

Friday, May 2, 2025

# Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0489

## Contact details

Name:

Craig Cliff

Organisation (if applicable):

University of Otago

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

No

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

## 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?**

## 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?**

## 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?

## 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?

### Any other comments?

University of Otago Submission on the Otago Regional Council's draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035

To: Otago Regional Council

transport.submissions@orc.govt.nz

Name of submitter:

University of Otago

PO Box 56

Dunedin 9054

Contact Phone: [REDACTED]

Contact Email: [REDACTED]

This is a submission on the consultation documents the Otago Regional Council's draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 (RPTP).

The University of Otago (the University) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft RPTP. We have regular meetings with the ORC's transport team, and, through the Dunedin Zero Carbon Alliance, ORC's strategy team. We acknowledge and endorse the aim to work closely with the University and Polytechnic (p.44) both in terms of research and operationally, and look forward to continued close collaboration.

The University acknowledges the improved bus services in Dunedin over the past two years and the increasing patronage that has resulted. Many of our staff and students rely on buses to get to and from campus, and many more use the bus as one of a number of travel modes. However, there is still significant opportunity to increase public transport mode share for those travelling to/from our Dunedin campus, and we are keen to continue working with the ORC to support this.

In terms of the Dunedin urban network (p65-66), University staff feedback consistently points to the indirectness of routes to the University, particularly the need to change buses at the bus hub, as a disincentive to using public transport. The introduction of express services from Mosgiel has been a positive addition and we encourage the ORC to consider express University services, particularly at morning peaks. We are happy to share data from our travel surveys about current University staff bus patronage and latent demand to help evaluate different options.

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The University notes that you are interested in feedback on whether to charge more for longer trips. Research, including the University of Otago's Dunedin-based Built Environment and Transport to School study, shows that active transport modes become less attractive as travel distance increases. For staff and students who do not live within Dunedin's inner suburbs, public transport is often the only sustainable travel option available. Our concern with this proposal is that the longer a passenger rides on a bus, the greater the emissions reduction compared to if they had taken the journey in a private vehicle. We would therefore encourage ORC to model the potential negative emissions impact of increasing public transport costs for longer journeys, alongside any potential revenue gains.

The University supports the intention to fully electrify the Dunedin bus fleet by 2028 (or sooner, if possible).

Targeted event travel (p.27) – the Dunedin City Council (DCC) funded a student to research the barriers to an event-based train service, particular at peak times of student travel (see the report [here](#)). Please consider these "events" (e.g. beginning and end of semester and semester breaks) and work with DCC/Dunedin Railways Ltd, the University and OUSA to help decarbonise student travel within the South Island. We also strongly support the idea of connector routes between Dunedin and Oamaru, and Dunedin and Balclutha (p57) and beyond as a way to support students with affordable, low emissions travel options.

We note reference on page 32 to luggage space on a city-airport bus service, but that no such service currently exists. An airport bus service would help reduce emissions from staff and students travelling to/from the airport, and we strongly support the introduction of such a service. The University is happy to work with ORC and Dunedin International Airport Ltd on potential options to pilot such as service.

The University would like to thank the Council for the opportunity to comment on the draft plan and would be available to discuss any of the above matters further at the appropriate time.

