

Thursday, May 1, 2025

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0461

Contact details

Name:

Daniel Jolly

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?

No

Tell us more:

In the area of sustainability the mode of transport has been largely limited to busses. Some busses have been electricified, however most of the busses remain large diesel and often not full. Rail as a transport option from Port Chalmers to the city and Mosgiel to city has not been advanced. Across the wider Otago region there are substantial benefits for tourism and lower emissions to use rail for connection between various towns, particularly Dunedin Queenstown, where many fly and produce much higher emissions.

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:

In some cases between particular towns a 2x daily passenger rail connection would be good.

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?

Tell us more:

No comment

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

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.

Please see my actual submission attached.

Submission by [REDACTED] on the ORC PTP 2025

While my submission is mainly on the omission of Rail from the ORC PTP, busses do bear a mention as they are a critical and in fact the only part of our public transport network at present.

Busses

The efforts of the ORC to reduce emissions with the use of EV busses are good.

There are other simpler and less costly ways to reduce emissions and running cost for our existing bus services. There could be a difference in size, with minivans used on off peak times, and only the large busses used during peak hours. This would easily cut emissions significantly, as well as reducing heavy vehicles use of the road, as well as decreasing the cost to operate the bus service. This would require holding additional minivan in addition to the main large bus fleet. It would be relatively simple to prepare a business case for the cost savings in fuel and carbon for the big and small bus service option.

Rail

I am not quite sure why rail has not been mentioned once in the PTP. The recent select committee report has recommended much higher levels of investment be made into regional and interregional transport. The omission of this major mode of transport is very disappointing.

In Aotearoa, the roll of rail as a major option for reducing our transport emissions has been largely overlooked. Rail was one of the first transport technologies developed, well before fossil fuel arose, and as a consequence rail has an intrinsically low energy input required for ton delivered and is often also more resilient than the roading network. While there has been significant work done on decarbonising freight its scope has often only included road-based options. Within rail, the sustainability focus has been narrow looking at how rail can be more sustainable on a carbon emissions basis rather than looking at the wider solutions rail offers for the entire transport sector.

For passengers there is a need to be able to travel in a safe and comfortable way without driving up emissions. Rail also supports a reduction in traffic congestion, increasing social cohesion and supporting regional small towns and in larger cities urban densification and tourism. For companies torn between trying to increase business, while reducing flight emissions and costs, rail offers a way to give staff flexibility to sit and work at a desk while travelling hub to hub in safety.

Rail can also support multiple fuel sources steam from wood, diesel, bio diesel and electricity.

Rail has a lower emissions profile per person than cars busses motorcycles and potentially EV's depending on how the carbon is calculated. Transport emissions in NZ accounts for 39 % of the nations CO2 emissions.

Relationship to Airports

Passenger rail has a significant potential to decrease regional and nation emissions as well as increasing resilience. Currently many companies and private individuals will fly short haul between

Dunedin and Queenstown or Christchurch while both of those location are easily within the reach of our current rail network. The switch to even conventional diesel rail from air travel could reduce per passenger emissions to only 17% of what is emitted when flying¹. Moves to hybrid or electrified rail would further improve these gains. Airports and flights are heavily dependent on weather with cancellations due to wind, ice, flooding not that uncommon. Every one of these events is very frustrating for people forced (due to lack other long distance options such as rail) to fly for work or personal reasons.

Benefits of Rail over Busses

Rail has many benefits which are not present on busses which is the sole focus of the ORC at present.

1. Lower emissions
2. Better access for disabled
3. Increased ability to work while on board
4. Reduced congestion and wear on road network increasing the longevity of the roading network, and the reducing cost of maintenance on the roads
5. Increased resilience for flooding as an alternative method to move people and goods.
6. For small towns rail could provide simpler more convenient direct access to large city centers
7. Improved productivity through stable rail cars and wifi, potentially with small desks for a additional fee
8. Improved domestic tourism
9. Better access to cycle networks which further improves the economy in rural towns
10. Higher levels of social cohesion than bus trips provide
11. Rail could allow for the development of housing in areas which otherwise have poor road networks, which struggle with large commuter flows
12. Interregional rail could reduce the dependence on and reliability of plane flights due to weather and climate change while still allowing high productivity working on the rail, and only marginally longer travel times CBD to CBD when car travel to the airport is included.

With all these benefits of rail, it is hard for me to fathom how passenger rail has been completely ignored in the ORC Draft Otago Regional Public Transport Plan Summary 2025–2035.

I propose that Passenger Rail be included in the draft ORC PTP and initially several options be put forward for discussion in the ORC PTP.

- Commuter Rail Port Chalmers to CBD
- Commuter Rail Mosgiel to CBD
- One interregional link between Invercargill-Dunedin-Christchurch
- Possibly a rail connection to Queenstown from other centers?

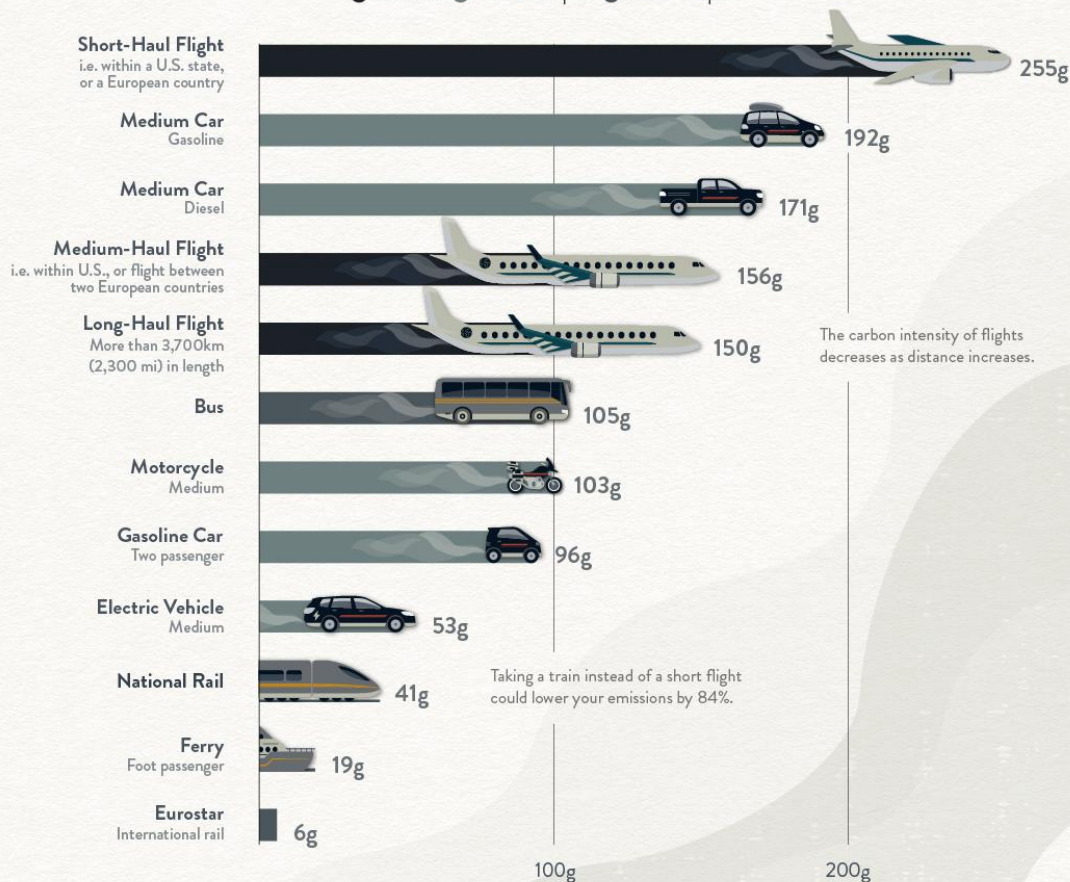
¹ Select committee report page 14

VISUAL CAPITALIST DATASTREAM

The Carbon Cost of Transportation

What's the lowest-carbon method of transportation? Here's the carbon footprint of travel for different vehicles, measured in grams of carbon dioxide equivalents per passenger-kilometer.

● Air Travel ● Private Transport ● Public Transport



Source: UK Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy via Our World in Data
Flight labels have been adjusted to be more relevant to an international audience, from the original UK-based source.



<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/comparing-the-carbon-footprint-of-transportation-options/>