

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI



VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

Wellington Regional Council	
18 MAY 2006	
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Please draft a reply

16 May 2006

The Chairman
Greater Wellington Regional Council
PO Box 11646
WELLINGTON

Dear Sir

JOINT SUBMISSION TO GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

This is a joint submission from Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) and the Victoria University of Wellington Students Association (VUWSA).

Victoria University is a major regional organisation with over 20,000 staff and students. It has created an outstanding reputation as the leading provider of tertiary education in the Wellington area and attracts students from all parts of the region. It makes a significant contribution to the economic vitality of Wellington and as a major business, its needs must be assigned a priority in relation to support services such as public transport.

The University is the single biggest contributor to people movement in the city and it has high potential to adversely impact on regional and city congestion. Every effort is made by the University and by the Students Association to encourage the use of public transport, in order to minimise traffic demand. It is therefore critical to ensure robust and well used bus linkages between all campuses, but to and from the Kelburn Campus in particular, as with staff and student numbers of over 12,000 at peak times, the site is a major destination for bus users.

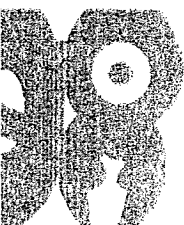
The high take-up of public transport options clearly benefits both the city and VUW. We are therefore keen to ensure that usage is maximised and that the structure and implementation of Metlink strategies achieve the potential mutual benefits and reflect the significant role of Victoria University in the regional economy.

There are two main issues that we believe the Greater Wellington Regional Council should consider.

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1. Metlink Fares

It is of real concern to the University that bus and train charges are likely to increase significantly under the current Metlink fare proposal. Victoria University and the Students Association strongly oppose the proposed fare increases and believe that Greater Wellington must revisit the level of increase that is recommended, as it cannot justify the new fare levels.

Victoria University and VUWSA currently fund student travel between campuses to the level of over 210,000 trips per annum. In addition the students and staff themselves fund their personal daily travel to the university by train and bus.

The proposed increase in charges will clearly have a major impact on our staff and particularly students, and we urge that consideration be given to the following amendments to the Metlink proposal:

- Extend the youth concession to all tertiary students, based on users being able to show a valid photo student ID card.

Applying the youth discount to all university students would make a major difference to students' attitudes to using public transport and would assist in the reduction of vehicle volumes, particularly at peak times. Students have a major economic impact on the city and discretionary spending is carefully allocated. Balancing the cost of public transport against their other needs is always difficult and keeping their bus fares to a reasonable level is essential.

- Extend the City Centre fare zone to include the Kelburn Campus.

The loop between the Railway Station and Kelburn is the most heavily used VUW route. It is used by students moving between campuses and carries over 210,000 VUW students and many staff over the peak 24 weeks of the University year. Treating this as part of the inner city fare zone would bring major benefits to both city businesses and VUW, by keeping the cost of travel to and from the city centre affordable for all.

2. Bus service subsidies

Victoria University of Wellington is currently paying over \$30,000 per annum to Stagecoach in order to receive basic services to match proven demand. This situation needs an urgent review.

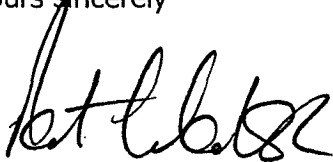
When establishing the Pipitea Campus in 2000, the University consciously decided to purchase additional bus services between the Railway terminal and Kelburn, in order to ensure good student access between the two main campuses, particularly noting that initial usage may be low and wishing to act responsibly to the wider community.

In the early days, passenger numbers averaged as low as five per trip, but average numbers now, on trips up to Kelburn during term time, sit at around thirty, although return patronage is lower.

We have held discussions recently with Stagecoach and Greater Wellington staff to ascertain whether all or some of these additional services could now be treated as standard public services, eliminating or reducing the need for a specific VUW subsidy. This subsidy currently amounts to over \$30,000 per annum and would seem to be unwarranted given the mandate of the regional council for public transport.

It is the view of VUW and VUWSA that these services should now be treated in the same manner as all other city services, assessed on a demand basis, and we would ask the Council to instigate a full review.

Yours sincerely



Pat Walsh
Vice-Chancellor



Nick Kelly
President, VUWSA