Proactive Release

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MINO-564 Bus drivers and MyWay

10 January 2023

Office of Hon Michael Wood seeks further information about bus drivers – councils' access to funding regarding an agreement with Waka Kotahi and unions; and MyWay in relation to a trial in Timaru, broader strategy with on-demand public transport and the "poor farebox" recovery figure

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Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

Bus driver terms and conditions

s 9(2)(ba)(i), s 9(2)(j)

[redacted]

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will be considered to be released with redactions

s 9(2)(ba)(i), s 9(2)(j)

[redacted]

Timaru MyWay

- Environment Canterbury reports that Timaru MyWay experienced a 26 percent increase in patronage in the 2022-23 financial year to date compared to the previous financial year. This service reversed the decline in patronage on the timetabled bus routes in Timaru in the years before MyWay commenced service.

- MyWay's farebox recovery for the 2022-23 financial year to date is 14 percent. This compares with 18 percent for the previous Timaru timetabled bus service.

On-demand public transport trials

- Waka Kotahi's current approach is to evaluate on-demand trials at their conclusion against patronage, operational cost, farebox recovery and customer satisfaction criteria, compared with a "do minimum" option (e.g. a fixed bus route). Public transport authorities are rolling out more trials and Waka Kotahi intends to apply the same evaluation approach.

- In terms of next steps, on-demand public transport is a component in the development of the Sustainable Public Transport Framework in 2023. Waka Kotahi will explore methods of developing and assessing on-demand public transport services as part of this workstream.

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On-demand public transport costs

- The costs for the on-demand software platform are fixed, but most of the costs of providing the service are variable operating costs based on demand. As patronage increases, more vehicles, drivers and driver hours will be needed due to the low vehicle capacity. As such, increasing on-demand patronage is not likely to result in improved farebox recovery over time. This means that a high-patronage on-demand service may need to become a fixed route at some point, or be used to complement fixed routes (e.g. last mile, passengers with mobility issues and passengers travelling outside timetabled bus service hours).

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