

## By email

1 September 2022

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Hon Michael Wood  
Minister of Transport  
Minister of Immigration  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington

Tēna koe Minister

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## Bus driver shortages and immigration settings

Thank you for your letter of 29 August responding to our letter on this matter. I am pleased to hear that you are reviewing settings for the Skilled Migrant Category in the immigration instructions. Thank you for drawing our attention to the increased median wage, and further changes expected in 2023. We look forward to hearing more about the category reopening to applications.

In the interim we would like to reiterate our request that the Government include Bus Drivers in consideration of immigration setting changes following the recent announcement of measures to address the skills shortages facing New Zealand businesses.

As you will be aware, we continue to face chronic bus driver shortages across New Zealand, leading to multiple recurring service cancellations. We believe that these shortages demonstrate an underlying gap in our New Zealand workforce, and therefore we must provide for overseas drivers to help meet our current and future demand. We share your views that a reliable, sustainable public transport system is vital to achieving our environmental, social, and economic goals.

We agree that our collective priority is to improve bus driver employment terms and conditions, and particularly median wage rates that reflect the value of this service to our communities. We are participants in the national industry Bus Driver Conditions Steering Group and have recently agreed Council-funded wage rate uplifts in Wellington and Auckland. We look forward to the release of the Climate Emissions Reduction Fund (CERF) contribution to support further uplifts in drivers' terms and conditions. We believe that that these increases are fundamental to retaining drivers in the service.

Without access to a larger bus driver labour pool however, these good efforts will not allay the workforce shortage. As we wait for the Sustainable Public Transport Framework to deliver system-wide benefits and improve overall terms and conditions, daily services will continue to be cancelled and communities will exit the public transport system.

Minister, we ask that you urgently review all means within our immigration settings to allow us to recruit the drivers that we need to meet demand and to deliver truly sustainable public transport services across New Zealand.

Ngā mihi



**Daran Ponter**  
Chair  
Greater Wellington



**Adrienne Young- Cooper**  
Chair  
Auckland Transport



**Jenny Hughey**  
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