

**From:** Environment Canterbury  
**Sent:** Sunday, 3 April 2022 2:55 pm  
**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**

Shona

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**Last name**

Powell

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**Email address**

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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?**

Waimakariri Access Group

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**Which age category are you in?**

Prefer not to say

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

Yes

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

Increases too high, not affordable or sustainable

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**Any other comments on bus fares?**

Please use the three month government subsidy as an opportunity to determine what impact reduced fares have on patronage and emissions. The time is not right with the cost of living increase to put up rates so much. Waimakariri ratepayers pay too much for services offered.

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

Attachment appended  
to end of submission

[duction-f368/original/1648954485/9a75a637a633a395ccc3ECan April 2022.docx?1648954485](#)

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## **Submission to Environment Canterbury Draft Annual Plan 2022/23**

**From: Waimakariri Access Group (WAG)**

**Contact: Shona Powell, Acting Chair**

**April 2022**

### **The Waimakariri Access Group would like to present their submission at the hearings**

The Waimakariri Access Group (WAG) would like to thank Environment Canterbury (ECan) for the opportunity to submit on their draft Annual Plan 2022/23.

The Waimakariri Access Group promotes access to public places, spaces, information and facilities in the Waimakariri District and a barrier free environment for all people within the District. The Group is consumer led with representation from a variety of organisations and interested members of the public.

### **Affordability**

The very large rate increase planned for Waimakariri ratepayers is not affordable nor is it sustainable. Any increases will also be passed onto renters affecting everyone. ECan must be mindful of the high increases in basic living expenses including food, power, and insurance, etc. Councillors must really examine proposed projects and trials, look at the benefits and the costs, and determine the best timing to ensure rate increases are affordable.

For urban residents in Waimakariri this proposed increase follows on from high increases over previous years, particularly in urban passenger transport rates. If option 1 was chosen, in the last six years the urban passenger transport rate for Waimakariri would have increased by 247% from \$51.29 in 2017/18 to the proposed rate of \$178.03 in 2022/23. Also given that the proposed increase is only for 5 months from February 2023 there will be another increase in the 2023/24 year to cover a full year.

Other than the introduction of commuter peak hour bus services from Kaiapoi and Rangiora to Christchurch in the morning and back in the afternoon there has been no increase in service levels provided which should have affected costs. During consultation the commuter service was forecast to increase urban rates by \$30 per annum but the actual increase, although it covers increased wages, fuel etc, is much much higher.

### **Public Transport**

The Group suggest that those with impairments or disabilities should be able to access fare free travel on public transport. However, eligibility would need to be determined by other mechanisms in addition to the Total Mobility card. They face many barriers that hinder participation in everyday life and this would make a real difference.

The Government has provided a three-month period of half price fares, and the outcome of this should be evaluated before going further with these proposed trials. There is also

thought that the Government should be funding fare initiatives for increasing use of public transport.

Public transport services need to be convenient, user friendly and run frequently if people are going to use them on a regular basis. Price is only one factor and people can value time and convenience much more highly.

### **Bus fare structure Trial**

Option 1: Targeted fare-free – two-year trial of fare-free travel for under 25s, students, Total Mobility and Community Services card holders across all zones.

Impact - increase in urban transport Waimakariri rates of \$36.55 for the 1<sup>st</sup> year (5 months) to \$178.03, a 25.8% increase

Whilst WAG is appreciative that the intent appears to be that those with disabilities will be able to get fare-free travel on public transport under this option, the Group question the use of the Total Mobility Card as the means for providing this. To be eligible for a total mobility card a person must have an assessment that basically shows they are not able to use a bus easily or safely. See below for the eligibility criteria.

An eligible person must have a long term impairment that prevents them from undertaking any one or more of the following five components of a journey unaccompanied, on a bus, train or ferry in a safe and dignified manner:

- Getting to the place where the transport departs
- Getting on to the transport
- Riding securely
- Getting off the transport
- Getting to the destination

Source: Environment Canterbury General Information on Total Mobility in Canterbury

For those with impairments or disabilities to fully benefit there need to be other mechanisms for determining eligibility in addition to the Total Mobility card. We are concerned at how those eligible would prove this and that it should not just be one method, for example it could be a letter from a health provider, or support group or agency, or some other option which needs to be identified.

The Group can see limited increase in bus users and little decrease in emissions for Waimakariri with this option.

Option 2: Flat fare across all zones – two-year trial of flat \$2 Metrocard fares for adults and \$1.20 for children and tertiary students

Impact - increase in urban transport Waimakariri rates of \$24.13 for the 1<sup>st</sup> year (5 months) to \$165.61, a 17% increase

This option would have some benefit for those with disabilities and impairments that can use public transport as it would provide a cheaper fare across all zones but the Group would like those with disabilities and impairments able to travel fare-free.

SuperGold card holders would benefit from this option as they would get cheaper fares if they travel in peak hours. Some SuperGold card holders find it difficult to travel within the 'free' daytime non-peak hours of 9am to 3pm given the frequency of buses and for Waimakariri residents, the length of the trip.



This option would be of benefit to far more people by providing discounted travel for all. It should appeal to commuters which would have a positive impact on bus usage, traffic congestion, and cut emissions. However, to what extent might be better determined by the three-month government trial of half price fares underway from 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Option 3: Current fares with a tertiary student concession, paying a child fare

Impact - increase in urban transport Waimakariri rates of \$16.26 for the year to \$157.74. This has already been approved in the Long-Term Plan last year.

This equates to an 11% increase on top of high increases in previous years for Waimakariri.

### **Provision of public transport services in Waimakariri**

The Group feels that public transport in Waimakariri is lacking in a number of areas for residents, and particularly for the disabled. For the people that WAG advocates for there are few usable transport options and hence they rely heavily on private transport, private driving services, and taxis where available.

For Total Mobility cardholders they are able to get subsidised door to door transport services with approved transport operators e.g. approved taxi companies and private driving services, because they are not able to use public transport easily and this is a very necessary subsidy for those living in Waimakariri and much appreciated.

Price is only one factor when it comes to people using public transport. In Waimakariri accessing and using public transport is difficult for a number of reasons:

1. Long distance to urban bus stops in Waimakariri – people can walk up to 1.5 km to get to a bus stop. For some, whether it be because of disability, age or illness, this is insurmountable. In Kaiapoi or Rangiora it may be possible to walk to a closer bus stop but it means having to transfer buses within Waimakariri and given that two of the three bus services only run every hour out of peak hours this makes it very difficult.
2. Current routes only serve a small geographic part of the District – there is no public transport for the rural areas and settlements of Cust, Oxford, Ohoka, Mandeville, Tuahiwi, Sefton, The Pines Beach, and Woodend Beach. There is only a limited peak hour service for Waikuku and Waikuku Beach. Yet they still pay for public transport, all be it a much lower rural rate.
3. Current routes also miss out large parts of the urban areas of Rangiora and Kaiapoi so commuting into Christchurch is often the main use rather than getting around within the towns.
4. Timeframe between buses on the 95 and 97 routes – are only hourly during off-peak hours and for many this is inconvenient, particularly if you just miss it.
5. Weather – if you have to walk a long distance to the bus stop and/or have a lengthy wait for the next bus weather can be a major deterrent. And this could be because it is too cold, too hot, too slippery with frost, it's raining or the wind.
6. Moving between the main towns of Rangiora, Kaiapoi, Woodend and Pegasus can still be difficult using public transport because of the routes and timetables. For example, the only way Silverstream and Sovereign Palm residents in Kaiapoi are able to travel to Rangiora is with a long walk into central Kaiapoi or catching the Pegasus bus, with a low frequency, and then transferring to the Rangiora bus.