

9 January 2026

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-45880

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request for information 2025-429**

I refer to your request for information dated 5 December 2025, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 5 December 2025. You have requested the following:

*"Information requested under the LGOIMA*

*I have travelled on the Wairarapa trains for 20 years between Featherston and Wellington. Pre-COVID, this was 4x a week and post-Covid, it is 2X a week.*

*Prior to 2024, passengers were able to access the carriages prior to the locomotive being connected. With almost no warning, it was suddenly decided that passengers had to wait on the platform until the locomotive has been connected.*

*This is adding delays to the travel - especially on days when other issues arise around the system. Wednesday this week (3rd December 2025) was a case in point. The locomotive didn't arrive for the 4.25pm until 4.12pm and passengers were not able to load until 4.21pm. (I checked on my watch as I was standing on the platform.) As such, the train did not depart anywhere near 4.25pm.*

*We have been "told" that this change was made for "health and safety reasons" so passengers are not injured when the locomotive is connecting up. This would appear to be reacting to a "potential" issue rather than an actual issue. As above, I have been travelling on this service for 20 years and have not heard of people actually being injured at this connection - and I was on the train that derailed at Te Marua.*

1) Please confirm the rationale for this change?

2) Please provide the statistics and completed risk assessment that support this rationale?

3) *How many times (in absolute #) have the carriages been available for passengers prior to 4.10pm - which allows an efficient loading of passengers.*”

**Greater Wellington’s response follows:**

Our understanding of this issue is that the process for coupling the Wairarapa Locomotive to the carriages changed at the beginning of 2024. The previous process was to close the doors and make an announcement for passengers on board before the coupling begins. However, Transdev has chosen to change this process and not allow customers to board until after the coupling has happened.

Greater Wellington is aware that the New Zealand Transport Agency – Waka Kotahi (NZTA), as regulator, completed a safety audit in 2022. In that audit, NZTA noted an inconsistency in the coupling process. Transdev and NZTA agreed on a decision which relates to the current process. Greater Wellington was not part of this decision.

Rail Licence holders are required to demonstrate safe operations and effective risk management, so far as is reasonably practicable under section 7 of the Railways Act 2005. This test is iterative, and licence holders need to revisit their risk assessments periodically to ensure that they are still valid and address any changes to the operating environment.

Greater Wellington does not hold the information requested. We are therefore refusing your request under section 17(g) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (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.

In making this decision we considered whether another agency subject to the Act or the Official Information Act 1982 would hold this information. We consulted NZTA, however, they did not believe that the request falls within the scope of the Official information Act 1982.

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



**Paul Tawharu**

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Waka-ā-atea | Group Manager Metlink (Acting)

PROACTIVE RELEASE