

Remarkables Primary School:

Janelle and Sharron are just two of the five parents that help out on the new Remarkable Primary School's walking school bus which runs every morning between Remarkables Crescent and the school. Both Janelle and Sharron find the biggest motivators to walk for parents and children are that it's fun and social. Walking is a great way for children to make new friends and for parents to get to know each other better. Many trips on the 'bus' involve a song, waving to the local bus driver on his way to Queenstown, and children noticing new things in their neighbourhood as well as what's familiar. Janelle says "my daughter just loves to know who we are picking up along the way each day, she's looking forward to seeing all her friends on the 'bus' and just has lots of fun". Important road safety tips are also being picked up as they walk, with children now knowing all about 'sneaky driveways'. Wearing the safety vests that were donated by the local Rotary Club makes drivers and passengers more visible and has helped to promote the 'bus'. New parents in the neighbourhood have been able to find out more about the walking route so they can join later in the year.

Getting more active is another reason parents get involved. Sharron has noticed how a regular walk builds up a basic level of fitness for the children and says "it's good for them to know they are capable of walking this distance rather than expecting to be driven everywhere by car. It just becomes a normal thing to do, and gives them some independence which they'll need later on anyway."

Both drivers find the walking school bus network also acts as a carpool group on wet days, so parents can take turns in transporting children, which gives other parents a break from the school run.

Remarkables Primary School is embarking on a school travel plan with council and is planning to carry out a parent travel survey later in the year. While walking has been the main focus for this new school in encouraging more travel options, promoting use of the school bus and getting children cycling will also be progressed as the school roll grows.