

21 April 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-1037

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2023-059**

I refer to your request for information dated 22 March 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 22 March 2023. You have verbally requested information via phone call which was summarised by us as follows:

- *Trends of cancellations May 2022 to December 2022.*
- *More details of cancellations for January 2023, including reasons for cancellations, and why reliability was 96% (an increase from previous months).*
- *Information regarding accessibility issues, including how Metlink and the bus operators manage elderly and disabled persons when they cannot get onto a bus because it is too full.*
- *A list of bus cancellations and complaints regarding buses to and from Brooklyn May 2022 to Feb 2023.*
- *Comment regarding the comparison of cancellations and complaints of March 2019 and January 2023.*

**Greater Wellington's response follows:**

*Cancellations data (May 22 – February 22)*

Please see **attachment 1** which contains the requested data on cancellations between May 2022 to February 2023.

*More details of cancellations for January 2023, including reasons for cancellations, and why reliability was 96% (an increase from previous months).*

This information is held by our operators and they are not required to provide us with it. We therefore find it necessary to refuse this part of your request 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 we have 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 most major factor is currently the workforce shortage affecting the bus driver 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.

For more information on the shortage and how we are working to remedy the current situation, please refer to report 23.94 which was put before Council on 30 March 2023. Link to the report (starts on page 64) <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2023/03/Council-30-March-2023-order-paper-public.pdf>.

#### *Reliability increase to 96% in January 2023*

In January 2023, Metlink elected to run what is known as a 'Saturday Plus timetable' which was in effect between 7 January to 27 January. Metlink ran this reduced bus timetable in order to:

- give customers certainty about services and increase reliability; and
- give our drivers a much-needed break so they could use leave and spend time with their families.

The timetable change during that period is our explanation for the increase in reliability as noted.

The monthly performance report for January 2023 available on our website also highlights this: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/assets/Performance-of-our-network/Jan23-Metlink-monthly-performance-report-v2.pdf>.

You can find out more about the performance of our network on our website here: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/news-and-updates/surveys-and-reports/performance-of-our-network/>.

### *Accessibility issues including for elderly and disabled*

There is no specific guidance regarding management of elderly and disabled who cannot get on a bus when full. Ideally, we would not like to leave any passengers behind including elderly, disabled, or any other person that may belong to a vulnerable community. However, this cannot always be safely or practically accommodated and is at the discretion of the driver to make the decision on whether or not it would be safe and appropriate to pick up the person or not.

In terms of Metlink's commitment to making the public transport network safer, and more accessible for vulnerable communities, refer to Metlink's Accessibility Charter which is available on our website here: <https://www.metlink.org.nz/getting-started/accessibility-guide/metlink-accessibility/>. The charter was adopted by Greater Wellington's Transport Committee on 9 September 2021 and aims to address inequities in the network.

### *Cancellations and complaints between May 2022 and February 2023*

Please see **attachment 2** which contains a list of complaints from 1 May 2022 to 28 February 2023 relating to cancellations for routes 7 and 17. In summary:

- 127 total complaints
- 105 were classed as First Call Resolution (operator sees it but no response necessary to customer)
- 21 Resolved (seen by operator and response sent to customer)
- 1 Response proposed (Seen by operator and response waiting to be sent to customer)

Please note this does not take into account complaints logged incorrectly coded by our Contact Centre.

### *Complaints regarding cancellations comparison between March 2019 and January 2023*

Our Metlink Monthly Performance Report for March 2019 reports on the number of bus and rail complaints received for that month, in line with the cancellations. These can be compared with the Metlink Monthly Performance Report for January 2023, which has been included above. <https://www.metlink.org.nz/assets/Performance-of-our-network/Mar-19-Metlink-Monthly-performance-report3.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 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



**Tim Shackleton**

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Waka-ā-atea | Acting General Manager Metlink