

25 August 2023

File Ref: OIAPR-1274023063-6116

Delia Mason

By email: fyi-request-23638-931cbc9c@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Delia

Request for information 2023-206

I refer to your request for information dated 30 July 2023, which was received by Greater Wellington Regional Council (Greater Wellington) on 30 July 2023. You have requested the following:

"1) the total amount of money collected as a result of snapper penalty fees for Wellington, broken down by month from January 2022 - June 2023.

2) the total amount of snapper penalty fees that are refunded to travellers for Wellington, broken down by month from January 2022 - June 2023.

3) what happens to the revenue from snapper penalty fees - what agency uses it, and for what purposes?

4) how much funding is retained as a result of lost snapper cards being found by members of the public and returned to snapper or a transport provider etc? My question is in relation to unregistered cards that cannot be returned to their owner. What happens to the money that is the balance on the cards? How is it used and by who?"

Greater Wellington's response follows:

Background to penalty fares

Snapper supplies records of the Default Fares to Greater Wellington, however, the data does not identify whether the Default Fares applied were due to missed tag offs on the bus network or the rail network. This data caveat is due to the way that the Snapper ticketing system charges fares.

In the absence of a tag-off for a trip, a Snapper card registers a Default Fare and keeps it in the card's memory until next tag on. On the next tag on, the Snapper card deducts the Default Fare from the remaining balance on your card. For example, if a Snapper card holder misses a tag off on bus, and connects to a train service, the Default Fare will be deducted from the card at the time of tag-on on the train service. The Snapper data would show the Default Fare against the tag-on transaction

recorded for the train leg of the journey, even though it has been incurred due to a failure to tag off a bus trip.

While it is possible to extract the total amount of Default Fares recorded against rail trips from the existing Snapper ticketing data, considering the caveat outlined above, this information will not be entirely representative of Default Fares associated with missing tag-offs on train services.

Further to the data caveat outlined above, to support rail passengers through the introduction of Snapper on rail, Metlink also provided a Default Fare amnesty period, up until 30 June 2023. This amnesty meant that up until 30 April 2023 passengers were able to contact Snapper and request to:

- Fully reverse the Default Fare for the first time it is requested (per card)
- Provide a 50% reverse of the Default Fare for the second occurrence on request.

From 1 May 2023 – 30 June 2023 passengers were able to contact Snapper and request a 50% reverse of the Default Fare for the first time it is requested (per card).

1) The total amount of money collected as a result of snapper penalty fees for Wellington, broken down by month from January 2022 - June 2023

The total amounts charged as default fares for the requested period from January 2022 – June 2023 are provided in the table below, broken down by month and mode.

Please note that Snapper on all rail lines was implemented in November 2022 therefore the default fares for January 2022 – October 2022 only relates to the Snapper on the Johnsonville Line pilot.

An additional caveat, mentioned above, the data does not identify whether the Default Fares applied were due to missed tag offs on the bus network or the rail network, due to the way that the Snapper ticketing system charges fares.

Month	Rail	Bus
January 2022	\$1,845.00	\$27,579.06
February 2022	\$2,257.84	\$32,882.46
March 2022	\$2,948.50	\$31,088.69
April 2022	\$1,557.00	\$16,656.32
May 2022	\$1,808.84	\$20,074.13

June 2022	\$1,620.50	\$18,842.59
July 2022	\$2,128.63	\$20,879.92
August 2022	\$2,523.59	\$23,830.70
September 2022	\$2,026.59	\$23,415.46
October 2022	\$1,900.09	\$22,318.67
November 2022	\$24,147.95	\$37,544.65
December 2022	\$59,833.57	\$44,716.17
January 2023	\$51,880.18	\$40,157.12
February 2023	\$60,404.78	\$47,877.17
March 2023	\$69,299.70	\$51,543.42
April 2023	\$43,621.73	\$37,332.08
May 2023	\$53,418.98	\$42,715.31
June 2023	\$50,332.33	\$42,932.43
Total	\$433,555.80	\$414,383.18
Default Fares total	\$847,938.98	

These amounts are inclusive of GST.

2) The total amount of snapper penalty fees that are refunded to travellers for Wellington, broken down by month from January 2022 - June 2023.

Snapper on the Rail network was implemented in November 2022 and to support rail passengers through the introduction of Snapper on rail, Metlink provided a Default Fare amnesty period, up until 30 June 2023. We do not have information relating to refunds related to Snapper on Rail prior to this period.

We have provided the total amount of Default Fares that have been refunded since implementation of Snapper on the Rail network.

Month	Rail	Bus
January 2022		\$1,600.43
February 2022		\$1,876.96
March 2022		\$1,762.61
April 2022		\$693.91
May 2022		\$754.35
June 2022		\$742.61
July 2022		\$750.43
August 2022		\$1,166.96
September 2022		\$1,050.43
October 2022		\$635.87
November 2022	\$14,610.45	\$1,205.00
December 2022	\$29,961.61	\$980.43
January 2023	\$21,756.58	\$211.30
February 2023	\$19,256.43	\$1,363.48
March 2023	\$21,326.94	\$1,981.09
April 2023	\$10,760.31	\$1,096.09
May 2023	\$14,463.08	\$1,575.65
June 2023	\$12,843.87	\$1,496.96
Total	\$144,979.27	\$20,944.56
Default Fares total	\$165, 923.83	

These amounts are exclusive of GST.

3) What happens to the revenue from snapper penalty fees - what agency uses it, and for what purposes?

When a Default Fare is collected, this is provided to Metlink as fare revenue and used to recover part of the cost of operating the Metlink services. Default fares are a necessary deterrent to discourage the intentional non-payment of fares and to encourage correct tag-on/tag-off activity. When a Default Fare is reversed in full then the fare that the passenger should have paid is not collected. This is because a Default Fare is charged when a correct fare for the trip cannot be determined. This means when a Default Fare is reversed no fare revenue is collected for that journey, i.e. the passenger travels for free.

4) How much funding is retained as a result of lost snapper cards being found by members of the public and returned to snapper or a transport provider etc? My question is in relation to unregistered cards that cannot be returned to their owner. What happens to the money that is the balance on the cards? How is it used and by who?

Greater Wellington does not hold the information on funding related to lost Snapper cards nor the money that is left on these cards and refuse this part of your request for information under section 17(g)(i) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (the Act) on the basis that the information requested is not held by Greater Wellington and there are no grounds for believing that the information is held by another local authority, or a department or Minister of the Crown or organisation.

Snapper cards are propriety products offered by Snapper Services Ltd and therefore subject to the terms and conditions set by the provider of the cards. Passengers purchasing a Snapper card are bound to the terms and conditions set by the provider of the card. These terms and conditions can be found on Snapper website at the following link: <https://www.snapper.co.nz/terms-and-conditions/>

Under the Snapper terms and conditions, an unregistered Snapper card is not protected by Snapper Services Limited, and if lost, the balance can be used by whoever finds the card. This money is not retained by Greater Wellington. If the card is not used, any balance on Snapper card is subject to the terms and conditions set by Snapper Service Limited. The money stays with Snapper. Greater Wellington does not receive or hold the balances on Snapper cards.

A Snapper card that is not used or topped up for a continuous period of five years and eleven months expires, and any money remaining on that card is forfeited to Snapper.

If you have any concerns with the decision(s) referred to in this letter, you have the right to request an investigation and review by the Ombudsman under section 27(3) of the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987.

Please note that it is our policy to proactively release our responses to official information requests where possible. Our response to your request will be published shortly on Greater Wellington's website with your personal information removed.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "sugan".

Samantha Gain

Kaiwhakahaere Matua Waka-ā-atea | Group Manager Metlink