

Thursday, April 17, 2025

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0260

Contact details

Name:

John Robertson

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:

This submission concerns mostly "Transport Disadvantaged People" and specifically, the ability of companion animal dogs, to be allowed on buses. I would like the ORC to adopt the same policy as Auckland Transport namely that dogs be allowed on buses at off-peak hours and that "dogs that do not fit in a carrier must wear a lead and cage type muzzle."

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?

No

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

Tell us more:

So long as a proper study of cost and ridership is done for people who will be riding for a number of zones

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:

So long as a proper study of cost and ridership is done for people who will be riding for a number of zones. Long trips should be on a sliding scale not just the same price per zone

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?

This submission concerns the ability of companion animal dogs, to be allowed on buses. I would like the ORC to adopt the same policy as Auckland Transport namely that dogs be allowed on buses at off-peak hours and that “dogs that do not fit in a carrier must wear a lead and cage type muzzle.”

In 2024 Dunedin had a population of 136,000 and 19,000 registered dogs. If we take the current household size of 2.7 that means roughly 38% of all households in Dunedin own a dog. That is a remarkably high percentage for any shared activity. I am assuming that this is approximately the same for the Otago region.

Dog ownership comes in many flavours but in most cases, these will be companion animals, considered by most owners to be a part of the family. Responsible owners want the best for their dogs and this includes plenty of exercise (most owners agree it’s good for them as well). Most owners take their dogs for walks along the street but nothing can compare to a good off-leash run, especially with other dogs. Around Dunedin this is best in a dog park or a designated off-leash area. The problem is getting there and back.

I want to argue for the elderly who can no longer drive but the same applies for of a number of “transport disadvantaged people” such as people who can’t afford to own a car or, for example, a young stay at home parent whose partner needs the car to get to and from work.

The current ORC regulations for bringing pets, and specifically dogs onto a bus requires the dog to be in suitable dog carrier but given that the 3 most popular pet breeds in New Zealand are Labrador Retrievers (30+ kg) , New Zealand Huntaways (30 kg) and Collies (25 kg), the pet carrier is 80 – 90 cm long and nearly 60 cm tall and typically costs well over \$100. While this might be acceptable for a emergency trip to the vet, this is ridiculous for a daily trip to the dog park. What is worse, if you get to the park you can’t really carry it around with you so you have to leave it unattended.

A little research shows that dogs on buses policy varies around the country ranging from **a.** No animals at all to **b.** They have to be in a crate and only at non-busy times to **c.** Dogs can be either crated or muzzled. Auckland Transport, the biggest bus operator in the country has policy c.

“Domesticated pets must travel in an approved carrier that fits on your lap or under the seat in front of you. Dogs that do not fit in a carrier must wear a lead and cage type muzzle.”

<https://at.govt.nz/bus-train-ferry/luggage-bikes-animals/taking-animals-on-public-transport#:~:text=Domesticated%20pets%20must%20travel%20in,on%20weekends%20and%20public%20holidays.>

I appreciate that the muzzle rule is intended to protect passengers and other dogs from badly behaved dogs and to a certain extent to protect the dog from badly behaved passengers.

have had the time to validate their rules and obviously, they must work.

A muzzle is significantly easier to carry around, especially for a more elderly dog owner, and does make excellent sense as a safety measure. I also agree with the other terms and conditions stated in the AT website.

I want to know why the ORC cannot adopt the same rules as Auckland Transport? I assume they

Finally, I would also hope that when the National Ticketing System (Motu Move) is implemented next year(?) there will also be a standardised national set of rules.

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DCC DOG CONTROL POLICY 2024

Section 1: Introduction 1.1 Context There are around 19,000 registered dogs in Dunedin, with many dogs considered part of the family. It is important that Dunedin has a range of public places that are accessible for dogs and their owners for fun and recreation.

That is 14% of all Dunedin residents own a dog.