free swimming passes provided by the Council for a fun class trip. This was a very successful promotion, with the winning class at one school recording a participation rate of 100%. All five schools had an average of at least 75% of children walking on these days. Most of the schools also reported that they noticed an increase in walking on the other days of the week as well, although no data was collected to support this claim. This was achieved with a limited budget. The only resources required were sheets to record the names of the children who walked, certificates to present to the children and the swimming passes which were provided by the City Council. There was little time or effort demanded of the school or teachers so it was a simple promotion to hold which was popular amongst staff and children alike.

Many Canadian schools participate in Walking Wednesdays as part of the broader national Active and Safe Routes to School programme (www.saferoutestoschool.ca). One school that has provided a lot of inspiration for other schools to follow is Morton Way Public School in Brampton, Ontario. This is an elementary school with approximately 875 students aged between 5 and 10 years old. They first participated in a Walk to School Day in 1999 and this received a resounding response with 98% of children walking to school (www.iwalktoschool.org). Having seen how successful this promotion was, the school introduced Walking Wednesdays in 2000 to try to maintain this high level of walking amongst students. Children are encouraged to walk every day, but especially once a week for Walking Wednesdays. On the first Wednesday of every month parent volunteers become Walking School Bus drivers and supervise children walking to school from five meeting

places around the area. Parents are also invited to stay at the school for morning tea on these occasions to encourage involvement and build a sense of community.

This is a very successful scheme with 85-95% of students walking to school on Wednesdays and many families keep this up throughout the week. Five senior students make up a Walk to School Committee which is responsible for calculating walking results from in-class surveys completed by the teachers every week to monitor the school's progress. These results are posted on the 'Walking Wall of Fame' in the front foyer. The programme therefore requires little effort from the teachers so it is easy to maintain, which explains how it has continued for four years. There is very little funding required to support this regular promotion. Posters, fliers and notices are supplied from the school's printing budget. Every child who walks to school on a Wednesday enters the draw for a small prize, such as a sticker, hat or pencil, which are donated by local organisations. Additional treats are offered to children when an entire class walks to school and these are supplied by the school at a cost of around \$100 each year. The school also receives ongoing support and any available resources from the coordinators of the national Active and Safe Routes to School Programme, Greenest Communities.

The Physical Education teacher, Kirstin Schwass, who oversees this programme at Morton Way Public School said that it has now become an important part of the school's culture. "Everyone KNOWS the importance of walking to school; for cleaner air, safer streets and a healthy body! Children are proud of walking and are remorseful when they don't walk" (pers.com, 31.05.06). Interclass competitions create positive peer pressure, with children encouraging one another to walk so that their class can be eligible for a prize. The school continuously promotes walking to school through newsletters and posters, and there are large banners hung around the school grounds proudly announcing 'Morton Way Walks!'. A parent volunteer composed a song about walking which the choir sings at special events, and they have a compilation tape of relevant songs which they play at the school gate every Wednesday morning. They also incorporate other walking promotions, such as International Walk to School Day, to maintain enthusiasm in walking and celebrate their achievements. Kirstin summarised the ongoing success of this promotion by stating "Our Walk to School program has brought a lot of spirit to our school... It puts a smile on everyone's face!" (Ibid).

A very similar programme has recently been introduced at a national level in the United Kingdom. Their version of this promotion is called **WoW** which stands for **Walk on Wednesdays**, or **Walk Once a Week** if schools prefer to nominate a different day to walk. This is based on the same principle as the Canadian programme: "Research tells us that the number of pupils walking to school increases by approximately 33% during national Walk to School Weeks. 'WoW', our new brand, aims to maintain at least some of this increase throughout the entire school year" (www.livingstreets.org.uk). Children are encouraged to walk to school every Wednesday and schools offer prizes to those who participate. There was also a national competition held inviting children to design a badge in the shape of a footprint which could be awarded to children who walk to school. The best twelve designs were going to be developed into enamel pin badges and distributed to WoW schools for the beginning of the new school year in September 2005. The winners would receive a prize, trophy and see their badge worn by thousands of children who walk to school.

The programme was piloted in London at the end of 2004, having been adapted from a similar concept that had been successfully operating in South Gloucestershire since April 1999. In January 2005 it was launched nationally by Living Streets, TravelWise and Transport for

London. At least 15 local authorities and 40,000 primary school students have participated in WoW so far in London alone, and another eight local authorities across the country are already actively involved with more to follow. Details regarding the budget for this programme were not available as they vary between areas but as with examples in other areas, it is likely that such a promotion could be run with limited funding as the main costs involved would be printing of posters, notices or other resources and provision of prizes which can often be donated.

Schools around the world have introduced many variations of these regular walk to school promotions. In April 2001, Loyola School in California initiated the **Lions A Foot Programme** which uses similar tactics to encourage children to walk to school, but involves four week sessions held four times throughout the school year rather than one day a week (www.iwalktoschool.org). During these periods, children receive an entry form for a prize draw every time they walk or bike to or from school, so if they walk every day they will have 40 chances to win. At the end of each four week session a celebrity attends the school assembly and draws out the winners names. They are rewarded with gift certificates in a range of values from local retailers such as a bicycle shop. The PTA provides \$250 to supply the prizes at the end of each session. The prize draws act as an incentive to entice children to walk to school and the programme has successfully achieved a small growth in the proportion of children choosing active modes of travel to school with 11-24% of children participating. The location of the school and its zone prevent most children from walking or biking to school as the boundary is long and narrow and over half of the families live on the other side of a main expressway. The school is also pursuing some physical changes to the infrastructure to overcome these difficulties and enable more children to safely consider active travel to school.

Lincoln Elementary School in Illinois in the United States, has introduced another variation of a regular walk to school promotion with their **Frequent Walker Programme**. This school has over 400 students aged between 6 and 11 years old, most of whom live within one and a half miles of the school (Smykowski, pers.com, 02.06.05). The school had always supported annual Walk to School Days by rewarding walkers, but in 2003 they introduced this programme to encourage children to walk daily with the aims of reducing traffic and increasing health awareness. At the beginning of each year all students are given a Frequent Walker/Rider Card and on the third Tuesday of every month they are encouraged to walk to school and earn a click on their card. Teachers and parent volunteers greet the children at the four corners around the school and punch their cards, often distributing stickers or pencils as small rewards as well. At the end of the year, the PTA holds a special event to reward all of those children who participated in most of the walk to school days throughout the year. There are also "surprise" walk to school days scheduled by the Principal which allow children to earn extra rewards. This is an effective way of encouraging children to walk on a regular basis rather than only on the designated Tuesdays because they are never sure when the next surprise day will be held. Overall participation in this promotion has been very high, with an average of 90% of children walking on scheduled days (www.iwalktoschool.org). Although the programme was thought to have successfully increased the number of children walking on an everyday basis, there were no statistics available to support this.

Once again, this is a programme that requires minimal resources to be maintained. The PTA provides some small rewards and caters for the end-of-year event with \$50 from their annual budget (Smykowski, pers.com, 02.06.05). The monthly Walk to School Days are highlighted on the school calendar which is produced at the start of each year and regular announcements

are included in the school newsletter. The laminated Frequent Walker Cards given to each child were produced and donated by a parent in the school community who worked for a printing company. However, the school was aware that these cards could not be provided for free in the long term so this will require a small budget in future years to cover the printing and laminating. Other prizes used as incentives were donated by local businesses which supported the programme.

3. Continuous Promotions:

There are two main types of continuous walk to school promotions which have been adopted by schools worldwide to encourage children to walk every day throughout the school year rather than only once a week/month or on special occasions. The first of these is based on a **Frequent Walker Programme** where children are rewarded for walking the school journey a certain number of times. There are a great variety of programmes built on this premise which usually involve some kind of frequent walker card which is distributed to all of the children at the school. Every time a child walks, bikes or scoots to or from school they receive a stamp on their card and once it is filled they are rewarded for their efforts. The cards differ in size but usually have space for 20-50 stamps depending on whether children are required to walk to and from school to be eligible for a stamp or can just walk one way to qualify. Families who live too far away from the school to walk the entire distance are encouraged to drive part of the way then park their car and allow the children to walk the remainder of the journey. As with some of the Walking Wednesday programmes, some schools have set up walking tracks around the school grounds to enable children who could not walk to school for a particular reason to earn a stamp during their lunch break so that all students can participate in the programme.

These ongoing promotions are often closely linked to some of the one-off walk to school events which were discussed in Section One. For example, Putnam Heights Elementary School in Wisconsin, United States, organised an International Walk to School Day celebration in October 2003 to launch their ongoing Frequent Walker Programme (www.iwalktoschool.org). They also incorporate special occasions into this continuous programme to maintain enthusiasm, such as a 'Carolling to School Day' before the Christmas holidays where children are encouraged to walk to school in groups singing Christmas carols along the way and are rewarded with a small candy cane provided by the PTA (Slowiak-Zabel, pers.com, 02.06.05).

There are many variations of this Frequent Walking theme which have been adapted by schools and Councils across the globe, some of which will now be discussed in more detail. At Dringhouses Primary School in York, England they have initiated a frequent walker scheme called '**Beat the Queues, Use Your Shoes**', a name chosen through a logo and slogan competition at the school (www.iwalktoschool.org). At the start of the school year each child is given a Beat the Queues, Use Your Shoes Card with 20 spaces on it which they can fill in each time they walk to school or park and walk. Once the card is completed, it is entered into a monthly prize draw for small donated rewards. All of these entries are also included in an annual prize draw at the end of the year for a bicycle donated by a local cycle shop which is a great incentive for the children. At the time that this information was gathered the programme had only been operating for a year and had not been evaluated so without recent data its success was unknown. However, it was expected that this programme could easily be

sustained as it required little funding or effort by staff and aimed to develop valuable everyday walking habits in children from an early age (Ibid).

Abbey Infant and Junior Schools in Darlington, England have developed a similar frequent walker incentive scheme called '**Friends of the Walking Train**' (www.iwalktoschool.org). All of the 630 children aged between 4 and 11 years old have a Friends of the Walking Train Card which they get stamped when they walk to or from school. When they fill up their first card by walking 25 times they receive a red badge. The next time they complete a card they are awarded an orange badge and this continues until they have all the colours of the rainbow from red to violet. The final badge is gold which is achieved after walking 200 times. This programme has been so popular that the school have had to create another cycle of badges as some children have already attained the gold badge. There were no statistics available which monitored the success of the programme in terms of the proportion of children walking to school over time, but a recent survey of parents revealed that 37% believed the scheme had influenced their travel patterns on the school journey and 35% felt it had resulted in noticeable reduction in congestion near the school gates (Ibid).

Another version of this concept has been adapted in Buckinghamshire County in the United Kingdom. In 2000, Holmer Green First School developed a frequent walker programme called '**Go For Gold**' in which every child was given a 'Passport' which was stamped each time they walked to or from school. Once they had walked ten times they received a star in their passport and when they earned enough stars they were rewarded with green, bronze, silver and finally gold stickers. This is a simple and cheap programme to run which proved to be very popular amongst students and has since been initiated at over 70 schools in the area (Rawas, pers.com. 29.06.05). Each school determines what incentives they will offer depending on how much funding they want to commit to the programme. Many schools just use small stickers and print their own certificates so the costs are minimal and sustainable. The programme has also been successful in that it has resulted in a significant decrease in car use for the school journey at the schools involved. At Holmer Green First School the proportion of children being driven to school fell from 62% in 2000 to 26% in 2001 and remained at this low level throughout 2002 and 2003 (www.iwalktoschool.org). Another school witnessed a reduction in car use from 57% to 7% in just one year (Ibid). These statistics are significant as few other organisations which have been involved in this type of initiative have monitored the impact of the programme in the long term, so Go For Gold proves that these frequent walker schemes have a lot of potential.

Lytchett Matravers Primary School in Dorset, England launched a very similar programme called '**Passport to Health**' during IWalk Week in October 2004. Over 400 children have a Passport which they get stamped to earn rewards such as stationery, vouchers and healthy items from the school's tuck shop. The area around the school has been divided into zones to encourage parents to drop their children off away from the school and walk part of the way. The red zone is right beside the school and children who are dropped off in this area do not receive any stamps. There is a yellow zone worth one point, a blue area worth two points and a green area furthest away where children can earn a maximum of three points. There is also a walking route around the school to allow children who travel by bus to participate in the programme. Hands-up surveys conducted in class have revealed an 18% reduction in car use since October which has been matched by a 15% increase in walking and a 1.5% increase in cycle rates (Holbrook, pers.com, 14.05.06).

This programme is simple to organise with senior pupils managing the scheme with lunchtime supervisors so little is required of the school. It has been funded by a £500 grant from the local parish which covered the set-up costs. The school also held a non-school uniform day to raise some additional funds which were used to produce the passports, maps and pay for tuck shop rewards and vouchers. The Chair of the IWALK Steering Group, Robert Smith, is impressed by this initiative and stated “This is a fantastic example of what can be achieved with a minimum amount of resources and a maximum amount of enthusiasm... It just goes to show that it’s possible to adapt or adopt an existing idea without the need for massive funding. There are many such successful school community supported long-term walk to school projects going on out there” (www.iwalktoschool.org).

Similar types of programmes have also been run in several Canadian schools and this led to the introduction of the IWALK Club in February this year by the national Active and Safe Routes to School organisers, Green Communities (www.saferoutestoschool.ca). This is designed to cater for schools which have been involved with Walking Wednesdays for some time and would like to move towards a more ongoing approach to encourage children to walk to school every day rather than once a week. It operates in a similar manner to the other frequent walker schemes which have already been described. Each student receives an IWALK Club card which is stamped every time they walk to school. For every ten trips they make the children receive a golden sneaker sticker on their card and when they have completed the card by making 50 walking trips they are awarded a certificate and are eligible for a prize. These can include stickers, pencils and other items solicited from local businesses or provided by the PTA. A class challenge can also be held with additional prizes for classes which get all of their students to complete a card. These rewards can include a longer lunch break or an extra swimming session so they do not require any extra funding. There are also plenty of online resources available on the Active and Safe Routes to School website such as guidelines, survey forms, club cards and ideas (www.saferoutestoschool.ca). Since its inception in February, 90 Ontario schools have registered for this programme and it is expected to spread to British Columbia later in the year. At this stage there are no results to indicate the impact this scheme has had on children’s travel patterns for the journey to school but there are prizes on offer to those schools which complete an evaluation form so the progress of the programme can be monitored regularly in the future.

The IWALK Club is closely linked to the other form of continuous promotion which many Canadian schools have introduced to influence the everyday travel of their students. This is based on a similar concept to the frequent walker programmes, but instead of providing incentives to children for the number of walking trips they make, this scheme rewards children for the total distance they have travelled on foot. Go For Green is a national non-profit organisation that organises a **‘Walking Tour of Canada’** programme (www.goforgreen.ca/asrts). Each student receives a Passport which they use to record the distance they walk to and from school each day. Rather than measuring the exact distance to each family’s home, the schools usually produce a map which has different coloured zones marked on it which might represent 0.5km, 1km, 2km etc from the school. Children then indicate which zone they walked from and these distances are used in the calculations. Other schools calculate the average distance the children travel and just multiply that by the number of children who walked each day. The distances travelled by a class or school are collated and recorded online and their progress is tracked on a map of Canada to show the children how far they have walked in total. As they pass through each provincial capital a new passport can be downloaded which congratulates students on their success so far. There is also an abundance of information provided online regarding the history and geography of each region which can

be used in classroom activities as the children travel through these areas to teach them about their nation. When a school or class completes the entire tour they can download a Certificate of Recognition to display which acknowledges their achievement. All of these resources are available to schools online once they have registered for the programme, along with other fun activities for children and a travel mode calculator which compares how different modes of transport affect the environment.

This particular walking promotion is part of a broader Active and Safe Routes to School programme coordinated by Go For Green so the costs involved with producing this website and online resources could not be determined. There was also no information available to reveal how successful the Walking Tour of Canada has been in reducing car use on the journey to school as it did not appear to include a monitoring component. The Green Communities Active and Safe Routes to School programme in Ontario also involves a '**Cross Canada Walking Challenge**'. They provide schools with a Cross Canada Map which highlights main landmarks and lists the distances between each region for the children to travel. They also have a new '**Walk Around the World Challenge**' which is available to schools that have joined the IWALK Club (www.saferoutestoschool.ca). When a school registers for the IWALK programme they receive a club pack which includes a Walk Around the World poster to hang up. This also pictures landmarks and notes the distances between main points of interest, such as the Eiffel Tower in France, Great Pyramid in Egypt and Taj Mahal in India, so that the school or individual classes can set targets to reach. They can also try to walk around the whole world by following the equator or set other challenges which may link in with studies they are conducting in class, such as walking the length of the Great Wall of China, crossing the Sahara Desert or climbing Mt Everest. However, unlike Go For Green's version of this programme, Greenest Communities has not developed an online programme to calculate and track the distances travelled so it is up to the teachers or children to plot their progress on the maps provided.

Similar continuous walking promotions are operating at schools in other parts of the world. The American Safe Routes to Schools programme offers a web-based interactive game very similar to that of Go For Green, called '**Walk and Bike Across America**' (www.saferoutestoschools.org/walk). Schools or classrooms can register and use the online resources including maps and spreadsheets to track how many miles the children have travelled on foot. They are also sent a wall map to hang up so that children can easily see their progress. As they travel through each state they visit various places of significance such as national parks, historic sites and key agricultural areas which can be incorporated into curriculum activities to allow children to learn more about the entire country. An online guidebook is available to explain the programme to teachers and provide lesson ideas for various subjects so the programme can be fully integrated into the children's work. There was no information available regarding the number of schools or children involved with this programme or the impact it has had on school travel patterns as these online resources also seemed to lack a feedback option to allow ongoing monitoring of the programme, although it is possible that this was sent out to schools once they had registered.

In a similar scheme, AC Moore Elementary school in Columbia, Canada encouraged children to walk to school every day by setting them a target of accumulating '**One Million Minutes of Motion**' within a given timeframe (www.walktoschool-usa.org). Each student kept a monthly walking log to monitor how many minutes they had spent walking each day and children who walked or exercised for more than 30 minutes for at least three days a week received a certificate to reward their efforts. Those children who travelled to school on a bus

were encouraged to exercise at home each evening or during their lunch break at school so that everyone could participate in the programme. When the school reached their Million Minute goal everyone joined in a 'Million Minute March' to the State House to celebrate their achievement. This is another innovative approach to encourage children to walk to school every day on an ongoing basis, but again there were no statistics available to indicate what impact this had on school travel behaviour in the long term.

Other schools have used similar promotions on a less regular basis to fit in with one-off events such as Walk to School Day. For example, Coldfall Primary School in London runs a challenge during Walk to School Week in May and October to see how far the children can walk in total during these promotions (www.iwalktoschool.org). The school area is divided into zones relating to the distance from the school (red = 250m, green = 500m etc) and each child receives a map so they can determine which coloured zone they live in. Each day of the challenge children hand in a coloured token to indicate how far they walked and these are added up by senior students. At the end of the week a certificate is presented to the school to announce their achievement and they try to exceed this next time. So far the school has walked to Paris and back, walked the Nile and climbed Mt Everest to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Sir Edmund Hillary's conquest, with every kilometre walked representing four metres climbed. This initiative has been in place since 2002 and has contributed to a 10% increase in children walking to school on a regular basis, as confirmed in a recent travel survey. It has continued over time as it is simple to run, easy to repeat and requires little work from staff. It is also a flexible promotion, so targets can be changed to reflect the number of children participating, and does not require any funding. This is an excellent example of how an ongoing walk to school promotion can be adapted to fit in with a one week event.

Recommendations:

The wide variety of Walk to School promotions that have been explored thus far illustrates how many different approaches can be employed to achieve a sustainable mode shift on the school journey. As noted throughout this report, some of these initiatives are more relevant to the New Zealand situation than others so two main recommendations will now be made regarding the most appropriate walk to school promotions which EECA could consider introducing nationally over the next year. The first of these involves a combination of a one-off event followed by a regular promotion which is held frequently throughout the year. The second suggested option involves a longer one-off event followed by an ongoing promotion which encourages children to walk everyday for the rest of the year. Both of these suggestions have proven successful in primary schools elsewhere without requiring a lot of funding or resources and could easily be adapted and implemented in New Zealand primary schools. These promotions would also both fit in well with existing school travel initiatives which are currently operating at some schools in New Zealand, such as Walking School Buses and School Travel Plans, as their objectives are consistent with these programmes aims so they could strengthen such schemes and improve their sustainability in the future.

Option 1: Walk to School Day and Walking Wednesday

The first recommendation is that EECA stage a one-off National Walk to School Day near the beginning of the school year which is used to launch a regular Walking Wednesday, Walk On

Wednesdays or Walk Once a Week (WoW) programme. Ideally, the one day event would be held on a Wednesday early in the school year while the weather is warm so families can be encouraged to develop sustainable travel habits which they can maintain for the rest of the year. If it is left until later in the year, families will have already established their routines and it will be more difficult to bring about a change in their behaviour. Many schools and organisations elsewhere have successfully used a one day event of this kind to launch a more regular initiative by using it as an opportunity to raise awareness of the benefits of walking to school and generate enthusiasm and support for the concept. Participation rates in one day events are often very high so they are a good way of introducing children of all ages to walking to school and showing families how fun and easy it can be to walk without requiring them to adjust their entire weekly schedules straight away.

These one day promotions are relatively simple to organise without the need for a lot of resources or funding. Notices can be included in weekly school newsletters to ensure that all families are aware of the upcoming event and a few posters could be distributed to each school to be displayed on noticeboards or classroom doors to raise the profile of the event. EECA could assist schools further by providing templates for posters and newsletters to reduce their workload. It is important that such an event does not require much effort from the school staff in order to gain their support. Small incentives, such as stickers, can be offered to all the children that walk to school and interclass or interschool competitions can be run to create positive peer pressure amongst children. Prizes for schools which achieve the highest rates of participation, such as sporting equipment, could also create greater support amongst principals and teachers and their enthusiasm is likely to influence their students. These rewards can usually be donated by local businesses or agencies which support the scheme so do not require a large budget.

However, as noted earlier, a one day event on its own is unlikely to achieve a long term shift to sustainable transport on the school journey, as many families will revert back to their old habits without regular reminders and constant encouragement to walk to school. It is therefore very important that such an event is followed closely by the introduction of a more regular walk to school promotion, such as the Walking Wednesday programme, to sustain this increase in the proportion of children using active modes of travel to school. Variations of the Walking Wednesday programme are spreading to more schools around the world, particularly in North America and the United Kingdom. The increasing popularity of this initiative can be largely attributed to its previous success with many primary schools recording participation rates of over 80%. Although some schools report that these rates are maintained throughout the week, there are few statistics to indicate whether this is true as most schools only conduct travel surveys on Wednesdays and do not collect data on other days for comparative purposes. Walking tracks around the school grounds can allow all children to be involved in the challenge, even when they are unable to walk to school, so nobody is excluded from this promotion.

Upon assessment, the Walking Wednesday programme was deemed to be relevant to the New Zealand environment as it is a simple concept for primary school children to understand and can include as many or as few schools as desired. EECA could therefore introduce Walking Wednesdays to pilot schools and later expand the programme to include other interested schools. The budget required to run this programme is minimal. The best form of advertising is through regular school newsletters and a few posters displayed around the grounds so there are little costs involved there. The most effective examples from overseas have used simple reward systems to maintain children's enthusiasm but these do not have to be expensive. Each

child could be given a travel card which their teacher stamps at the beginning of class on a Wednesday morning if they walked to school. This would not require a lot of time and would soon become part of the class' routine on a Wednesday. When a child has filled their card up they could be presented with a certificate in assembly or go in the draw for a small prize at the end of each term. These rewards can usually be sourced from local businesses or organisations that promote healthy lifestyles, so do not require additional funding. Alternatively, if the finances were not available to provide each child with a travel card, teachers could simply tick each child's name on a chart to keep track of how many Wednesdays they walked. Senior students could collate these results and classes could compete for a Golden Boot, or similar trophy, which could be awarded to the class with the highest proportion of walkers each week, month or term. If there was a larger budget available, rewards such as badges could be produced so that children could earn a different colour badge each time they complete a certain number of walks. This system has worked well in parts of England with children wearing their badges with pride and striving to reach their next goal. It would also be beneficial to follow the example of Morton Way Public School in Canada and thank parents for their support by holding regular morning teas for them to attend on a Wednesday morning once a month /term to maintain their commitment and foster a sense of community at the school (Schwass, pers.com. 31.05.06).

An advantage of the Walking Wednesday programme is its flexibility. Schools could have the option of introducing Walking Wednesdays once a week or once a month as preferred. The programme is likely to be most effective if it is held every week as families will develop a regular routine and are more likely to remember to participate each Wednesday. However, some schools or families may find this too much of a commitment at first so might prefer to start the programme on a monthly basis and gradually build up towards holding it once a week. This could be an effective method of easing families into the habit of walking without appearing too daunting and requiring them to alter their entire schedules straight away. Some schools overseas held this promotion once a term, but this is not frequent enough to have a lasting impact on children's everyday travel behaviour so once a month would be the recommended minimum. If the WoW branding was adopted this could provide even more flexibility as schools could nominate another day to walk if Wednesdays were not the most convenient. This type of programme could also be developed further at successful schools into a frequent walker programme that operates everyday, as is recommended in Option Two.

Option 2: Walk to School Week and a Frequent Walker Programme

The second suggested option which EECA could consider introducing as a national Walk to School promotion consists of a week-long event which is used to launch an ongoing Frequent Walkers incentive programme. Just as in Option One, the Walk to School Week would introduce families to the concept of walking to school every day and build enthusiasm for the initiative. Unlike a one day event, a Walk to School Week is more likely to have a greater impact on children's travel patterns as it forces families to rearrange their routines to accommodate walking to school for the entire week. However, this type of launch event may require more organisation and resources as travel surveys need to be conducted every day to monitor progress and more incentives may be required to maintain the children's enthusiasm throughout the whole week. To achieve this without the need for extra rewards, ideas could again be drawn from overseas examples and children could be set a distance challenge to see how far they could walk during that first week. Schools could try to walk to local landmarks such as the Beehive or Sky Tower depending on their location and the school population and

children could be encouraged to walk as far as possible in a week to help the school reach its target.

After the initial week-long event, schools could then launch their ongoing Frequent Walkers programme. These could be renamed by each school to encourage local ownership or a national brand could be chosen to give the programme a New Zealand image. Each child could receive a travel card/passport to record the number of times they walk to school and these could be stamped by their teachers in class each day. Families that live further away could be encouraged to park and walk to qualify for a stamp. As with the Walking Wednesday programme, children could be rewarded with certificates, prizes or badges as they fill in a card, depending on the budget available. If finances allowed, EECA could even consider setting up a website similar to that of Go For Green with an online walk to school programme that enables schools to track their progress as they walk towards certain targets, for example walking the length of New Zealand, walking to Antarctica or across the Tasman Sea. As was described in Section Three, an interactive web programme could provide information about each main centre the children travel through and these activities could be incorporated into the school curriculum.

It is recognised that such a resource, although valuable, is likely to require substantial amounts of time and money to be established, although once it has been developed it would not require much effort to maintain. EECA could therefore consider trialling this programme by distributing hard copies of walking maps and related information about landmarks to pilot schools to determine how successful and popular a website of this nature would be. If the pilot schools provide positive feedback and are keen to continue with such challenges in the long term, a web programme could then be designed that would allow schools to walk towards their goals with little ongoing input or resources from EECA. It should be noted that these walking distance challenges could easily be integrated into Option One's Walking Wednesday programme as well, even though it has usually been associated with continuous frequent walker initiatives overseas, so if the budget was available an interactive website like this could be considered for either option.

As in Option One, a Frequent Walker Programme could be initiated with limited financial resources to as many schools as desired, and could easily be expanded to accommodate more schools in the future. The advantage of this recommendation is that a Frequent Walker Programme is more likely to contribute to an increase in the proportion of children walking to school on an everyday basis so families could enjoy the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle and pollution and congestion around schools would be reduced throughout the week, rather than for only one day. The drawback is that this programme demands a greater commitment from families as it challenges them to alter their schedule for the entire week to accommodate walking to school. Although those families who find this too difficult could still try to walk once or twice a week, the programme may seem too daunting which could put people off so they may not participate at all. Option One allows families to ease into walking patterns at their own pace so more people might be inclined to participate because it seems like a more attainable target in the short term. It is therefore suggested that Option One would make a better starting point for a national walk to school promotion and Option Two could be developed later for schools which have proven their commitment to the Walking Wednesday programme.

Additional Recommendation:

It should be noted that whatever option is adopted, it is strongly recommended that a sound set of baseline data is collected from each school that will be involved through a series of in-class travel surveys before any promotions begin. These surveys should continue to be conducted at regular intervals once the programmes have been introduced so their effectiveness can easily and accurately be monitored. It became very clear during this research that many schools and agencies did not plan this element of their programme before they began so they were unable to assess the success of their schemes over time. It would be recommended that some kind of incentive is offered to schools that participate in the programme and submit a regular evaluation form to allow this kind of monitoring to occur. The IWALK Club in Canada has an excellent example of this with every registered school going in a prize draw once they return their evaluation survey. This is an important element of any programme which has often been overlooked previously, so EECA should take advantage of this opportunity to start fresh with recent and accurate data.

Conclusion:

There is a wide range of innovative ideas which have been employed by schools across the world to encourage walking to school. Several examples of one-off, regular and continuous promotions have been examined in depth in this report and their suitability to the New Zealand situation has been assessed. Overall, two main recommendations emerged which EECA could consider introducing as a national promotion in local schools over the next year. The first of these involves a National Walk to School Day event which is used as a launching pad for a regular Walking Wednesdays programme which is held once a week or month for the rest of the school year. The second option is similar but includes an initial week-long event to get children into the habit of walking before introducing an ongoing Frequent Walkers incentive programme which encourages children to build and continue this everyday walking habit. Both of these options could easily be introduced to any number of primary schools in New Zealand without requiring a significant financial commitment. The notable difference between the two programmes is the timeframe involved. The Walking Wednesday initiative could provide a better starting point as it eases families into the habit of walking gradually once a week without requiring them to alter their entire schedules, but this could be developed into a Frequent Walker Programme which challenges children to continue this travel pattern every day. Each of these initiatives have proved their worth in similar situations overseas and, by learning from these examples, EECA could implement either of these programmes in New Zealand primary schools to successfully promote and facilitate the regular use of active travel modes for the school journey well into the future.

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