

6 December 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-24191

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

Request for information 2023-273

I refer to your request for information dated 8 November 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 8 November 2023. You have requested the following:

“Any response? Today's train 15 mins late leaving Masterton. Why? If you can't get this service out on time change the timetable - passengers are sick of being late, waiting with no info. Where was the message on Facebook, on the platforms, even on the train - some kind of explanation ...omg an apology and part refund for delay. Please give me an answer as per my previous requests- what actions are you taking to improve real time passenger comms, compensate passengers for the consistent disruption, what are the plans ahead for improvement- what improvement delivery timescales are you/kiwirail/whoever is responsible for decision making working to- what are they key actions on going for upgrade and when will they be delivered, you have published an improvement date of January 2024 and then additional works for the line with new carriages in the distant future. Please provide me a full explanation of what is ahead, your justification for the constant delays to the commuter service, morning and afternoon - and the actions/mitigations you have in place to resolve them short and longer term, your advice to staff about appropriate communication, your advice to staff about methods of communication and timely use of these, an understanding of how you oversee that these communications are delivered in a timely manner bearing in mind Wairarapa commuters are using 6am services. This information please in relation to the WRL service. If you will not provide it directly please treat this message as a request under the Official Information Act.

In addition to my request please advise on forthcoming known delays over the next five years.

Please be honest about the repair schedule for infrastructure and the service mitigation-for example if the tunnel repairs will require a WRL bus replacement service please identify this, the proposed start and finish dates. Please provide a realistic project timeline of passenger disruption over the next five years. This will allow people to plan their lives- choose to seek a change of job or homebase. The old 90 min journey is regularly at 130 plus.”

Greater Wellington's response follows:

Today's train [8 November] 15 minutes late leaving Masterton. Why?

Where was the message on Facebook, the platform, or on the train?

Metlink did send out communications regarding the disruptions on this service. Please refer to **Attachments 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5** which contain the communications which were sent out – one for each morning service on 8 November and proactive communications sent on Monday and Tuesday (6 and 7 November 2023) warning customers that “*newly added speed restrictions will delay services on level crossings in the Carterton area*”. These service alerts were sent out to customers who were registered through the Metlink app to receive alerts regarding the Wairarapa Line. We do note after checking the messages that were sent out by our rail partner Transdev, there did not appear to be a reason for the delays included in some of the messages.

The service alerts that were sent were also on the Metlink website from Monday evening (6 November 2023) and the individual service communications were sent out once the service got to 15 minutes late. Other than the attached communications, there was also messaging on the Real Time Information (RTI) screens.

If you have not done so, we encourage you to download and sign up to our Metlink app, check the website, and check RTI screens when at the station so that you can ‘know before you go’.

Alerts and updates are shared as soon as possible on our website, app and PA announcements on the train.

What actions are you taking to:

- ***Improve real time passenger comms***
- ***Compensate passengers for the consistent disruption***

Transdev have assured us that they are communicating with customers about these late services. Metlink have asked Transdev to remind staff about manual communications and informing passengers on board. We continue to work with Transdev to ensure passengers are well informed of any disruptions or delays occurring on the network.

As set out in Section 22 of our Conditions of Carriage which are publicly available online (<https://www.metlink.org.nz/about/legal/conditions-of-carriage/>):

“Other than as described in paragraphs 2.10, 22.1 and 22.2, we are not liable to you:

- *For any losses, damage, costs, distress or inconvenience suffered by you or any other person, or loss or damage to any property*

- *For any losses, damages, costs, distress or inconvenience if we:*
 - *refuse to allow you to travel*
 - *refuse to allow you to travel with any luggage or other item*
 - *if our services depart early, arrive late, are cancelled or miss stops or terminate early*
 - *For any losses, damages, costs, distress or inconvenience as a result of a service disruption.”*

Metlink does not compensate passengers for disruptions that have occurred on the network.

What are the plans ahead for improvement- what improvement delivery timescales are you/kiwirail/whoever is responsible for decision making working to?

KiwiRail, who owns and manages the railway network, is currently undertaking upgrade work across all Wellington rail lines, but in particular on the Wairarapa line.

A large-scale track upgrade is underway on the Wairarapa Line including track, sleeper and ballast renewal on the line, and improvement to bridges and tunnels. A significant task that remains is the replacement of rail, sleepers and ballast in the Remutaka and Maoribank tunnels.

The track condition in the Remutaka tunnel currently restricts speeds to 60 kilometres per hour. The track replacement in this 8.8km long tunnel presents a unique challenge and necessitates significant amounts of time. The work in both tunnels is scheduled for Christmas 2023 and Christmas 2024.

However, most of the track work outside the two tunnels is nearly finished. The last sleepers have been placed, and the new rail will be completed over the Christmas 2023 shut down. All this track work has caused major disruptions to our passengers.

What are they key actions on going for upgrade and when will they be delivered?

There is further work happening on the Wairarapa Line to prepare for the new trains which are planned for 2029. KiwiRail will improve the public level crossings on the line, add new passing loops and a completely new signalling system.

This work will be less disruptive to commuters than the track work has been. It has a target complete date of late 2026.

All this work is essential to keep the Wairarapa Line open. Much of the rail network has been in slow decline for a number of decades and Metlink are pleased that KiwiRail have been able to undertake these programmes of work to address the issues across the network.

When the track work is completed the travel time for Masterton to Wellington should stabilise. However, KiwiRail still have to maintain the line and temporary speed restrictions are required from time to time for safety reasons.

You have published an improvement date of January 2024 and then additional works for the line with new carriages in the distant future.

Please provide me a full explanation of:

- ***What is ahead, your justification for the constant delays to the commuter service, morning and afternoon - and the actions/mitigations you have in place to resolve them short and longer term***
- ***Your advice to staff about appropriate communication, your advice to staff about methods of communication and timely use of these, an understanding of how you oversee that these communications are delivered in a timely manner bearing in mind Wairarapa commuters are using 6am services.***

In addition to my request please advise on forthcoming known delays over the next five years.

Please be honest about the repair schedule for infrastructure and the service mitigation-for example if the tunnel repairs will require a WRL bus replacement service please identify this, the proposed start and finish dates. Please provide a realistic project timeline of passenger disruption over the next five years.

Please refer to **Attachment 6** which contains a copy of a high-level timeline of programmes of work we are aware of across the rail network over the next 5-6 years. RS1 on this schedule essentially refers to our ability to run a 15-minute timetable across the rail network.

We note that there are unplanned disruptions across the network on a daily basis. These disruptions are dealt with in a reactionary manner, and we do our best to adapt to ensure our passengers are not severely impacted by the disruption. We cannot guarantee that these disruptions will be within our control.

More information is available regarding scheduled works on the rail network on KiwiRail's website here: <https://www.kiwirail.co.nz/our-network/our-regions/wellington/>.

In terms of advice to staff on the network, we do not provide advice directly to them about communications to passengers for passenger announcements. We make clear our expectations with Transdev in regard to customer experience and information. Transdev are responsible for ensuring that on board announcements are provided where appropriate. This is at their discretion. Our staff also work to update the Metlink app and website with disruption information as soon as we become aware of anything that may impact a passenger's journey on our services. These updates are also able to send notifications out to passengers who may be affected by the disruptions.

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 | Group Manager Metlink

From: no-reply=metlink.org.nz@mail.metlink.org.nz on behalf of [Metlink](#)
To: [Daniel Pou](#)
Subject: Alert - WRL: The 5:46am service from Masterton to Wellington is running approx 15 minutes late from Featherston.
Date: Wednesday, 8 November 2023 6:43:25 am

Metlink



WRL: The 5:46am service from Masterton to Wellington is running approx 15 minutes late from Featherston.

Delays due to other cause

Dates: Wednesday 8 November

Services Affected:

WRL Wairarapa Line (Masterton - Wellington)

Stops Affected:

CART Carterton Station

FEAT Featherston Station

MAST Masterton Station

MATA Matarawa Station

MAYM Maymorn Station

PETO1 Petone Station

RENA Renall Street Station

SOLW Solway Station

UPPE Upper Hutt Station

WATE1 Waterloo Station

WELL Wellington Station

WOOD Woodside Station

Metlink Service Centre **0800 801 700**

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From: no-reply=metlink.org.nz@mail.metlink.org.nz on behalf of [Metlink](#)
To: [Daniel Pou](#)
Subject: Alert - WRL: The 6:20am service from Masterton to Wellington is running approx 15 minutes late from Carterton.
Date: Wednesday, 8 November 2023 6:56:26 am

Metlink



WRL: The 6:20am service from Masterton to Wellington is running approx 15 minutes late from Carterton.

Delays due to other cause

Dates: Wednesday 8 November

Services Affected:

WRL Wairarapa Line (Masterton - Wellington)

Stops Affected:

CART Carterton Station	FEAT Featherston Station	MAST Masterton Station
MATA Matarawa Station	MAYM Maymorn Station	PETO1 Petone Station
RENA Renall Street Station	SOLW Solway Station	UPPE Upper Hutt Station
WATE1 Waterloo Station	WELL Wellington Station	WOOD Woodside Station

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From: no-reply=metlink.org.nz@mail.metlink.org.nz on behalf of [Metlink](#)
To: [Daniel Pou](#)
Subject: Alert - WRL: The 6:47am service from Masterton to Wellington has departed Masterton approx 15 minutes late.
Date: Wednesday, 8 November 2023 7:05:23 am

Metlink



WRL: The 6:47am service from Masterton to Wellington has departed Masterton approx 15 minutes late.

Delays due to other cause

Dates: Wednesday 8 November

Services Affected:

WRL Wairarapa Line (Masterton - Wellington)

Stops Affected:

CART Carterton Station	FEAT Featherston Station	MAST Masterton Station
MATA Matarawa Station	MAYM Maymorn Station	PETO1 Petone Station
RENA Renall Street Station	SOLW Solway Station	UPPE Upper Hutt Station
WATE1 Waterloo Station	WELL Wellington Station	WOOD Woodside Station

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From: no-reply=metlink.org.nz@mail.metlink.org.nz on behalf of [Metlink](#)
To: [Daniel Pou](#)
Subject: Alert - WRL: Expect delays on the Wairarapa services due to speed restrictions
Date: Monday, 6 November 2023 3:30:45 pm

Metlink



WRL: Expect delays on the Wairarapa services due to speed restrictions

Delays due to planned maintenance

Dates: Monday 6 November

Newly added speed restrictions will delay services on level crossings in the Carterton area

Services Affected:

WRL Wairarapa Line (Masterton - Wellington)

Stops Affected:

CART Carterton Station	FEAT Featherston Station	MAST Masterton Station
MATA Matarawa Station	MAYM Maymorn Station	PETO1 Petone Station
PETO2 Petone Station	RENA Renall Street Station	SOLW Solway Station
UPPE Upper Hutt Station	WATE1 Waterloo Station	WATE2 Waterloo Station
WELL Wellington Station	WOOD Woodside Station	

Trips Affected:

4:25 PM from Wellington Station to Masterton Station

5:30 PM from Wellington Station to Masterton Station

6:18 PM from Wellington Station to Masterton Station

3:38 PM from Masterton Station to Wellington Station

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PROACTIVE RELEASE

From: no-reply=metlink.org.nz@mail.metlink.org.nz on behalf of [Metlink](#)
To: [Daniel Pou](#)
Subject: Alert - WRL: Expect delays to services on the Wairarapa Line due to speed restrictions
Date: Tuesday, 7 November 2023 5:01:19 am

Metlink



WRL: Expect delays to services on the Wairarapa Line due to speed restrictions

Delays due to planned maintenance

Dates: Tuesday 7 November

Newly added speed restrictions will cause delays to services on level crossings in the Carterton area.

Services Affected:

WRL Wairarapa Line (Masterton - Wellington)

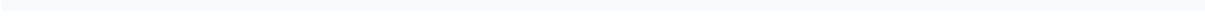
Stops Affected:

CART Carterton Station	FEAT Featherston Station	MAST Masterton Station
MATA Matarawa Station	MAYM Maymorn Station	PETO1 Petone Station
PETO2 Petone Station	RENA Renall Street Station	SOLW Solway Station
UPPE Upper Hutt Station	WATE1 Waterloo Station	WATE2 Waterloo Station
WELL Wellington Station	WOOD Woodside Station	

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PROACTIVE RELEASE



Rail Projects High Level Timeline (Nov 2023)

