

10 April 2025

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-37129

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED],

Request for information 2025-088

I refer to your request for information dated Friday 14 March 2025, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on Friday 14 March 2025. You have requested the following:

“Could you please advise, who is Manager responsible for the trains being on time? Please advise their contact details so I can further my inquires.

Could you please advise why this service does not have un-interrupted internet, the same as the Kapiti/Palmerston North line?

Could you please advise why, after the majority of the tracks have now been replaced this journey continues to be a 1hour 50minute journey (if its on time)?

Why does the train often stop when approaching outside the Wellington railway station? I.E. why hasn't the Wairarapa line got priority over the other services?

Why is there no a drinks service available the same as the Kapiti/Palmerston North service.

Why does the train slow to a crawl for the western lakes road crossing? Its been repair before 2024 Christmas.

Is the Metlink CEO aware of the poor service they are providing to the Wairarapa customers?”

Greater Wellington’s response follows:

Greater Wellington’s Manager responsible for trains being on time

Our Partnering Contract (the contract) with the rail operator, Transdev, provides for several measures of performance, including reliability and punctuality. You can find a representative version of the contract online at: <https://www.gw.govt.nz/transport/metlink-bus-train-and-ferry/public-transport-contracts/>

The contract essentially sets out all reporting and accountability measures for our rail operator to adhere to. However, in this case, we generally consider reliability and punctuality to be the

most important performance indicators that our operator reports to us. These are defined as follows:

Reliability

The rail reliability measure shows the percentage of scheduled services that depart from the origin and key stations no earlier than 30 seconds before the scheduled time, meet the consist size for the scheduled service, and stop at all stations timetabled for the service.

Punctuality

The rail punctuality measure records the percentage of services arriving at key interchange stations and final destination within five minutes of the scheduled time.

Therefore, the operator is responsible for ensuring that trains are running to the timetable and meeting both the Reliability and Punctuality targets as set out in the contract.

Metlink managers and who to contact

There are a number of managers at Metlink who are involved in managing the contract, partnership, operational issues, and accounts with our rail operator. The key roles are our Senior Manager Operations and our Senior Manager Commercial Partnerships, who both report to the Metlink Group Manager, Samantha Gain.

We request that all inquiries are sent to info@gw.govt.nz in the first instance.

Why the Wairarapa Line does not have uninterrupted internet access the same as the Kapiti/Palmerston North line?

Metlink does not currently provide Wi-Fi onboard any of its trains. Implementation of a Wi-fi signal across the Metlink rail network would necessitate additional expenditure and maintenance fees. As such Metlink does not intend to introduce Wi-fi onboard its services in the Greater Wellington region in the foreseeable future.

Greater Wellington understands by the Kapiti/Palmerston North Line you are referring to the 'Capital Connection' long distance commuter train that runs between Wellington Station and Palmerston North. This is an interregional service which is operated by KiwiRail and does not currently provide Wi-Fi onboard.

If this is instead with regards to cell service and the ability to access internet via 3g/4g/5g providers, then this is not a matter under the purview of Greater Wellington and should be referred to your mobile phone plan provider.

Why is there not a drinks service available the same as the Kapiti/Palmerston North service?

As above the Capital Connections line is operated by KiwiRail.

Metlink does not currently have and has no intention of introducing a “drinks service” to offer drinks aboard any of its public transport rail services.

Additionally, the consumption of alcohol onboard Metlink trains is against section 9.13 of our Conditions of Carriage.

Why the journey takes 1 hour and 50 minutes and why the service slows down around the Western Lakes?

As per our letter to you dated 28 March 2025, we have transferred this part of your request to KiwiRail for their response. This was done as the information you requested is believed by Greater Wellington to be more closely connected with the functions of KiwiRail.

Why the service stops before entering the Wellington Station?

During peak travel times, trains arrive at Wellington Station every few minutes. There are 3 train lines that feed into the 9 platforms which are shared between Metlink and KiwiRail services.

The current operational timetable is designed for this level of services, including movements of empty trains off the platform and into the yard plus the extra movements needed to move the Wairarapa Locomotive. If there are no delays on the network, services will operate without needing to stop to wait for a platform to become free.

Due to ongoing network speed reductions set in place by KiwiRail, this has caused delays on a number of lines which results in train arrivals overlapping at Wellington Station. This means that occasionally trains will need to wait for the platform and the line to be cleared before the train can safely pull into the station. This issue is affecting all train lines, not just those for Wairarapa Trains.

Platform berthing is currently being reviewed, and changes are expected to be made to improve the current situation. This task is complicated by speed restrictions on lines being subject to frequent change as KiwiRail continues with its maintenance and replacement of outdated tracks.

Is the Metlink CEO aware of the issues facing the Wairarapa Line?

Yes, the Greater Wellington Chief Executive is aware of the issues, as is our Metlink Group Manager. Metlink is aware of the ongoing issues facing the Wairarapa line and we are working through the issues both with our operators and with KiwiRail.

We have published a public response to the recent issues regarding the Wairarapa Train Line on our website at <https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/news/wairarapa-line-train-reliability>

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 Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 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