

28 July 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-3690

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Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2023-178

I refer to your request for information dated 3 July 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 3 July 2023. You have requested the following:

“Under the LGIA I would like to know what happens to the money charged by snapper for penalty fares. Does this go to the Council or is it held by snapper?”

How much has been charged in penalty fares since snapper was introduced on the Wellington train lines?

Is the amount snapper charges verified by the council or contract holder?”

Greater Wellington’s response follows:

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

Does money received from Default Fares go to Council or to Snapper

When a Default Fare is collected, this is provided to Metlink as fare revenue and no portion is retained by Snapper.

However, we note that when a Default Fare is reversed then the fare that the passenger should have paid is not collected. Default Fares are in lieu of a fare (as we cannot charge a correct fare when we do not know the distance travelled). This means when a Default Fare is reversed no fare revenue is collected for that journey, i.e., the passenger travels for free.

How much has been charged in Default Fares since Snapper was introduced onto the Wellington rail network

Please refer to **Attachment 1** which includes a breakdown of the total amount charged through default fares from the period of 12 November 2022 to 18 April 2023.

Snapper supplies records of the Default Fares to Greater Wellington, however, the data does not identify whether the Default Fares applied were due to missed tag offs on the bus network or the rail network. This data caveat is due to the way that the Snapper ticketing system charges fares.

In the absence of a tag-off for a trip, a Snapper card registers a Default Fare and keeps it in the card's memory until next tag on. On the next tag on, the Snapper card deducts the Default Fare from the remaining balance on your card. For example, if a Snapper card holder misses a tag off on bus, and connects to a train service, the Default Fare will be deducted from the card at the time of tag-on on the train service. The Snapper data would show the Default Fare against the tag-on transaction recorded for the train leg of the journey, even though it has been incurred due to a failure to tag off a bus trip.

While it is possible to extract the total amount of Default Fares recorded against rail trips from the existing Snapper ticketing data, considering the caveat outlined above, this information will not be entirely representative of Default Fares associated with missing tag-offs on train services.

Further to the data caveat outlined above, to support rail passengers through the introduction of Snapper on rail, Metlink also provided a Default Fare amnesty period, up until 30 June 2023. This amnesty meant that up until 30 April 2023 passengers were able to contact Snapper and request 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.

From 1 May – 30 June 2023 passengers were able to contact Snapper and request to:

1. Provide a 50% reverse of the Default Fare for the first time it is requested (per card)

Noting the caveats above, there has been \$551,083.42 of Default Fares charged on the Wellington rail network for the period 12 November 2022 (go live of Snapper on Rail) through to 30 June 2023. This does not take into account any Default Fares that were reimbursed under the Default Fare amnesty.

Is the amount Snapper charges verified by Council or the contract holder

After clarification on this question was sent to you on 21 July, you responded on 22 July:

“What I’m really asking is does someone check how much snapper charges in Default Fares and how long they hold they money?”.

Metlink sets the Default Fare as part of the fare strategy. We have an external auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) who complete audits on Snapper revenue for us, including whether all fares deducted are correct. Snapper holds the money overnight, and then it gets sent through to Greater Wellington the next morning.

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

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