

6 December 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-24226

[REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2023-274**

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:

*“The number of people eligible for Community Connect in your district, broken down by demographic if possible, and the investment (if any) spent on enabling Community Connect to be realised in your district (i.e. technology changes, policy work, engagement and communications of the scheme) either spent from our council or provided by central Government.”*

### **Greater Wellington’s response follows:**

On 19 May 2022, as part of Budget 2022, the Government announced funding for a Community Connect Initiative to provide half price public transport fares for Community Service Cardholders (CSC). This commenced on 1 July 2023.

On 18 May 2023, as part of the Wellbeing Budget 2023, the Government announced funding for an extension to the Community Connect Initiative (Community Connect Initiative Extension). This includes free travel for under 13-year-olds, half price fares for under 25-year-olds, 75% off adult fares for 13–18-year-olds and half price fares for CSC holders. This commenced on 1 September 2023.

The latest statistics we received from the Ministry of Social Development on 15 October 2023 show that there have been 16,676 successful applications for the Community Connect Initiative.

Please refer to **Attachment 1** which was sent to Waka Kotahi (New Zealand Transport Agency) on 8 August 2022 and refers to the Community Connect Initiative and the cost associated with this scheme.

Please refer to **Attachment 2** which was sent to Waka Kotahi (New Zealand Transport Agency) on 30 August 2023 and refers to the Community Connect Initiative Extension and the cost associated with this scheme.

The total number of people who are eligible for the Community Connect Initiative is 93,000. This information is provided from Ministry of Social Development.

The total number of people who are eligible for the Community Connect Initiative Extension include 100,199 children aged under 0 – 14 years old and 77,933 individuals aged 15 – 24 years old. This information has been gathered from the latest Census data.

We do not have the information broken down by demographic.

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

8th August 2022

Delaney Myers  
Manager Public Transport  
Waka Kotahi  
Wellington

[Delaney.myers@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:Delaney.myers@nzta.govt.nz)

Kia ora Delaney

### Community Connect

My team and I are delighted to have been working closely with Waka Kotahi, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and the Ministry of Transport to implement the Community Connect Scheme (the Scheme) since it was announced by the Government in the May Budget. We believe this is an excellent initiative which will actively support community members most in need.

We have made significant progress towards the implementation of the Scheme and will have a production ready portal (not for use by the public) by the end of August. The recent announcement by the Government to delay the roll out of the Scheme from 1 September 2022 till 1 February 2023 allows us to deliver a more comprehensive and consistent solution, as Snapper will be on the entire rail network by the end of November 2022.

In its upcoming meeting on 25 August 2022, the Council will consider the deferral of the Scheme until 1 February 2023. To this end, we would appreciate at your earliest confirmation in writing that the scope outlined below meets both the Government and Waka Kotahi's expectations to fully fund the implementation of this Scheme:

1. The Greater Wellington's public transport services proposed to be included in the Scheme and how we intend to offer the concession are set out in **Appendix A**.
2. We will be seeking reimbursement from Waka Kotahi for 50% of the difference between an applicable adult fare and community connect fare that is sold. The 50% will be based on the adult fare that the Community Service Card (CSC) holder would have been expected to pay (based on Greater Wellington approved fares policy) at the time of travel if the concession was not available.
3. We will also be seeking reimbursement from Waka Kotahi of reasonable costs of implementing the Scheme. The estimated cost at this stage is \$1,158,000 (excluding GST) in addition to ongoing operational costs of \$16,000 per month. The breakdown of these costs is set out in **Appendix B**.
4. Finally, we have identified a potential revenue protection issue regarding one CSC number being able to be attached to multiple cards – either across a region or nationally. This creates the risk that a number of people who are not entitled to a CSC concession will be able to access the concession if they have access to a valid CSC number.

We have explored potential solutions with our partner, Snapper, however, they do not store any of the CSC information. This information only exists in the memory of the Snapper concession application for the duration of the browser session with the MSD API. They only store a unique transaction identifier, date/time and the response code from the MSD API. Therefore, we believe the Ministry of Social Development should investigate a solution to mitigate this revenue risk and regularly monitor the situation when the Scheme goes live.

I would appreciate it if you could please confirm the scope of our implementation and funding expectations as outlined above, at your earliest convenience and I look forward to hearing from you.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Samantha Gain', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

**Samantha Gain**  
**General Manager**  
**Metlink**

Copy: [kelly.curry@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:kelly.curry@nzta.govt.nz), [Edward.Wright@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:Edward.Wright@nzta.govt.nz),

Rebecca Bell, Nicki Lau Young, Tim Shackleton

PROACTIVE RELEASE

**Appendix A – Scope of the approach to implement Community Connect Scheme in Greater Wellington Region**

Below is an outline of our proposed approach to be implemented by 1 February 2023, with pre-registration available from 18 January 2023.

| <b>Bus (including Airport, school and midnight services) and Rail</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>In scope</b>   | <b>Out of scope</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CSC concessions will be made available by registering via the Community Connect Concession Portal.</li> <li>- CSC concession will apply to the region’s existing off-peak discount <i>subject to Council approval</i> of the current fare policy changes being consulted on.</li> <li>- CSC must be sighted for all concession ticket purchases validation, where required.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The CSC concession will not be made available for cash fares and other fare products including 30 Day passes, Metlink Explorer Day passes and event tickets</li> <li>- The CSC concession will not apply cumulatively to the region’s existing concessions.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Ferry</b>  |   |
| <b>In scope</b>   | <b>Out of scope</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Given the ferry’s small share of all trips across the Metlink network (0.5%) a paper-based arrangement will be implemented using existing concession tickets.</li> <li>- CSC must be sighted for all concession ticket purchases or validation, where required.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The concession will not be available on period passes or excursion tickets.</li> </ul>   |

Please note: exempt public transport services (e.g. Cable Car), as well as On-Demand Services and Total Mobility taxi services are not currently covered by the Scheme.

## Appendix B – Estimated Costs

Below is the outline of the estimated costs involved to launch the solution by 1 February 2023.

Please note, there will be:

- ongoing costs for the maintenance and support of the concession portal of approximately \$16,000/month which have not been included in the budget below
- ongoing costs for the administration and network wide operation of the scheme; and
- reimbursements of the reduced revenue for Greater Wellington.

| CSC Portal   | Costs (ex GST)        | Comments  |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| Development and testing (does not include monthly hosting and support of portal)             | \$350,000.00          | Portal will be built by Snapper   |
| Accessibility testing of online form   | \$5,000.00            | This is to ensure the fields adhere to government standards and can be accessed by assistive technology   |
| <b>Comms and engagement</b>  |                       |   |
| Collateral - design and printing   | \$80,000.00           | Comms campaign to effectively engage CSC holders  |
| Ambassadors at 11 MSD offices (one person per MSD office)                                    | \$93,000.00           | Ambassadors to help CSC holders sign up to the concession from 24 Jan till 28 Feb.  |
| Call centre staff to support roll out  | \$30,000.00           | Additional call centre staff for Snapper - 6 week period from application "go-live" from 24 Jan until 28 Feb. Mon-Fri 8am - 6pm, Saturday 8am – 12 noon |
| <b>Free Snapper cards</b>  |                       |   |
| Snapper cards to be given to CSC holders at no cost to CSC holders - 40,000 at \$10 per card | \$400,000.00          | This is based on the retail price of a Snapper card. This doesn't cover any replacement costs of Snapper cards. Note: this is subject to availability.  |
| <b>Project management</b>  |                       |   |
| Project management, 40 hours/week for 22 weeks   | \$200,000.00          | From mid June till end of Feb 2023  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$1,158,000.00</b> |   |

30 August 2023

Anthony Leung  
Team Leader – Public Transport  
Waka Kotahi  
Wellington

[Anthony.Leung@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:Anthony.Leung@nzta.govt.nz)

Kia ora Anthony

## Community Connect Extension

My team and I are delighted to have been working closely with Waka Kotahi to implement the Community Connect Extension Scheme (the Scheme) since it was announced by the Government as part of the May 2023 Budget.

We have made significant progress towards the implementation of the Scheme and the Snapper portal was ready on 26 August to enable eligible customers to sign up for the new age-based concessions which will be available from 1 September 2023.

We have identified the one-off implementation costs associated with the extension of the Scheme which, as set out in Schedule one of the Memorandum of Understanding, have agreed to be fully reimbursed by Waka Kotahi. We thought it useful for your budgeting purposes to give you an early indication of these implementation costs. These are estimated to be \$ 908,823.32 (excluding GST) in addition to ongoing operational costs of \$25,000 per month. The breakdown of these one-off implementation costs is set out in Appendix A.

We will be entering the costs incurred to date in TIO over the next few days. If you need more explanation of any of these, feel free to reach out and discuss with us.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Shackleton". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a large, light grey watermark that says "PROPOSED FOR RELEASE".

**Tim Shackleton**  
**Senior Manager, Commercial, Strategy and Investments**  
**Metlink**

Copy: Nicki Lau Young

## Appendix A – Estimated Costs

Below is the outline of the estimated costs involved to launch the Community Connect Extension solution. Please note, there will be:

- ongoing costs for the maintenance and support of the concession portal of approximately \$25,000/month which have not been included in the budget below. Note the monthly operational costs includes but is not limited to additional support required in the following areas:
  - o Monitoring
  - o Reporting
  - o Amazon Web Services costs
  - o IT and support resource (1 additional FTE)
  - o Customer care and comms (2 additional FTE)
- ongoing costs for the administration and network wide operation of the scheme; and
- reimbursements of the reduced revenue for Greater Wellington.

| API/ Portal Maintenance  | Costs (ex GST)       | Comments   |
|--|----------------------|--|
| Development and testing (does not include monthly hosting and support of portal) | \$300,000.00         | Portal built by Snapper.   |
| <b>Customer support and scheme administration</b>                                |                      |  |
| Collateral - design and printing   | \$130,000.00         | Comms campaign to effectively engage with affected customers i.e. new concession holders, new fares coming from 1 September.<br><br>Includes costs of printing and installation of collateral. |
| Media costs  | \$150,000.00         | Costs of the media and social campaigns.   |
| Ambassadors at key community organisations for 6 weeks                           | \$152,000.00         | Ambassadors to help customers understand the new fares and concessions and support in sign-ups where appropriate.  |
| Engagement with Total Mobility Customers about new concession types              | \$10,000.00          | Cost of postage for direct communications with Total Mobility customers to support them with the new concessions.  |
| Snapper cards for affected Total Mobility Customers                              | \$5,000.00           | Free Snapper cards to affected Total Mobility customers  |
| Project management and support   | \$96,823.32          | 3 FTE for July-August 2023 to support the implementation of the new fares.   |
| Privacy Support  | \$10,000.00          | Costs for looking at privacy implications related to age based concessions.  |
| Costs for updating existing reporting portals                                    | \$55,000.00          | Snapper costs for 3 FTE full time for 3 weeks.   |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>\$ 908,823.32</b> |  |