

Monday, April 28, 2025

# Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID RPTP-0367

## Contact details

Name: kristin Aarts

Organisation (if applicable): Clutha Development

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

## 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?

## 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?

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

### Tell us more:

We support improved public transport options for the Clutha District, particularly between Balclutha and

Dunedin. Reliable transport is essential for education, employment, healthcare, and social wellbeing.

While we recognise the value of community-led solutions, based on our experience through the Clutha District Volunteer Network and Community Connector project, we are concerned about relying heavily on volunteers. Our district has an aging population, time-poor residents, and a small group of volunteers already stretched across multiple commitments.

We appreciate the support ORC proposes — Council staff assistance, financial grants, technology provision, and purchasing leverage — but emphasise that without ongoing operational funding and coordination, community transport risks being unsustainable.

In our view, the best outcome would be an ORC-led regional service, establishing a direct bus route between Balclutha and Dunedin as signalled in the 3–10 Year Plan — the sooner, the better. Community transport should complement, not replace, formal public transport services.

### 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?**

Yes

### 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:**

We believe this charge should be a zoned fare like other towns in NZ as you have stated

### 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

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

Yes

## 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.**

A regional bus service between Balclutha and Dunedin, operating at a secondary service level (3–6 trips per day), would bring enormous benefits.

It would help address key challenges identified through our Community Connector work — providing access to education, training, employment, healthcare, and essential services. A regular service would particularly benefit young people, adults seeking further education, jobseekers, and our older residents needing to attend medical appointments in Dunedin. While the St John Health Shuttle is valuable, hospital appointment scheduling often does not consider travel limitations.

A stronger regional link would also ease congestion, offering an affordable, reliable alternative for students and workers commuting between Clutha District and Dunedin — and vice versa, supporting workforce mobility into Milton and Balclutha. It would reduce isolation, open access to mental health services, English language classes, and driver licensing support not currently available in our district.

Ultimately, a regular bus link would increase equity, opportunity, and wellbeing for Clutha residents. We strongly encourage ORC to prioritise a regional service as outlined in the 10 year transport plan — and to progress this as soon as possible.