Greater Wellington
Te Pane Matua Taiao

19 August 2022

File Ref: OIAP-7-25350

[redacted]
By email: [redacted]

Tēnā koe [redacted]

Request for information 2022-110

I refer to your feedback message which included a request for information dated 22 July 2022, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 22 July 2022. You have requested the following:

"Have you investigated getting smaller buses? More suited to Wellington's narrow and hilly streets, less dangerous for cyclists and more efficient in terms of passengers on board?

Do you measure the carbon emissions of your diesel buses and offset it?

How do you offset it?

If you don't offset these emissions, why not?"

Greater Wellington's response follows:

Metlink has made good progress towards the target that all core routes have zero emissions by 2030. There are 83 electric buses currently in service with more on the way over the next 3 years.

Metlink has investigated using smaller buses and operates a mixed fleet of buses including smaller Mercedes Sprinter vans up to high-capacity double-deck buses. We use smaller buses where this is the most appropriate solution such as on the recently launched Metlink On-Demand Trial in Tawa.

The type of bus used is generally dictated by peak demand with smaller buses used on lower demand services outside Wellington and larger buses on Wellington city routes with high peak-time demand.

Greater Wellington monitors and measures carbon emissions and CO2-e emissions have been calculated for the Metlink bus fleet since 2017/2018. CO2-e emissions are consistently trending downwards as kilometres travelled by electric buses increases. As Greater Wellington's carbon

footprint reporting requires CO2-e from electricity consumption to be counted, CO2-e emissions will still be reported even for a fully electric fleet.

Greater Wellington measures its carbon footprint annually, which includes emissions from the bus fleet as well as other organisational activities. Greater Wellington has a restoration programme for parks which includes planting native trees and restoring wetlands. This contributes to sequestration of carbon and offsets some organisational emissions. More about our climate action initiatives can be found on our website here: Greater Wellington Regional Council — What we are doing (gw.govt.nz)

Additional Information

Smaller buses on high demand services at peak times would result in more bus drivers being required which would create less attractive driver shift patterns to carry the same number of passengers. For example, replacing one double-deck bus with a capacity of 100 passengers with a Mercedes Sprinter that carries around 20 passengers would require five drivers instead of one. Currently there is a national driver shortage and the cost of labour is a significant component of running a bus service. This would be an inefficient way to provide required peak bus capacity. As extra drivers are only required at peak times when demand is highest they are only needed for short shifts in the morning and afternoon peak services which is a type of part-time split-shift work that is very challenging to recruit staff to fill.

Having large buses to run at peak and another fleet of smaller buses to run off-peak is generally also not a practical option as it requires the cost of two bus fleets and the inefficiency of having to switch buses during the day creating costly and inefficient running between routes and depots.

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 | General Manager Metlink