



Report 10.165
Date 7 April 2010
File TD/04/11/01

Committee Transport & Access Committee
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Greater Wellington offer of "free" public transport for the Rugby World Cup 2011

1. Purpose

To update the Committee on public transport arrangements for Rugby World Cup 2011.

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 Rugby World Cup will be held in New Zealand in September/October 2011. It is being organised by Rugby World Cup (RWC) NZ Ltd and the government. The Rugby World Cup is held every four years and is promoted as being the third largest sporting event in the world. It attracts over 70,000 international visitors and about four billion television viewers.

Following a contestable bid process Wellington was successful in securing two quarter final matches (to be held on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 October 2011) and five pool games to be held at the Wellington Regional Stadium. These games are estimated to attract 21-22,000 international visitors to Wellington with a possible economic outcome of \$34 million for the Greater Wellington Region.

Greater Wellington's contribution to this successful bid, as resolved by Council on 30 June 2008 (Report PE08.472), was the resolution that Council:

“Agrees in principle that Greater Wellington’s contribution to the region’s bid for hosting the quarter final(s) in Wellington is the offer of some free public transport from midday on quarter final match day(s).”

This report outlines a proposed policy for what services Greater Wellington intends to provide free as a basis for commercial negotiations with public transport operators.

4. Rugby World Cup transport planning in Wellington

Transport planning for the Rugby World Cup is being coordinated by Wellington City Council, which has commissioned Tim Kelly Transportation Planning Ltd to produce a Transport Management Plan (TMP) for the Wellington matches. The TMP will include indicative forecasts of transport demand to and from RWC events and provide guidance for Greater Wellington’s public transport planning.

Initial indications from Tim Kelly are that the RWC matches will be on a similar scale to previous international events successfully hosted in Wellington such as the 2005 Lions Tour (which attracted 26-27,000 international visitors) and the annual rugby 7’s tournament.

This is backed up by the Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Tourism document “Preliminary Forecasts of International Visitor Activity in New Zealand during Rugby World Cup 2011”. Figures in that document note that while international visitor arrivals to New Zealand will be much higher during RWC 2011 than they would be in the absence of the event, visitor levels are anticipated to be comfortably below the levels experienced during the peak tourism season in February and March, and well below the Christmas peak in December (Figure 1).

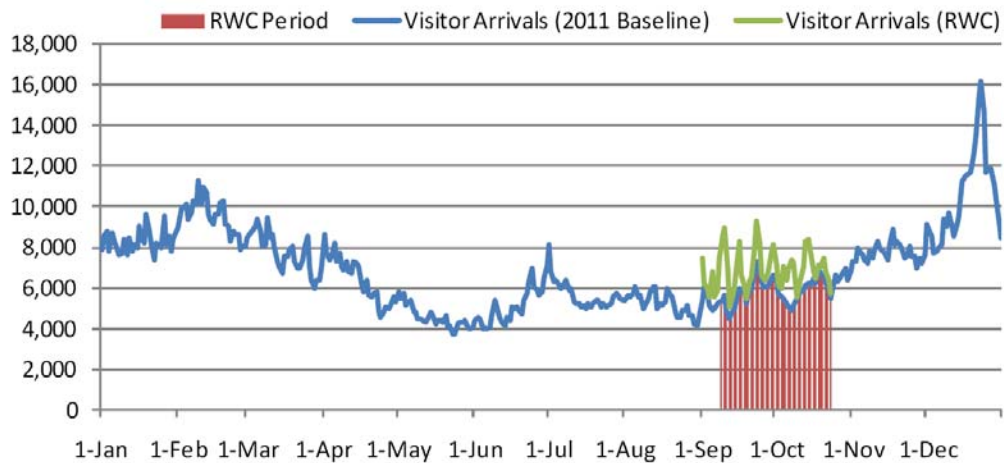


Figure 1 - Daily International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand in 2011 (MED & MT March 2010)

The TMP is yet to be finalised and visitor numbers are difficult to accurately predict until September 2010 when international air bookings and ticket sales data will become available.

Therefore planning of what public transport services will need to be provided will need to be successively refined as the better information becomes available.

To advance this an operator forum has been established to discuss and organise public transport arrangements. This forum held its first meeting on 18 February 2010 and another is planned for April. Greater Wellington is also working with NZTA, which is co-ordinating public transport planning on a national scale.

5. Policy on free public transport for RWC 2011

Discussions are being held with the operators as to how the “free” public transport will be applied. Free transport is proposed to be offered to all regardless of whether they hold a match ticket in recognition that many local residents will not have tickets to games and may wish to attend a number of “live” sites to be hosted around the region.

At this stage no decisions have been made regarding the provision of any services additional to those in the published timetable. This will be decided once the TMP is finalised.

There are other matches held in Wellington, but the offer of free transport only applies to the two quarter-final days.

6. Budget

Greater Wellington will work with operators in coming months to confirm costs so that provision can be made for these in the 2011/12 budget.

7. Communication

No communications are required.

8. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*
- 3. Notes that discussions are being held with operators regarding the provision of public transport for the Rugby World Cup matches.*
- 4. Notes that provision for free public transport will need to be made in the 2011/12 budget.*

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