

Friday, May 2, 2025

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0466

Contact details

Name:

Protect Our Winters NZ

Organisation (if applicable):

Protect Our Winters NZ

Do you wish to speak to your submission at a public hearing?

Yes

Topic 1: Are we focusing on the right things in the plan?

Do you agree that these focus areas capture Otago's public transport priorities?

Yes

Tell us more:

Passenger experience: More frequent buses are the easiest to catch. If a service isn't provided early enough, late enough, or often enough people will drive instead. Passengers need to be able to take bikes on buses so that they can easily complete the first/last miles of their trip, and recreate without having to drive.

Build Trust: A public transport connection to Wanaka is an equity issue. Many people who live in Wanaka can't afford to be driving everywhere all the time, but that's currently the only option.

Environmental sustainability: Thank you for working towards electrifying the network. This needs to happen as quickly as possible, to ensure both transport emissions are reduced, and to make buses more affordable to operate. In addition to advocating for more public transport, and more efficient public transport, the ORC needs to be advocating for higher-density development. If urban sprawl is allowed to continue unchecked, as it currently is then public transport simply won't be effective and cars will continue to be necessary.

A connected and integrated network: There needs to be a Wanaka-Queenstown connection. This is critical to equity, transport for healthcare, improved productivity, and recreational transport for locals and visitors. A connection between Alexandra, Cromwell, Hawea and Luggate is also important for community connection.

Value for money: In our survey of more than 200 people a common theme was pricing. The bus must cost less than to drive.

Topic 2: Should we support community transport services in smaller towns and rural areas?

Our proposal: we are considering the establishment of a subsidised community transport programme providing support for transport services in Otago's smaller towns and rural areas.

What do you think about this proposal?

Do you agree with ORC having a role in supporting community transport services?

Yes

Are there other initiatives or programmes that you think Council should be considering?

Yes

Tell us more:

A public transport connection between Wanaka and Queenstown. These are the two fastest growing cities in the country, and two of the most visited cities in the country. Yet there's no public transportation connection between them. The ORC needs to seriously consider this connection, and work together with the QLDC and central government to make it happen. This would be an excellent way to spend a local visitor levy, or reason to create a special economic zone.

Topic 3: Should we increase our passenger fares?

Our proposal: we are considering increasing the base fare for adult Bee Card passengers from \$2 to \$2.50. This would effectively increase bus fares for all passengers using Bee Cards by 25%.

What do you think about this proposal?

Should Council increase the adult Bee Card fare?

No

Topic 4: Should we charge more for longer trips?

Our proposal: we are considering introducing a zone fare system to our bus networks in Dunedin and Queenstown. Under this system, passengers travelling further distances across multiple zones will pay a higher fare than those travelling short distances within one zone.

What do you think about this proposal?

Should Council charge more for longer trips?

Yes

Tell us more:

Should Council charge more for longer trips? No

Typically people living the furthest from the city centre have lower incomes than those living the closest. This means that passengers likely on lower incomes, taking the bus from further away would have to pay more. POW recommends a simple two tier system with all bus fares within the same urban area costing

the same, with trips from satellite cities/towns such as proposed buses to/from Oamaru to Dunedin, Cromwell to Queenstown, or hopefully Wanaka to Queenstown costing more.

Topic 5: Should we keep our free fares for children (5-12 years)?

Our proposal:

- A. Retain free fares (100% discount) for children (5-12 years), **AND**
- B. Standardise our concession discount for youth (13-18 years) to 40% across both the Dunedin and Queenstown networks. For example, if the adult fare is \$2, youth pay \$1.20, or if the adult fare is \$2.50, youth pay \$1.50.

What do you think about this proposal?

Should Council retain free fares (100% discount) for children (5-12 years)?

Yes

Tell us more:

If families begin having to pay for all members to take the bus they are more likely to drive, causing increased climate pollution and congestion. If children are able to start taking public transport at a young age they are more likely to continue to take public transport later in life as they'll learn that it is a safe, efficient, and cost-effective way to travel.

Should Council standardise our concession discount for youth (13-18 years) to 40% across both the Dunedin and Queenstown networks?

Yes

Tell us more:

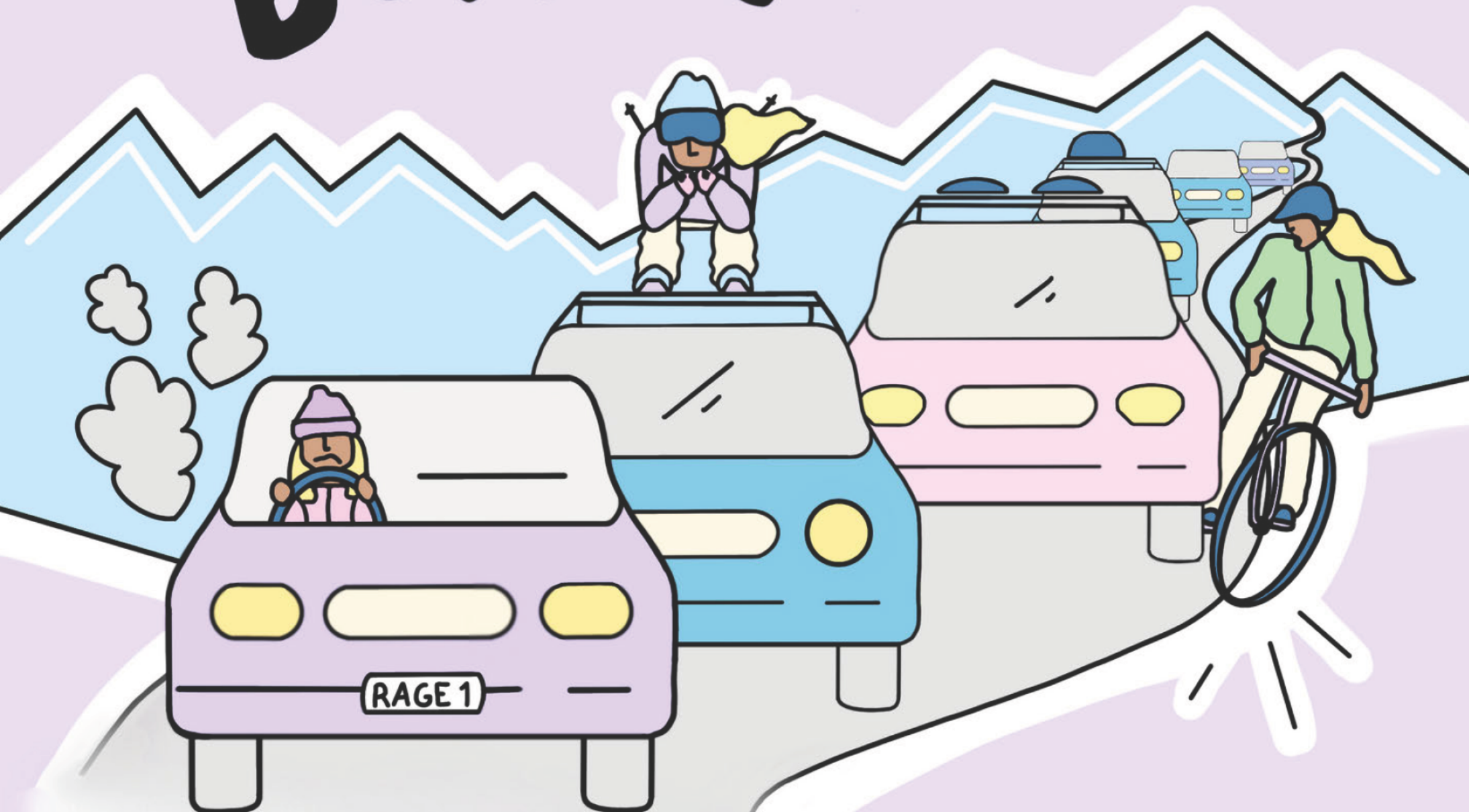
Evidence shows that the simpler the concession process and pricing is, the less administrative costs there are, and overall the network operates at a lower budget. There should be a standardised concession rate across both Dunedin and Queenstown networks.

Any other comments?

Let us know if you have any other comments or ideas on the topics discussed in the Draft Regional Public Transport Plan.

There needs to be a bus between Wanaka and Queenstown! Many of our members either live in the Wanaka/Queenstown area and need to travel between the two cities. Our open letter asking for this service had close to 500 signatures. This bus service would benefit all of us: Parents who wish their kids could travel between cities without you having to drive them? Travel for medical appointments. Commuters who could use that time on a bus to increase their productivity. Tourists who don't want to rent a car, locals who don't want to or can't drive. The number one source of greenhouse gas emissions in the Southern Lakes area is from transport - they need to be reduced and could easily with more public transport options for all of us. See our open letter here: <https://protectourwinters.nz/public-transport-open-letter/> The results of our survey are attached. Out of about 340 responses 100% of them were in favour of a bus service between Wanaka and Queenstown.

Let's explore
BETTER WAYS ⚡⚡



To Get AROUND

POW 
PROTECTOURWINTERS.NZ

Open Letter

- 485 individuals signed in support
- 25+ Local businesses and organisations
- 36% Wānaka/Hāwea/Alberttown
37% Queenstown/Frankton/Arrowtown
6% elsewhere in Otago
21% Visitors to region

Open Letter | Key Points

- Biggest source of emissions in our area = Transport (47%)
- Climate change is a significant concern to local residents
- Everyone needs to be reducing emissions but we need local government help to do so.
- Electric bus is essential.
- Connecting public and active transport needs to be part of the plan
- Most importantly we need public transport connecting Queenstown and Wanaka

Local businesses & organisations in support:

CARDRONA
ALPINE RESORT / NEW ZEALAND



PURE
EXPLORATION

NZ SHRED
SNOW • STREET • SUNF • SKATE

patagonia[®]

HEATWAVE

b.effect
BREWING CO. WĀNAKA

**Mutton
bird**


wao

**THE
NORTH
FACE**

 **THE
GLAMOROUS
GOAT**

 **FORWARD**

GREENHAWK

icebreaker
Move to natural

TRAC

VERVE
BEER & WINE

Support from local businesses:

“As a Wānaka based mountain guiding company we care deeply about our local mountain landscapes and protecting them for the future. The experiences that we share with guests foster great environmental awareness and an appreciation of how it is changing. Most of our guests travel to Wānaka via Queenstown. A public bus service would contribute to reducing their impact on our roads and environment by minimising unnecessary vehicle movements.”

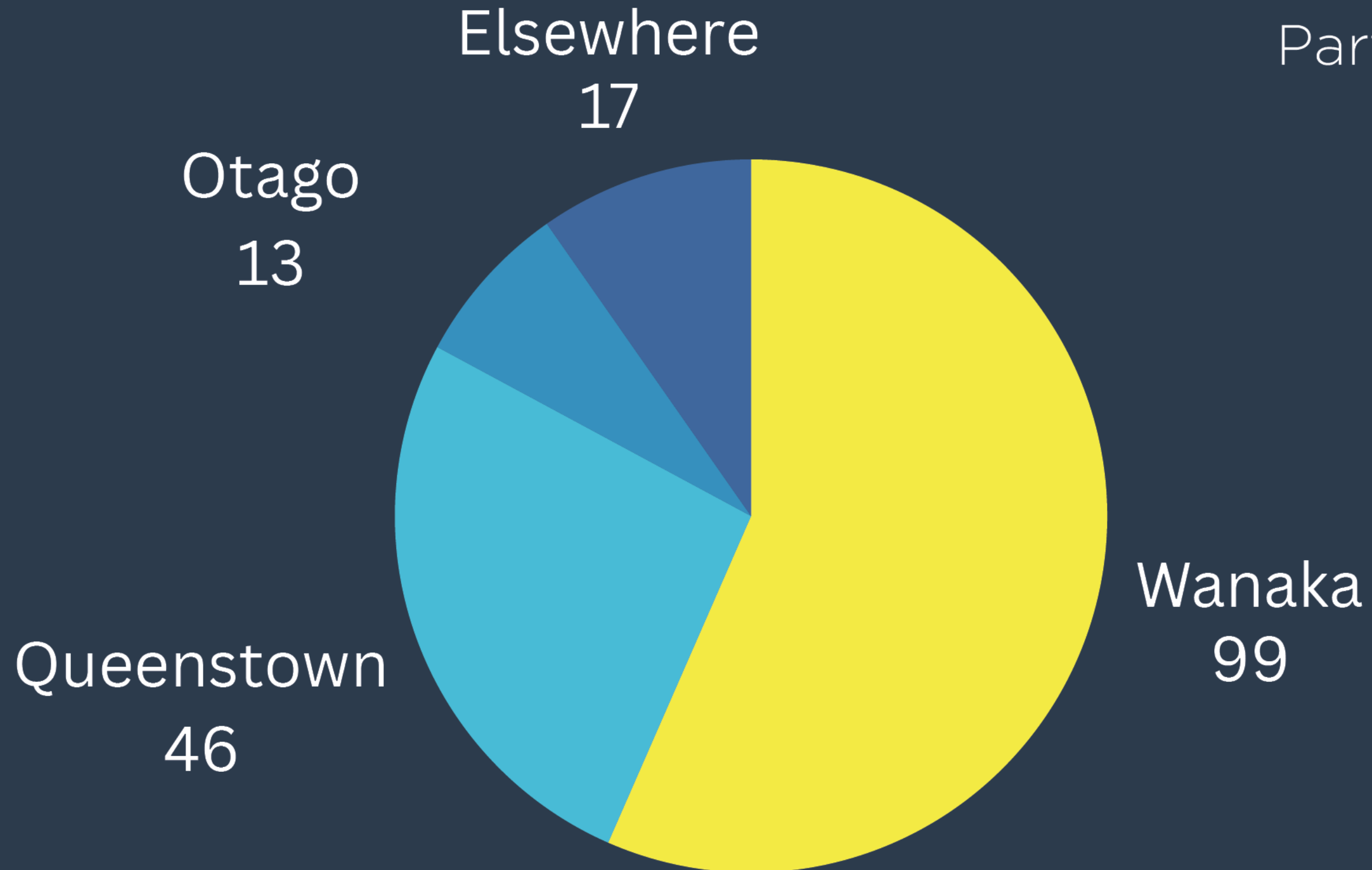
- [REDACTED] Wanaka Mountain Guides

“Public transport between Queenstown and Wanaka would be a great idea. It would reduce car traffic over the congested crown range as well as giving the public many more options other than the current private shuttle which has limited time slots. We are fully supportive of this initiative.”

- [REDACTED], Glamourous Goat

Survey Results | Location

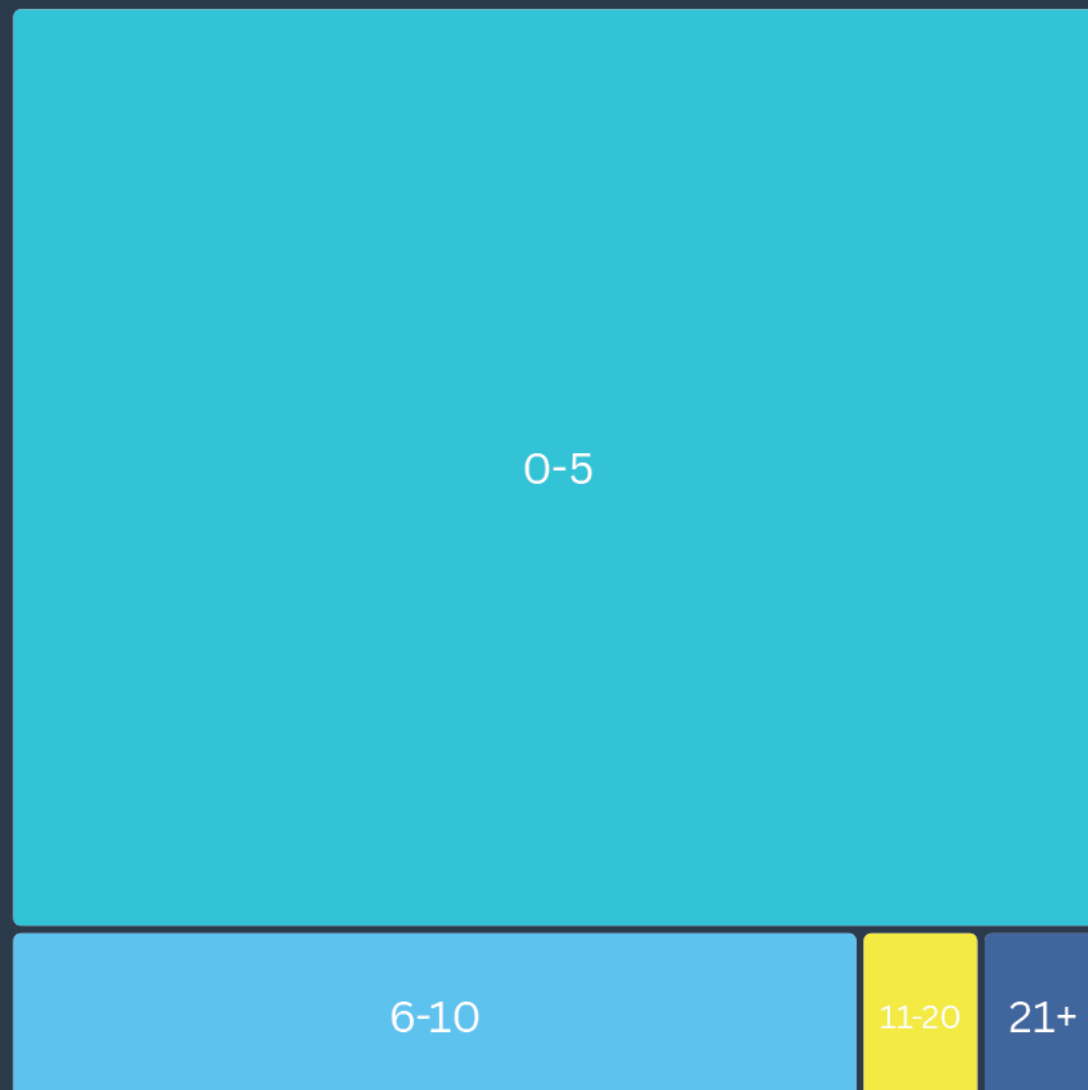
Location of 180
Participants Total



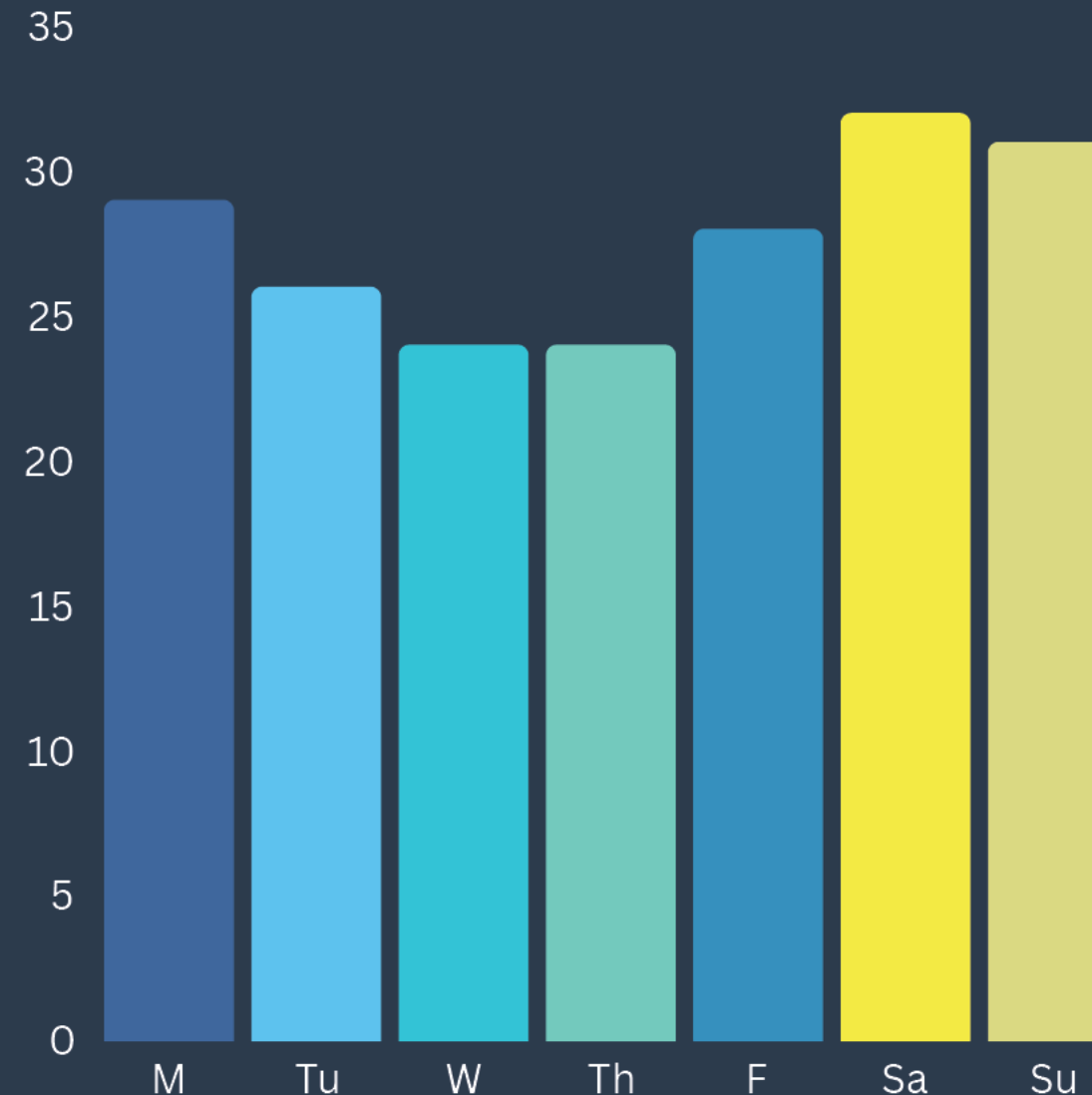
Survey Results | Frequency

- Most respondents travel between towns 1-5 x month, all days of the week (highest on weekends).

of times a month between towns



Typical days of travel

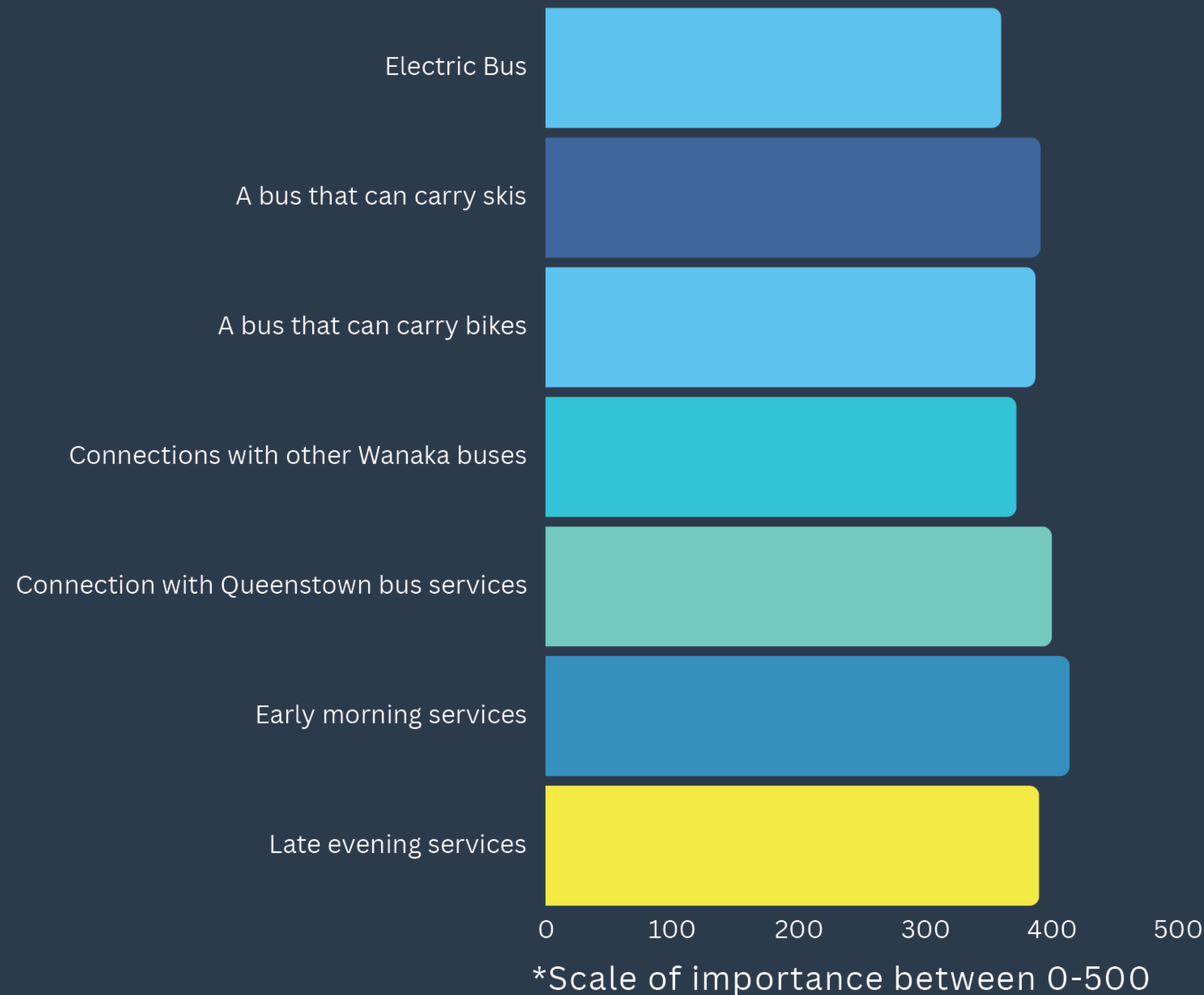


Survey Results | Price



- Most common price people were willing to pay was \$5-10
- Nobody suggested \$2 (same as other Queenstown buses) or >\$15

Survey Results | Other Requirements



- All of these requirements scored highly important
- Especially early and late services, connection to other buses and being able to take skis/bikes

Common Themes | Q: Why is public transport connecting Wānaka - Queenstown important?

Reducing Traffic & Emissions

- Cars off the road, reduce congestion, lower carbon emissions.

Cost Savings

- Driving is expensive due to fuel costs, car maintenance, and parking. Public transport would provide an affordable alternative.

Environmental Concerns

- Many respondents highlighted sustainability, reducing fossil fuels, and the need for more options that are less polluting.

Access & Mobility

- Several people mentioned not owning a car, sharing a car, or not being able to drive. Public transport is essential for accessibility.

Common Themes | Q: Why is public transport connecting Wānaka - Queenstown important?

Recreation & Tourism

- Many people wanted transport options for skiing, biking, visiting friends, or exploring without needing to drive.

Work & Commuting

- Aid productivity & reduce cost for those who commute for work

Safety & Convenience

- Crown Range is dangerous, tiring, & inconvenient, especially at night or in winter. A bus = a safer alternative.

Social & Lifestyle Benefits

- Public transport would allow people to go out (e.g., to events, or bars) without worrying about driving home.

Public Transport as a Basic Service

- Frustration that a bus doesn't already exist, noting that similar towns worldwide have well-developed public transport networks.

Common Themes | Q: What barriers would prevent you from taking a bus?

Timings & Frequency

- Early morning + late evening services essential
- Infrequent schedules and long wait times = major deterrent.
- Poor timing with flights and work shifts is a recurring issue.

Cost & Affordability

- Many stating they would drive if the bus wasn't significantly cheaper

Convenience & Connectivity

- The lack of available routes and stops near workplaces, homes, and key locations like ski fields is a major barrier.
- No park and ride or intergration with other transport

Common Themes | Q: What barriers would prevent you from taking a bus?

Equipment & Accessibility

- Many respondents travel with bikes, skis, backpacks etc.
- Accessibility concerns for wheelchair users and those with mobility needs.

Environmental & Transport Preferences

- Some would prefer to take the bus if it were electric
- Need for Reliable, Fast Transport
- Speed is a factor—some worry about buses being too slow. Too many stops or indirect routes may make the trip inconvenient.

Common Themes | Q: Other Comments

Other transport connections in the area are also urgently needed:

- Bus to Albert town, Hawea and Luggage raised often, a bus to Cromwell and Alexandra too
- Buses to Cardrona to then connect with ski area transport, could go on a ski holiday with no car easily.

Accessibility:

- Many respondents travel with bikes, skis, backpacks etc. Buses should be able to take these
- Accessibility concerns for wheelchair users and those with mobility needs.

Notable Quotes

“The only reason I rented a car was because I wanted to go to Wanaka”

“I’m a rate payer and would be more than happy for my rates to contribute to public transport to Wanaka”

“Bike transport is essential for the last mile problem”

“As a parent my teens would love this service. I get sick of driving them, and they get sick of driving me”

“I’d love to be able to live car free in Wanaka”

“Why can’t we have buses like other countries?”

“Driving is expensive and inefficient, but there’s no other choice”

“This is a great example of what a visitor level could help fund”

“A bus every hour would be the best thing ever!”

“I try really hard to reduce my environmental impact but when there’s no other option than driving my efforts seem pointless”

Thank you!



Together we can protect our winters