

**From:** Environment Canterbury  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 16 March 2022 8:13 am  
**To:** Have your Say  
**Subject:** Submission on draft Annual Plan 2022/23

Anonymous User just submitted 'Draft Annual Plan 2022/23 submission' with the responses below.

**First name**

RussellMiddleton

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**Last name**

Turnbull

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**Email address**

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**Suburb**

Middleton, Christchurch

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**Phone number**

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**Are you submitting on behalf of an organisation?**

Yes, I'm submitting on behalf of an organisation

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**Which organisation are you submitting on behalf of?**

Go Bus Transport Ltd

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**Which age category are you in?**

40-64 years old

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**Do you wish to speak to your submission at a Council hearing?**

Yes

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**Which bus fare structure option would you like to see trialled?**

Option 2: \$2 flat fare for adults and \$1.20 for children across bus zones 1, 2 and 3

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**Tell us more about why you support the selected bus fare option.**

See attached submission

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**Any other comments on bus fares?**

See attached submission

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**Is borrowing and repaying through general rates the right approach for this regionally significant event?**

Don't know

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**How else might we pay for our share of this work?**

n/a

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**How do you think recovery from flooding of this scale – events that impact state highways, bridges, rail and power for example – should be funded in the future?**

n/a

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**Which option for distribution of rates in Ashburton River rating district do you support?**

I don't have a preference

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**Any other comments on flood protection in Ashburton?**

n/a

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**Would you support a levy to accelerate action in response to climate change?**

Don't know

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**Any other comments on future funding for responding to climate change?**

n/a

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**Any other comments on Environment Canterbury's draft Annual Plan or other matters?**

n/a

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**Upload any supporting documents (if applicable)**

<http://aust39f8> Attachment appended  
to end of submission

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<http://aust39f8> [nal/1647371531/c06c4f16193640590612n Go Bus.pdf?1647371531](http://aust39f8)

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**Where did you hear about the consultation?**

Email

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16 March 2022

The Chief Executive  
Environment Canterbury

**Subject: Submission bus fare structure - Annual Plan 2022/23**

Go Bus is making this submission on the proposed changes to the bus fare structures for the Christchurch City, Selwyn and Waimakariri districts as both your principal partner in the supply of services, and as a significant employer in the region.

We firstly acknowledge the sentiments in the identification of potential changes. We certainly agree with the need to encourage more people to use the bus to get around, making fewer car trips.

We therefore make the following observations of the three options, from our professional viewpoint as a large operator with extensive knowledge of the industry, across multiple regions.

**Option 1**

We are however concerned that the actual flavour of the Council preferred proposal, Option One, is more about social outcomes, and less about encouraging patronage. Whilst we applaud the Council recognising that there are members of the community less able to afford travel than others, there is a very real risk that this option may create an environment where using the bus in the Greater Christchurch area is seen not as a regular every-day commuter option for everybody, but instead, a mode of transport for those with no other option.

Further, we observe that creating a free environment also creates an environment where the value to the user drops. In areas such as Hamilton, fare free travel on the weekend saw an increase in anti-social behaviour on the buses. Removing price as a value for making the journey, what was created was another reason to travel, for socialising (and anti-socialising), which led to the problems.

This Option may get more people using the bus, but it will potentially reduce the likelihood of commuters moving from car travel to bus, because of the environment the free fares option has created.

**Option 2**

We see Option 2 as actually the most likely fare strategy to achieve the objective of encouraging more people to use the bus, by taking fewer car trips. As recent documented evidence from Dunedin and Queenstown has shown, moving to a flat fare system has simplified bus travel and increased patronage. In the face of other regions seeing significant drop-offs in patronage over the last two years, Dunedin has seen a much steadier level of patronage, following their move to a flat fare system, the only change in the network made. Queenstown of course saw significant increases in patronage following their flat fare changes made in 2017, alongside network changes as well.

The introduction of low flat fares will especially effect longer car journeys, where the bus journey will become even more value for money. This happened in Dunedin where Mosgiel services into the city are being more than doubled in July to accommodate the increase in patronage. The regular all-stops

service will be operating every 15 minutes at peak, and a new 30-minute frequency peak express service is being added. These services will replace 'assist buses' which were placed in urgency to support the main service as demand increased following the Dunedin fare changes.

The benefit of long-distance patronage increases is of course the relief of congestion on the constrained corridors coming into Christchurch from the Waimakariri and Selwyn District's. In the face of increasing motoring costs, a low flat fare from these locations into the city will be incredibly attractive. And it will not change the current costs for traditional journeys within the city either, it will just make them simpler.

Finally, the benefits of simple fares and few concessions include smooth boarding and driver wellbeing, an important feature of this option to Go Bus. Too often across other regions we operate in, there is a desire to provide cheaper fares for different social groups, all requiring ID cards from their various organisations. This often leads to conflict at the bus stop as drivers try and navigate all the various rules and fares pertaining to each person boarding, checking ID's etc. The bus system in Canterbury has always kept things simple with fare types, which our current drivers are very thankful for, and no doubt the majority of passengers, as they move smoothly through their journey with minimal hold-ups, tension and worry at boarding time.

Option 2 if favoured by Go Bus.

### **Option 3**

As per Option 1, we applaud the initiative on a social basis, but don't believe it will remove the quantum of cars off the network the objective suggests.

### **Fare strategy – deeper detail**

Within the strategy we believe greater emphasis needs to also fall on the fare structure applied between cash and card payments. The acceptance of cash for payment of fares on the bus should be a 'last resort' option at best.

For the past two years, Auckland Transport has not accepted cash for payment on board buses in Auckland, mainly as a strategy to reduce the Covid-19 risk to bus drivers, and those passengers receiving change for bus fares. What would have been a major issue historically, has not been a serious detracting factor for using public transport. Perhaps the opposite. Anti-social behaviour such as robbery of bus drivers for their cash box has of course reduced to nothing. Even general assaults of drivers have reduced significantly. This has resulted in few-to-no news reports of violence on buses or at the bus stop, thereby reducing any anxiety of use of the bus, for passengers and drivers. Go Bus has for many years implored Councils to take cash fares off buses, primarily to reduce the risk of assault of our drivers, a health and safety responsibility we should all take seriously. Other prominent cities that no longer accept cash on buses include London and parts of Sydney

If Council really wish cash fares to remain, the discount between cash and card fares is a tool to reduce the amount of cash on the bus. The wider the gap, the more card use can be expected. More card payments for fares reduces driver assault risk, and also speeds up bus loading and improves the total journey time, which of course makes it more attractive to the commuter.

Go Bus would like to present this submission in person.

Russell Turnbull  
Director – Business Development