



Report 09.237
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Committee Transport & Access Committee
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SuperGold card free travel

1. Purpose

To review usage of the SuperGold card free travel scheme in Wellington, now that it has been in operation for six months.

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

The SuperGold scheme, which is managed nationally by NZ Transport Agency (NZTA), provides free travel free travel for those aged 65 and over at off-peak times. Off-peak times have been defined by NZTA as 9am to 3pm, and after 6.30pm on weekdays, and all-day at weekends.

[NB. Regional councils are able to adopt a different off-peak period, but if they do so they must fund the cost of travel the difference themselves. All councils other than Auckland have adopted the NZTA definition of the off-peak period. Auckland, largely because they already had a concession for over 65's, have chosen to only have a peak time in the morning].

The scheme is funded by central government. Operators are reimbursed at 75% of the average adult fare for each SuperGold passenger. Funding of \$18m a year for four years has been provided for the scheme nationally.

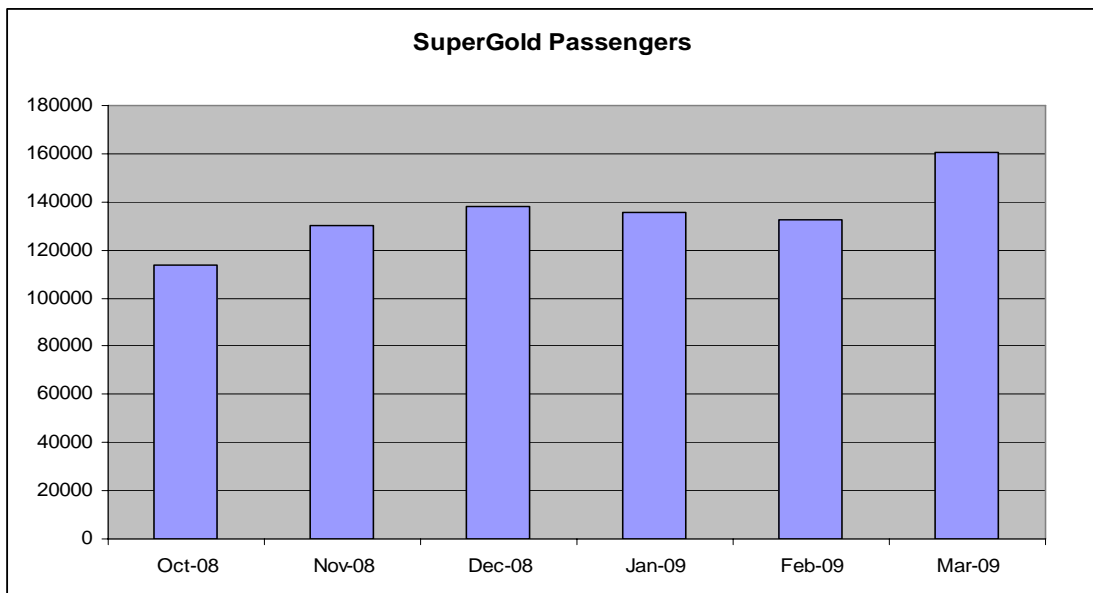
The scheme began on 1 October 2008. It is to be reviewed by NZTA in June 2009.

4. Usage to date

The numbers of passenger trips undertaken on the scheme since it began in this region, and the re-imbursement from central government, are as follows:

	Bus	Train	Ferry	Cable Car	Total	Reimbursement
Oct-08	90,566	20,081	843	2,266	113,756	\$ 310,864
Nov-08	107,430	19,449	707	2,415	130,001	\$ 341,775
Dec-08	114,342	20,020	1,093	2,429	137,884	\$ 363,813
Jan-09	111,762	19,080	1,775	2,799	135,416	\$ 354,229
Feb-09	108,182	20,555	1,365	2,397	132,499	\$ 349,610
Mar-09	131,115	23,869	1,998	3,441	160,423	\$ 423,729
Total	663,397	123,054	7,781	15,747	809,979	\$ 2,144,020

The Wellington regional passenger information in graph form is shown below:



In this region, approximately 810,000 trips have been made in the first six months of the scheme, at a cost to central government of \$2.14m. This equates to about \$2.70 per trip, and equates to about 3 trips per month per SuperGold card holder (there are about 50,000 SuperGold card holders in the region).

The highest number of trips was in March, indicating that usage is still increasing. However it is expected, based on evidence to date of the impact of weather on travel, that usage will decline during the winter.

Nationally, in the first six months of the scheme, almost 4 million passenger trips have been made. The Wellington region has accounted for 20% of those trips, and Auckland 50%.

It is likely that the cost of the scheme will exceed the original estimates, although that isn't likely to be a problem in this year due to the fact that the scheme started part-way through this financial year.

NZTA has recently released the results of a nationwide survey of SuperGold card holders it undertook in December 2008 about the scheme. Some of the results include the following:

- Knowledge of the scheme was high (86% nationally; 93% in Wellington).
- 31% of those surveyed had used public transport prior to the introduction of the scheme (56% in Wellington).
- 41% of Wellington card holders said they were likely or very likely to use public transport more often as a result of the scheme.
- Shopping (44%) and recreation (43%) were the main reasons why Wellington SuperGold card holders used public transport.
- In Wellington, use of the scheme was likely to result in a 59% decrease in driving, and 9% decrease in walking by SuperGold card holders.
- In Wellington, 21% of Wellington SuperGold card holders have concerns about using public transport. This was the highest level of all regions. The predominant reason for this concern was because of "disability/access issues".

5. Communication

No communication is required.

6. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. *Receives the report.*
2. *Notes the content of the report.*

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