

24 February 2023

File Ref: OIAP-7-27044

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2023-014

I refer to your request for information dated 20 January 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 20 January 2023. You have requested the following:

“Ticket fare revenue for the month of December 2022 on metlink train services using snapper as the payment method.

Total number of fare penalties applied, issued and/or reversed by penalty type for the month of December 2022 on metlink train services using snapper as the payment method.

Total amount of revenue generated by snapper train fare penalties for the month of December 2022.”

Greater Wellington’s response follows:

Background

Please note we refer to the amount charged due to a missed tag off as a ‘Default Fare’ as opposed to a penalty.

One of the important aspects of introducing electronic ticketing on to the rail network is to ensure that customers tag on and tag off to make sure that the right fare is calculated. One of the challenges of this process is balancing the need to get people to remember to tag off every time, with the recognition that a new system can take time for customers to adjust to. During the period in which the majority of rail customers have transitioned to using Snapper on Rail (i.e., November 2022 through to January 2023), the approach we have taken to balance these competing drivers is to:

1. Fully reverse the Default Fare for the first time it is requested (per card)
2. Provide a 50% reverse of the Default Fare for the second occurrence on request.

Snapper has advised that this approach has seen a significant reduction in Default Fares being incurred for the second time on a card which has led us to conclude that this Default Fare reversal approach is the right balance to get customers into the habit of tagging off.

It is noted that when a Default Fare is reversed then the fare that the passengers should have paid is not collected. Since when a default fare is incurred there is no record of where the journey taken actually ended, we have to assume that the fare the passenger should have paid could have been the maximum fare possible. This is a consistent approach amongst international ticketing schemes and is designed both to encourage correct tag-on/tag-off practice, and to prevent it being more attractive to avoid paying a fare on higher value trips.

Please note that December 2022 was the first month after the launch of the Snapper on all Rail lines. We consider that the first few months after the launch are a transitional period during which the rail users who were accustomed to paper ticketing would need some time to adjust to the new Snapper payment and fares. As a result, the fare revenue and Default Fare revenue would not be representative of what we would expect to see after this transition period.

Please also note that we are working on approaches to enable us to align the level of default fares – as far as is possible – with the applicable fares on the line in question. This will not always be possible (as for instance, a passenger boarding at Wellington station could be travelling anywhere on the network – but one boarding at Johnsonville could only travel as far as Wellington).

Snapper on Rail ticket fare revenue for December 2022

The ticket fare revenue using Snapper on Rail for December 2022 (excluding Default Fares) was \$787,489.76 (GST incl). This includes fare revenue collected on the buses that replaced trains throughout December 2022.

Total number of Default Fares applied for the rail network

Due to the complexity and nature of this data in the Snapper system which we have access to, we would only be able to get this information by a manual collation which would require a substantial amount of time and effort. Your request for this information is refused under section 17(f) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 in that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

Please note we do have the number of total penalties applied for both bus and rail together but are unable to separate the value of the Default Fares applied for both modes in our current reporting tools. Please advise us if you are interested in receiving this information.

Total number of Default Fares reversed by Snapper for the rail network

The number of Default Fares refunded for December 2022 was 3,457.

Total revenue generated due to Default Fares on the rail network

The total revenue generated due to Default Fares for December 2022 (including any that may have later been reversed) was \$86,309.57 (GST incl).

Total value of Default Fares reversed by Snapper for the rail network

The total value of the Default Fares refunded in December 2022 was \$33,278.01 (GST incl).

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 possible. 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 | General Manager Metlink