

17 July 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-3536

Delia Mason

By email: [fyi-request-23002-557a5ea5@requests.fyi.org.nz](mailto:fyi-request-23002-557a5ea5@requests.fyi.org.nz)

Tēnā koe Delia

### **Request for information 2023-160**

I refer to your request for information dated 16 June 2023 which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 16 June 2023. You have requested the following:

*“How much money have Wellingtonians using the train service paid in penalty fees for not snapping off the trains since Snapper was introduced. Please provide the amounts broken down by train line/service.*

*How was the decision of a \$10 penalty decided?*

*Has there been any consideration of reducing the penalty fee while train fares have been reduced to half price?”*

### **Greater Wellington’s response follows:**

*How much money have Wellingtonians using the train service paid in penalty fees for not snapping off the trains since Snapper was introduced. Please provide the amounts broken down by train line/service.*

Please note that we refer to the amount charged due to a missed tag off as a ‘Default Fare’ as opposed to a penalty. This is primarily due to the nature of these fares as outlined under the answer to your second question.

Snapper supplies records of the Default Fares to Greater Wellington, however, the data does not identify whether the Default Fares applied were due to missed tag offs on the bus network or the rail network. This data caveat is basically due to the way that Snapper ticketing system charges fares. In the absence of a tag-off for a trip, Snapper card reverts to a Default Fare and keeps it in the card’s memory until next tag on. On the next tag on, the Snapper card deducts the Default Fare from the remaining balance on your card. For example, if a Snapper card holder misses a tag off on bus, and

connects to a train service, the Default Fare will be deducted from the card at the time of tag-on on the train service. The Snapper data would show the Default Fare against the tag-on transaction recorded for the train leg of the journey.

Further to the data caveat outlined above, to support rail passengers through the introduction of Snapper on rail, Metlink also provided a Default Fare amnesty period, up until 30 April 2023, where the passengers were able to contact Snapper and request to:

1. Fully reverse the Default Fare for the first time it is requested (per card)
2. Provide a 50% reverse of the Default Fare for the second occurrence on request.

As the Snapper ticketing has no way of knowing where a passenger has travelled if they do not tag off, Greater Wellington is unable to identify the breakdown of Default Fares by rail line.

While it is possible to extract the total amount of Default Fares recorded against rail trips from the existing Snapper ticketing data, it would take a significant amount of officer time as it would require review of each transaction in the data set to extract the information requested. The information would also be incomplete as it would not show any refunds/reversal of payment of the Default Fare. We would also not be able to provide you the information by train service/line, as we do not hold information at that level.

Therefore, we are refusing this part of your request under section 17(f) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) on the basis that the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

When refusing a request under section 17(f) of the Act we are required to consider whether consulting you, charging you for the supply of the information, or extending the timeframe to make a decision on your request would help us meet your request. In this instance, we do not believe that this would resolve the difficulty in meeting your request.

*How was the decision of a \$10 penalty decided?*

Please refer to **Attachment 1** which contains information relating to the decision-making behind the Default fares and transition to Snapper on Rail.

Please note we have deleted information in this attachment that are outside the scope of your request.

*Has there been any consideration of reducing the penalty fee while train fares have been reduced to half price?*

Snapper on Rail was introduced while half price fares were in place, therefore the Default Fare of \$10 took into consideration the reduced fares. We will be reviewing the Default Fare policy in light of the recently announced age-based concessions, and the return to full price adult fares.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Samantha Gain'.

**Samantha Gain**

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Waka-a-atea | Group Manager Metlink