

10 April 2025

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-37128

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED],

Request for information 2025-087

I refer to your request for information dated Sunday 16 March 2025, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on Sunday, 16 March 2025. You have requested the following:

“All relevant information held by GWRC (and its delegated third parties) regarding the ongoing operational failures of the Wairarapa train service and the plans to address these issues.

Information Requested

1. Operational Data and Performance Metrics

1.1. Complete service reliability data for the Wairarapa train line for the past 24 months, including:

- Monthly cancellation rates and specific reasons for each cancellation*
- Monthly on-time performance statistics*
- Frequency of bus replacements and reasons for substitutions*
- Comparison of Wairarapa line performance against other Metlink train services*

1.2. Staff resourcing data for the Wairarapa line:

- Current staffing levels compared to optimal operational requirements*
- Staff shortage statistics for the past 24 months*
- Staff turnover rates compared to other Metlink services*
- Details of any unfilled positions and duration of vacancies*

2. Contractual Arrangements and Accountability

2.1. A copy of the current service level agreement between GWRC/Metlink and TransDev regarding the Wairarapa line, with specific focus on:

- Performance targets and minimum service requirements
- Penalty clauses for service failures
- Any modifications or exemptions that have been granted

2.2. Details of any penalties imposed on TransDev for service failures in the past 24 months:

- Amounts charged
- Reasons for penalties
- Any penalties waived or reduced, with justification

2.3. Information about contract review processes:

- Date of last contract review
- Findings from any service audits
- Timeline for next contract review

3. Communication and Customer Service

3.1. Processes for communicating service disruptions to Wairarapa commuters:

- Advance notification protocols
- Decision-making timeline for service cancellations
- Methods used to notify affected passengers

3.2. Customer complaint data:

- Total number of complaints regarding the Wairarapa service in the past 24 months
- Categorisation of complaint types
- Average response time to complaints
- Actions taken in response to common complaints

4. Strategic Planning and Remediation

4.1. Current action plans to address service reliability issues:

- Short-term mitigation strategies (next 3 months)
- Medium-term improvement plans (3-12 months)

- *Long-term service enhancement strategies*

4.2. Specific strategies to address TransDev's staffing issues:

- *Recruitment initiatives*
- *Changes to employment conditions*
- *Alternative staffing models being considered*

4.3. Infrastructure improvement plans:

- *Scheduled track maintenance and upgrades affecting the Wairarapa line*
- *Rolling stock maintenance schedules and replacement plans*
- *Budget allocations for Wairarapa line improvements*

4.4. Minutes from GWRC meetings where Wairarapa train service issues have been discussed in the past 12 months, including:

- *Regional Transport Committee discussions*
- *Board-level discussions regarding service performance*
- *Any working groups or task forces established to address these issues*

5. Financial Information

5.1. Financial data related to the Wairarapa service:

- *Operating costs for the Wairarapa line compared to other services*
- *Revenue from the Wairarapa line*
- *Subsidies provided for the service*
- *Cost-per-passenger comparisons with other regional services*

5.2. Financial impact of service disruptions:

- *Cost of providing replacement bus services*
- *Financial implications of service penalties*
- *Budget adjustments made in response to ongoing issues”*

Greater Wellington’s response follows:

1.Operational Data and Performance Metrics

1.1. Complete service reliability data for the Wairarapa train line for the past 24 months

Greater Wellington regularly publishes a Monthly performance report created for our Transport Committee, on Metlink's website at <https://www.metlink.org.nz/about-us/performance-of-our-network#monthly-performance-report>.

Cancellation rates and punctuality (on-time) rates are included in the Monthly performance reports. However, specific reasons are not provided. These monthly reports cover all rail lines. Therefore, you can use them to compare performance against each other.

At this time, the report for March 2025 has not yet been published. As it is our common practice to upload and publish the reports once they are ready, we are refusing your request for the service reliability data for the month of March 2025, under section 17(d) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) as the information requested is or will soon be publicly available.

Please refer to **Attachment 1** for a list of all train cancellations on the Wairarapa Line in the period 1 January 2023 to 28 February 2025, including the reasoning for their cancellation. This document includes the services that were bus replaced. During this period there were 6515 scheduled services, with 1832 planned bus replacements and 197 unplanned replacements.

These figures include the approximately 500 planned bus replacements over the period December 2024 to February 2025 during the KiwiRail track upgrades.

1.2. Staff resourcing data for the Wairarapa line

As operator, Transdev is responsible for their resourcing of their staff, including the employing and training of new staff. Greater Wellington does not hold current staff resourcing data, however, a report was provided to the Transport Committee on 16 February 2023 which includes the information that was accurate at the time of this report.

You may access the report in the order paper of the 16 February 2023 Transport Committee meeting at: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2023/03/Transport-Committee-16-February-2023-order-paper.pdf>

In order for a Train Manager to operate on the Wairarapa services they require specialised training and industry standard licenses due to the Remutaka Tunnel and shunting operations in the Masterton Yard. For safety reasons a Train Manager from a different train line without these qualifications is unable to operate on the Wairarapa Line.

Transdev have informed us that of their 12 Train Managers with these additional qualifications, only six are available for rostering on the Wairarapa Line, and that a full weekday timetable for the Wairarapa Line requires seven Train Managers.

This is due to staff being needed on other lines, in combination with unplanned leave due to illness, injury and personal matters beyond the ken of Greater Wellington.

For more information on this, please visit our website at: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/news/wairarapa-line-train-reliability>.

2. Contractual Arrangements and Accountability

2.1. A copy of the current service level agreement between GWRC/Metlink and TransDev regarding the Wairarapa line

The rail contract between Greater Wellington and its operator has been proactively released on our website at: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/transport/metlink-bus-train-and-ferry/public-transport-contracts/>.

Please note that as part of the proactive release process some parts of the contract have been withheld. Where a part of the contract has been withheld, it has been noted along with the reasoning for the withholding under the LGOIMA.

The contract covers:

Performance targets and minimum service requirements, and penalty clauses for service failures. These are located in Schedule 3 and Schedule 6 of the Rail Partnering Contract Schedules.

In the link above, you can also find variations to the contract which have been applied. These can be found under the Deeds of Variation heading.

2.2. Details of any penalties imposed on Transdev for service failures in the past 24 months

Penalties are applied to operators for any service that does not meet the punctuality and reliability targets as set out in the operator's contract. These can be found under Schedule 6, Part 6 (pages 191 to 196 of [Rail Partnering Contract Schedules 3 to 19](#)).

Penalties have been applied to the operator every month since the signing of the contract. The primary reason a penalty has been applied during this time, is due to services running with lower capacity than standard. The reason a service runs with lowered capacity would be due to a combination of staff shortages and/or mechanical issues.

Penalties are not applied for any network related issues as that is covered by Kiwirail under a different performance regime, or for services that were replaced by buses.

As per the redactions to the Rail Partnering Contract Schedules document on pages 193, 195 and for the rest of the document, all information on the values of penalties applied to any operator for failure to meet their punctuality and reliability quotas is withheld under section 7(2)(b)(ii) of the LGOIMA, wherein the making available of the information would be likely

unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information.

The release of this information would be likely to compromise the commercial position of both operator and Metlink, which would result in negotiations with both current and future operators becoming subject to prejudice. This could lead to the inability of Greater Wellington to negotiate best value for money on future contracts and may have long-reaching impacts to the ability of Greater Wellington to impose penalties on Operators, or service levels.

We therefore do not believe that the public interest in the release of the information outweighs the need to withhold the information.

2.3. Information about contract review processes

On 28 August 2023, the contract was renewed with Transdev to run through to 2031. For more information on the extension please refer to: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/news/metlink-renews-wellington-rail-contract-with-transdev>

The contracts with our operators are monitored on a monthly basis with regards to their service levels.

As of 16 March 2025, there have been 16 variations to the contract with our rail operator since it was initially signed. These variations are included on our website at: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/transport/metlink-bus-train-and-ferry/public-transport-contracts/>.

Regarding the Rail Partnering Contract with Transdev, the contract is in place until 2031 and is not currently under a formal review process.

3. Communication and Customer Service

3.1. Processes for communicating service disruptions to Wairarapa commuters

Greater Wellington has a different process for communicating service disruptions depending on if the disruption is due to a planned or unplanned event.

For planned disruptions we publish a monthly calendar at least 4 weeks before the disruption at all stations and on our website – this calendar indicates which days will have services that will be bus replaced. Specific timetable information for those days is published at stations and on our website and communicated by service alert in the week before the bus replacements are due to start. These services alerts will be found on our Metlink and via the Metlink app.

For unplanned disruptions Greater Wellington or our operators provide updates to passengers as soon as practicable via the Metlink app's service alerts, the Metlink website, social media, and station signage. Passengers may also call the Metlink Contact Centre on 0800 801 700 for updates.

Greater Wellington sends a service alert and updates the website if a service is running more than 15 minutes late, if it has reduced capacity, or if it is bus replaced or cancelled.

Due to the nature of rostering and some unplanned KiwiRail track works, we cannot always predict which services will require bus replacements in advance. We are working to keep as much consistency as possible, with prioritisation of the mid-week commuter services, and where feasible only replacing trains with buses on the lowest passenger count services.

3.2. Customer complaint data

Please refer to **Attachment 2** for a copy of a report run for the period 16/3/2023 to 20/03/2025 of all complaints received regarding the Wairarapa Line.

The report includes information on case categorisation, the time and date that a case was created, closed or referred, and the current status of the case.

Please note that for this document the acronym “FCR” means “First Contact Resolution” and refers to cases where the complaint was resolved during or as a part of the initial contact between Greater Wellington and the customer.

Additionally, please note that the “Date & Time Closed” refers to the latest timestamp that the case was closed. Cases may be reopened and closed multiple times in events where the submitter asks for a follow-up or where operators investigate complaints and report back to Metlink with findings. Greater Wellington does not store information in a manner that would allow us to report the date and time of each cases’ closure in cases where multiple closures occurred.

Therefore, we cannot provide an average time it takes to respond as cases can constantly be opened and closed.

Of the complaints received within the last 24 months, the following represent a list of the top four highest recorded complaint type subcode:

- Train ran late.
- Bus replacement: Which may include complaints that a train was bus replaced or an issue with the bus replacement itself.
- Passenger Interaction: Referring to complaints regarding other passengers' onboard services.
- RTI Website: Referring to issues with the Real Time Information on the Metlink website.

The typical actions taken in response to these common complaints are dependent on the case itself. The following table outlines typical actions that may be taken in relation the four most common complaints on this service:

Complaint Subtype	Action(s) taken
Train ran late	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The case is referred to the operator for review. • If the complainant has requested a response, then the operator will propose a response to Greater Wellington’s Customer Care Team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Response will typically include details on the reason for the train running late, and what is being done to address issue.
Bus replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the complaint is about trains being replaced: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These calls are typically resolved during the first call (FCR). ○ Buses replacing trains are a necessary step during times of rail upgrades or staff shortages to ensure the safety of passengers and crew and the compliance of services. • If the complaint is about an issue with the bus replacing the train: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The case is referred to the operator for review. ○ If the complainant has requested a response, then the operator will propose a response to Greater Wellington’s Customer Care Team. ○ Response will typically include information on the issue reported, such as cause, and then what steps are being taken by the operator to resolve/prevent future reoccurrences of the issue.
Passenger Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on severity or nature of complaint, may recommend that complainant contact police to lodge police report. • Case is referred to Operator for a follow-up investigation. • If a response is requested, then Operator will provide proposed response to Greater Wellington’s Customer Care team to review and then provide response to customer.

RTI Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If complaint includes a request for information or advises that the information on the Metlink RTI (Real Time Information) website was incorrect, correct information is provided. • If complaint advises that information on RTI website is incorrect, request submitted with IT team and/or operator to investigate and resolve.
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4. Strategic Planning and Remediation

4.1. Current action plans to address service reliability issues

In order to operate as a Train Manager on the Wairarapa Line, an employee requires specialised training, which includes industry standard licences for safety procedures necessary for protocols undertaken in the Remutaka Tunnel and shunting operations in Masterton Yard.

The necessary skills and licences take time to train and there are assessments for competency before a Train Manager can work on the Wairarapa Line.

For more information, please refer to the Wairarapa Line recovery plan from Transdev that has been proactively released on the Metlink website at: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/news/wairarapa-line-train-reliability>

Short term

We have made the decision to bus replace the 3.38pm from Masterton and the 6.18pm service from Wellington, this will enable the roster to have one spare train manager in place to cover any staff sickness and provides certainty for customers as to which services will be run by trains. Further to this a relief Train Manager from another service with the appropriate qualifications, has agreed to cover some shifts on the Wairarapa Line and leave is also being reviewed to ensure there is sufficient available staff and a higher level of resilience in the roster.

Medium term

Our rail operator has:

- Recruited two new staff who started training at the end of March – training a new Train Manager can take up to six months.
- Initiated a further recruitment campaign which is underway, and a second training school is expected to start in June 2025.

- Brought a Wellington based Rail Operator who has a shunting licence into shortened training for the Masterton yard (Rail Operators are the people who are qualified to do the train and carriage movements in the Wellington yard) – this will reduce the number of hours that the train managers (who also carry out this function) need to be rostered for.

Long term

We will review how the services are rostered and operated, including looking at the right level of staffing for each service, as well as whether the shunting and yard operations are safer to be run by a specialised role.

4.2. Specific strategies to address Transdev's staffing issues

We refer you to our response to parts 1.2 and 4.1 of this letter.

4.3. Infrastructure improvement plans

As per our letter to you dated 28 March 2025, some parts of this request have been transferred to KiwiRail on the basis that the information requested is believed by Greater Wellington to be more closely connected with the functions of KiwiRail.

This includes:

- Scheduled track maintenance and upgrades affecting the Wairarapa Line.
- Budget allocations for Wairarapa Line improvements.

While KiwiRail is the primary information holder on the above, Metlink does have information on all upcoming projects, which is available on our website at:

<https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/projects-timeline/>, with a specific project page for the KiwiRail upgrades to the Wairarapa Line, which can be found at <https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/projects-timeline/kiwirail-upgrades-wairarapa-line>.

Regarding your request for rolling stock maintenance schedules and replacement plans, carriage planned maintenance follows a combination of accumulated running distance (km) schedule, time (annually) and operating hours servicing on specific components.

Replacement of the Wairarapa Line rolling stock is part of the Lower North Island Rail Intergrated Mobility (LNIRIM) programme, and the new timetable on the Wairarapa and

Manawatū lines is schedule for 2029. Further information on the LNIRIM programme is on our website at: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/projects-timeline/lnirim-north-island-rail-connection>.

4.4. Minutes from GWRC meetings where Wairarapa train service issues have been discussed in the past 12 months

The minutes from all Council Committee meetings, including the Transport Committee and Wairarapa Committee, are published on our website at <https://www.gw.govt.nz/your-region/events-and-meetings/>

To locate prior transport committee meetings, you can select the “Past events” button and then under categories select “transport committee”. We can confirm that issues facing the Wairarapa Line have been discussed at both Transport Committee and Wairarapa Committee meetings.

We have interpreted your request for “board-level discussions” as Senior Leadership Team and Metlink Leadership meetings. There have been no board level discussions where the issues facing the Wairarapa Line have been discussed.

Please refer to **Attachment 3** for copies of all meeting minutes from them daily standup meetings that have been set up between Metlink and Transdev to address the current issues facing the Wairarapa Line, and the minutes from Monthly Network Meetings where the Wairarapa Line issues have been discussed.

It will be noted that the Monthly Network meetings, held between Greater Wellington/Metlink, KiwiRail and Transdev were not set up specifically for the purpose of addressing the issues affecting the Wairarapa Line, and would be otherwise considered out of scope of your request but have been provided in a show of transparency. These meetings instead are held to discuss issues affecting the entire rail network.

Please note that from Attachment 3, personal details such as names and phone numbers have been redacted to protect the privacy of persons. These redactions have been made in line with section 7(2)(a) of the LGOIMA and where information has been redacted under this ground it will be noted as such within the document. We have also redacted information we consider to be completely out of scope of your request, i.e. any information not relating to the Wairarapa Line.

5. Financial Information

5.1. Financial data related to the Wairarapa service

Greater Wellington does not hold information in a manner that would allow us to report on the following parts of your request:

- Operating costs for the Wairarapa line compared to other services.
- Subsidies provided for the service.
- Cost-per-passenger comparisons with other regional services.

Therefore, we are refusing these parts of your request under section 17(g) of the LGOIMA wherein the that the information requested is not held by the local authority and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is either—

- (i) held by another local authority or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation; or
- (ii) connected more closely with the functions of another local authority, or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation:

Regarding your request for Revenue from the Wairarapa Line, Greater Wellington receives a monthly farebox report from Transdev which includes fare revenue gathered for non-Snapper tickets. This revenue is not broken down by train line and represents revenue gathered across the rail network for non-Snapper Tickets.

Snapper tickets are reportable on a station-by-station basis, however, as the Wairarapa Line stops at Petone, Waterloo and Upper Hutt stations, and passengers tagging on or off at these stations may be boarding or alighting either from a Hutt Valley Line train or a Wairarapa Line train. Therefore, we cannot provide a completely accurate snapper revenue report for these lines.

Though we are unable to provide an accurate revenue report for the Wairarapa Line, we are providing the farebox reports for the entire rail network for the period 1 January 2024 to 28 February 2025 as well as the Snapper ticket information for the Wairarapa line for the period 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2025. Please refer to **Attachments 4** and **5** for this information.

Please note that for the Snapper fare revenue numbers, the following caveats apply:

- Revenue is for Snapper trips on rail services only, i.e. revenue from buses replacing trains is not included.

- Revenue from pass sales (i.e. 30-day pass, Explorer pass) is not included.
- Revenue from default fares is not included.
- Values are inclusive of GST.

5.2. Financial impact of service disruptions

Greater Wellington does not hold the information on the cost of bus replacements as separated out by line.

Due to the limited pool of bus suppliers, release of the financial information regarding the cost of replacing trains with buses across the network would undermine our future ability to negotiate contracts and ensure competitive tension remains for future opportunities and pass value for money measures.

Therefore your request for all information held by Greater Wellington on the cost of providing replacement bus services and budget adjustments made in response to ongoing issues is refused under sections 7(2)(b)(ii) and 7(2)(i) of the LGOIMA, wherein the "withholding of the information is necessary to— protect information where the making available of the information— would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information" and "the withholding of the information is necessary to— enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations)"

It will be noted however that the bulk of train replacements since 1 January 2025 have been due to scheduled and planned maintenance by KiwiRail which necessitated the replacement of trains with buses.

Regarding your request for information on the financial implications of service penalties, we refer you to our response to part 2.2 of this letter.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the LGOIMA 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where appropriate. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā



Samantha Gain

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Waka-ā-atea | Group Manager Metlink

Proactive Release