

By email

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Kiwi Rail

Tēnā kōrua Peter and David

Reliability of the Wairarapa Line

I'm writing to underline the critical importance of restoring public confidence in the reliability of rail services, particularly on the Wairarapa Line.

While we acknowledge that Transdev's current staffing challenges are front of mind for passengers, it's clear that the extensive upgrade and engineering work over the past two to three years — along with recent locomotive issues — have also contributed to ongoing frustration with service reliability and subsequent patronage decline.

I remain fully supportive of KiwiRail's efforts to carry out essential maintenance and improvement works across the network — including tracks, signals, level crossings, and tunnels. However, I would appreciate your focus on how this work can be delivered in a way that reduces the duration and/or frequency of line blocks, and the disruption they cause.

These disruptions not only inconvenience passengers but also place additional pressure on the wider transport network, including increased congestion on our roads.

Recent issues with the locomotives used in the 'hook and tow' arrangements for Wairarapa Line carriages have also caused delays. I would appreciate your personal assurance that you will investigate the root causes of these problems and ensure a swift and sustainable resolution.

In addition, the increase in signal failures — affecting the Wairarapa Line and others — is concerning. I understand that a comprehensive signal upgrade is still some years away. In the meantime, I would like your assurance that KiwiRail is actively managing this risk to protect service reliability.

I would also appreciate an update on the current status of temporary speed restrictions (TSRs) on the Wairarapa Line, and your assurance that, where this is safe and practical, these will be lifted as soon as possible.

This situation is not unlike having a major pothole on a state highway, surrounded by cones and forcing traffic to slow to 40kph — something we all know wouldn't be tolerated on a state highway for long. Yet I understand that some TSRs have been in place for a year or more.

The rail network is an essential component of Wellington region's transport infrastructure. Without consistent, reliable rail services, major highways — particularly the Remutaka Hill Road and State Highway 2 — face significant pressure during peak travel times.

To conclude, I seek your assurance that KiwiRail will make every effort to ensure that the Wairarapa Line services that are operating as trains are reliable and on time, so that together we can rebuild the confidence of our passengers.

Ngā mihi nui,



Daran Ponter
Heamana | Chair