

12 May 2025

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-38179

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2025-116**

I refer to your request for information dated 31 March 2025, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 31 March 2025. You have requested the following:

*"I am writing to inquire about the ongoing rail performance issues affecting the Wairarapa line and the Greater Wellington Regional Council's (GWRC) handling of these challenges. I am also seeking information regarding funding requests and allocations related to increased sick leave entitlements and the establishment of Matariki Day.*

*To that end, I am submitting the following Official Information Act (OIA) request:*

- 1. Please provide copies of all correspondence, including but not limited to letters, reports, papers, meeting minutes, emails, text messages, and phone records between GWRC and Transdev (both Wellington and Australia offices) concerning Transdev's request for additional funding due to the New Zealand Government's increase in sick leave entitlements and the establishment of a new public holiday (Matariki Day).*
- 2. Please provide copies of all correspondence, including but not limited to letters, reports, papers, meeting minutes, emails, text messages, and phone records between GWRC staff and the following: Chair of GWRC, Transport Committee Chair, GWRC Councillors, and the Transport Committee concerning Transdev's and any bus operators' requests for additional funding due to the increase in sick leave entitlements and the establishment of Matariki Day.*
- 3. Please provide all correspondence, including but not limited to letters, reports, papers, meeting minutes, emails, text messages, and phone records between GWRC and NZTA concerning GWRC's request for additional funding for its contracted transport operators due to the increase in sick leave entitlements and the establishment of Matariki Day.*

4. *Please provide all correspondence, including but not limited to letters, reports, papers, meeting minutes, emails, text messages, and phone records between GWRC and any other organization regarding when GWRC was first notified that other regional councils, including Auckland Transport, had been allocated additional funding from NZTA to support transport operator costs due to the increase in sick leave entitlements and the establishment of Matariki Day.*
5. *Please advise when the Chair of GWRC and the GWRC Transport Committee Chair were first notified by GWRC staff that NZTA had allocated additional funding to regional councils, including Auckland Transport, to support their transport operators due to the increase in sick leave entitlements and the establishment of Matariki Day.*

*I would appreciate it if you could acknowledge receipt of this email and provide an estimated timeframe for when I can expect a response.*

*I am seeking this information to ensure a fair and accurate portrayal of the situation. I believe transparency in this matter is crucial for the public interest.”*

**Greater Wellington’s response follows:**

Given the scope of your request, officers ran multiple searches through our internal systems for anything related to ‘Matariki’ and ‘sick leave entitlements’. The initial search returned a large volume of items (60,000+ items). Officers then refined the search to relate to Metlink officers, Greater Wellington Councillors, and external parties which include our operators, and New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi. This search returned just over 1000 items. We provide the result of that as **Attachment 1**. This attachment is our response to questions 1-4 of your request for information. The attachment contains items between:

- Greater Wellington and Transdev
- Greater Wellington and Tranzurban
- Greater Wellington and Environment Canterbury, Auckland Transport, New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi, and Bus and Coach Association
- Greater Wellington and NZ Bus

Please note we have redacted material in the attachment that is:

- Out of scope of the request
- Withheld under section 7(2)(a) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) to protect the privacy of natural persons, including that of deceased natural persons
- Withheld under section 7(2)(b)(ii) of the Act in that the release would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information

- Withheld under section 7(2)(g) of the Act in order to maintain legal professional privilege
- Withheld under section 7(2)(h) of the Act in order to enable any local authority holding the information to carry out, without prejudice or disadvantage, commercial activities
- Withheld under section 7(2)(i) of the Act in order to enable any local authority holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

Where the redactions are made, the reason for the redaction has been noted on the attachment in red overlay text. When withholding under these sections, we are required to consider the public interest in the release of the information. We have considered this and do not believe the public interest in the information outweighs our decision to withhold the information.

**When was the Chair and Transport Committee Chair notified by Greater Wellington staff that NZTA had allocated additional funding for regional councils to reimburse operators for the change in Matariki and sick leave entitlements**

NZTA provides funding to regional councils to support them to meet their contractual commitments with operators, at a set funding assistance rate that for Greater Wellington is usually 51%. NZTA funding relating to Sick leave and Matariki entitlements would be provided on the same basis, should this be provided for in the relevant contract. Therefore, this is considered an operational matter which would not usually be communicated to either Chair. We are not aware of any notification to the Chair or Transport Committee Chair on this matter.

We therefore refuse this aspect of your request for information under section 17(g) of the Act in that the information requested is not held by the local authority and the person dealing with the request has no grounds for believing that the information is either—

- (i) held by another local authority or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation; or
- (ii) connected more closely with the functions of another local authority, or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

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 Act.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where appropriate. 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

Proactive Release