

9 May 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-1791

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2023-080

I refer to your request for information dated 6 April 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 6 April 2023. You have requested the following:

“Can you please let me know:

- a breakdown of all the reasons for why the buses are being cancelled in all of Wellington (ie Wellington city and greater Wellington)- please break down those reasons above by city and region if possible*
- what accountability mechanisms there are for the private providers that cancel these services*
- what is being done at both a Metlink and council level to address this, including any plans, strategy, and actions taken to date”*

Greater Wellington’s response follows:

- 1. A breakdown of reasons for why buses are cancelled across Wellington, by city / region, and our plan to address this*

In regard to your request for information on why services are cancelled, our Operators are not contractually required to provide this information, therefore it is not information we hold, either in respect of the whole network or different parts of the region. Our information relates to whether the service operated or not. Therefore, this part of your request is refused under section 17(g) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) on the basis that the information requested is not held by Greater Wellington and there are no grounds for believing that the information is held by another local authority or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

However, we are aware of some of the factors which impact the service cancellation rate. The major factor is currently the workforce shortage affecting the bus industry. Driver shortages and the impact that they have had, and will continue to have, on our ability to provide essential bus services is front of mind for Metlink and our operators.

By way of additional information, we are aware anecdotally that the outer areas of our region such as Kāpiti, Wairarapa and the Northern Wellington suburbs are less affected by cancellations as the local operators have the staffing capacity to meet the demand in their area.

You can find out more about the performance of our network including cancellation and reliability rates with commentary on our website here: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/surveys-and-reports/performance-of-our-network/>. Refer to the monthly performance reports for detailed analysis and commentary.

2. Accountability mechanisms for our operators

The contracts between Greater Wellington and our operators set out provision for mechanisms whereby our operators have abatements made to their monthly payment if they fail to meet set Key Performance Indicators. There is also a mechanism allowing for a bonus to be paid where the operator has exceeded certain Key Performance Indicators.

The current KPI framework (effective from 1 July 2021) includes a threshold for Monthly Reliability of 98% and Daily Reliability of 96%. The Daily Reliability measure is to incentivise bus Operators to better manage their daily operations. The Punctuality threshold is 95%. Greater Wellington will either:

- Withhold a percentage of the daily payment to operators when the performance is below 96% but higher than 80%; or
- Withhold a percentage of the average daily payment when the performance is below 80%.

3. What is being done at both a Metlink and council level to address this, including any plans, strategy, and actions taken to date

Greater Wellington suspended the application of the KPI regime during various stages of the COVID-19 response framework. This occurred during Alert Levels 3 and 4, as well as the red and orange settings of the 'Traffic Light' framework. The application of the Reliability KPI measurement criteria was suspended for cancelled trips from 1 February 2022 to 30 September 2022 due to the significant impact COVID-19 was still having on the bus Operators' ability to deliver services.

For more information on the shortage and our future plans to remedy the current situation, please refer to *Uplift in Bus Driver Wages – Report 23.94* which was put before Council on 30 March 2023. This report can be found in the order paper for this meeting, starting from page 64:

<https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2023/03/Council-30-March-2023-order-paper-public.pdf>.

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 Act.

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