

Notice is given that an ordinary meeting of the Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee will be held on:

Date: **Wednesday 24 September 2025**
Time: **9:30am**
Meeting Room: **Tasman Council Chamber**
Venue: **189 Queen Street, Richmond**
Zoom conference link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87937288026?pwd=3j539H9VkbyhqrN0QFnDjmlGblzgo8.1>
Meeting ID: **879 3728 8026**
Meeting Passcode: **794632**

Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee

Komiti Te Kawenga Rohe o Nelson Tasman

AGENDA

MEMBERSHIP

	Chairperson	Deputy Chairperson
	Deputy Mayor S Bryant (Tasman District Council)	Mayor N Smith (Nelson City Council)
Members	Cr B Dowler (Tasman District Council)	Deputy Mayor R O'Neill-Stevens (Nelson City Council)
NZTA Waka Kotahi	Ms E Speight	
Alternate Members	Cr C Butler (Tasman District Council)	Cr M Courtney (Nelson City Council)
	Cr J Ellis (Tasman District Council)	Cr J Hodgson (Nelson City Council)

(Quorum 3 members)

Contact Telephone: 03 543 8400
Email: tdc.governance@tasman.govt.nz
Website: www.tasman.govt.nz

AGENDA

1 OPENING, WELCOME, KARAKIA

2 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Recommendation

That the apologies be accepted.

3 PUBLIC FORUM

Nil

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

5 LATE ITEMS

6 CONFIRMATION OF [MINUTES](#)

That the minutes of the Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee meeting held on Thursday, 14 August 2025, be confirmed as a true and correct record of the meeting.

7 REPORTS

7.1 Public Transport Review Update..... 4

7.2 R25-408 Ministry of Education Integration of School Buses with Public Transport 30

8 CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

Nil

9 CLOSING KARAKIA

7 REPORTS

7.1 PUBLIC TRANSPORT REVIEW UPDATE

Report To:	Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee
Meeting Date:	24 September 2025
Report Author:	James Hills, Senior Transport Planner, Nelson City Council
Report Authorisers:	John Ridd, Group Manager - Service and Strategy
Report Number:	RNTRTC25-09-1

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on public transport matters since the August 2025 Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee (JNTRTC), and to seek approval for the proposed service changes put forward in the report.
- 1.2 The report provides, as requested by the JNTRTC, further information on the proposed service changes, put forward by officers as part of the Public Transport Review (PT Review), that were not approved at the August 2025 JNTRTC.

2. Recommendation

That the Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee

- 1. receives the Public Transport Review Update report RNTRTC25-09-1; and**
- 2. approves Route 1 and Route 2 – timetable optimisation to better run the existing service, paragraph 3.7 in the agenda report; and**
- 3. approves the Late Late Bus – continue with the cancellation of the 3.45am trip and undertake a six-month trial with reduced fares and additional promotion; and**
- 4. approves Route 4 - change of frequency to 35 minutes to better operate existing service, paragraph 3.7 in the agenda report; and**
- 5. notes officers to consider earlier peak services for Routes 1 and 2 in the development of the next Regional Public Transport Plan.**

3. Background and Discussion

Regional Public Transport Plan and Public Transport Review

- 3.1 The 2021-2031 Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP) established the eBus public transport service across Nelson and Tasman. This change was a significant improvement in the level of service for the region's residents with both the coverage and the frequency of the service improved.
- 3.2 The eBus began operation on 1 August 2023 and as part of the new service a 12-month PT Review was required and is a condition precedent to New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) funding for the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 financial years.

- 3.3 NZTA confirmed that they are satisfied that Nelson City Council (NCC) and Tasman District Council (TDC) have met the conditions of the Phase 1 review in December 2024 and have approved the release of funding for years two and three of the programme.
- 3.4 The PT Review fits within the current RPTP period and, as part of the review, a number of improvements and optimisations have been developed that can be implemented in the short term.

Optimisations and improvements

- 3.5 At the May 2025 JNTRTC, a number of optimisations and improvements were outlined for further investigation. Optimisations to the current service will involve making changes to the existing timetable to reflect actual travel times.
- 3.6 Proposed changes were presented to the JNTRTC in August 2025 of which several were requested to be brought back to JNTRTC for further refinement before approvals from the JNTRTC. A workshop was held on 10 September 2025 and the workshop material is attached as Attachment 1 and 2.
- 3.7 Table 1 (below) outlines the proposed changes that were asked to be brought back to the September JNTRTC for further analysis.

Route	Summary of optimisation / improvement	Scale of change
R1 & R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earlier service Timetable improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantive Approx \$50k to \$75k each route (for earlier services) Cost unknown for timetable improvements
R8 (LLB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earlier services Remove services after 0200 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-substantive optimisation change Less than \$5k
R4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease frequency to 35 mins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-substantive Savings: four fewer trips per day

Table 1: Table 1: eBus routes with proposed optimisations requiring further analysis by the JRTC

- 3.8 Where additional services and significantly longer run time are proposed, this is considered 'substantive' and will incur higher costs. Small changes such as activating existing out of use stops or adding smaller additional run time, are considered non-substantive and will incur minimal cost.

4. Analysis

Remaining optimisation and improvements outstanding

- 4.1 As outlined in [Table 1](#) there are three key issues to be considered as part of this report:
- optimising the timetable for Routes 1 and 2 so that users experience a reliable service;

- reinstate earlier services (which were operated prior to the start of the eBus) on Routes 1 and 2;
- timetable changes on the Late Late Bus (Route 8); and
- decrease in frequency on Route 4.

Optimising the timetable on Routes 1 and 2

- 4.2 The current eBus service is struggling to operate to the scheduled timetable which is leading to a number of consistently late running trips. This leads to an unreliable service and erodes public confidence in the service.
- 4.3 Officers therefore recommend optimising the timetable to better run the current service. This will not lead to any additional services and instead will involve small timetable changes and additional run time on specific trips to create a timetable that is able to be met and reflect actual travel times.
- 4.4 At the time of writing, costs for small timetable optimisations to better run Routes 1 and 2 are not yet known, however, based on previous timetable changes of a similar nature we expect this to be no more than \$50,000. SBL are currently costing this change, and we expect to be able to table it at the JNTRTC.

Earlier trips on Routes 1 and 2

- 4.5 Currently, Route 1 begins early enough in the day to deliver users to work beginning at 8.00 am each day in both Nelson and Richmond. Route 2 delivers users into Nelson in time for an 8.00 am start to work and to Richmond in time for an 8.30 am start to work. With the shift in bus interchange location to Millers Acre (Nelson Bus Hub) it is proposed to have the first bus arrive earlier in the morning to allow more time for walking to places of employment.
- 4.6 Feedback received during Stage 1 of the PT Review highlights that there is demand for additional morning services to deliver commuters to Nelson and Richmond earlier than the current first bus of the day. The natural work start times for commuters to arrive into each centre are 7.00 am and 7.30 am.
- 4.7 To estimate the potential demand for these services, the old NBus patronage data for the early trips has been analysed. This data shows that patronage for the trip delivering workers for a 7.30 am start is around 50% of the patronage on the trips delivering workers for an 8.00 am start.
- 4.8 There is no data from the NBus service to interrogate to determine the likely patronage levels for a trip that would deliver users to the main centres in time for a 7.00 am work start. To be able to undertake some level of analysis it has been assumed that patronage on the 7.00 am service would be in the order of 25% of that on the 8.00 am service.
- 4.9 A key question that has been asked by elected members is how financially efficient any more significant changes are expected to be. The measure of subsidy cost per passenger trip is a useful indicator of financial efficiency.
- 4.10 The existing subsidy per passenger trip is approximately \$5.09 for Route 1 and \$5.60 for Route 2. The difference between the routes is primarily driven by lower fare income from Route 2.
- 4.11 It is important to note that while we have provided cost information there has been no corresponding calculation of the benefits associated with these trips being made by public transport, such as reduced peak hour vehicle numbers, and associated emissions, cost

savings for users compared to using private vehicles, and improved employment opportunities for those without access to vehicles.

- 4.12 There are two options available for Routes 1 and 2 that have come from user feedback as follows:

Option 1: One additional trip in each direction on Routes 1 and 2, delivering users to Nelson and Richmond in time to start work at 7.30 am.

- This option is estimated to cost approximately an additional \$50k to \$75k per year for each route (\$100k to \$150k total) and estimated to result in a total subsidy per passenger trip of \$4.95 and \$5.46 for Routes 1 and 2 respectively.
- However, actual costs from the contracted service provider have not been finalised at the time of writing and these estimations could therefore change.

Option 2: Two additional trips in each direction on Route 1 and one additional trip in each direction on Route 2.

- This would allow users starting work at 7.00 am and 7.30 am to use the bus and arrive in Richmond and Nelson in time for work. The compromise is that this option would provide the 7.00 am option to users living along Route 1 only.
 - This option is estimated to cost approximately an additional \$75,000 per year for Route 1 and \$50,000 for Route 2 and estimated to result in a total subsidy per passenger trip of \$4.88 and \$5.46 for Routes 1 and 2 respectively.
 - However, actual costs from the contracted service provider have not been finalised at the time of writing and these estimations could therefore change.
- 4.13 SBL are currently costing these changes, and we hope to be able to provide them and our assessment at the JNTRTC.
- 4.14 Given the substantive nature of these changes and the level of uncertainty there may be value in considering a trial of an additional service to understand actual usage or considering and consulting on these changes as a part of the development of the forthcoming 2027-2037 RPTP. Noting that the RPTP review provides an opportunity to look at the eBus network as a whole and recommend more substantial changes to the current service.
- 4.15 If officers do not have a level of confidence in the costs, officer recommendation would be to consider additional earlier services on Routes 1 and 2 as part of the RPTP review.

Late Late Bus (Route 8)

- 4.16 Monitoring of the patronage on the Late Late Bus over the last two years has highlighted that the 2.30 am and 3.45 am Saturday morning trips and the 3.45 am Sunday morning trips have been very underutilised, with services regularly operating without passengers.
- 4.17 Additional research of the closing times of restaurants, hospitality venues and establishments in both Nelson and Richmond indicates that there has been a change to earlier closing times. Earlier this year, officers therefore instructed SBL to cease operating the 3.45 am service from Nelson to Richmond in response to this underutilisation.
- 4.18 Officers had initially recommended that instead of running the later services, they could be reallocated to earlier in the evening to provide public transport for users between 8.00 pm and 10.00 pm. Additionally, it was proposed to extend the service beyond the Richmond Interchange to serve Berryfields and provide connections the cinema and restaurants there.
- 4.19 Further feedback from elected members has included:

- the latest services would not be welcomed by residents in Berryfields after midnight due to the noise of the buses at that time of night and the last service of the night should therefore not terminate in the residential area (rather than the current commercial area);
- the cost of the service to users is high compared to a group choosing to share a taxi or Uber. Quotes from taxi operators indicate the taxi fare between Nelson and Richmond is between \$45 and \$55;
- the cost to taxpayers and ratepayers per passenger trip is very high;
- the lack of promotion of the service may be contributing to its low patronage numbers; and
- to cater to a wider geographic area, consideration could be given to operating Routes 1 and 2 later into the evening, rather than operate the Late Late Bus earlier. This has not been costed but costing may be similar to the costings given in 4.12.

4.20 In response to this feedback, it is recommended that the following changes are made to the Late Late Bus:

- continue with the existing timetable and 3.45 am trip remains cancelled;
- the fare for the route be trialled at a reduced rate that matches the fares on the standard eBus services for six months beginning 1 November 2025; and
- the service be promoted for the same period.

4.21 The changes above are assumed to be cost neutral if there is a significant increase in patronage. The patronage for this route will be monitored closely and further recommendations brought back to the JNTRTC regarding changes that may need to be made following the trial period to be included in the RPTP 2027 review.

4.22 Implementing the above changes in the short-term would allow for analysis before a wider review of the Late Late Bus as part of the RPTP 2027 review. The RPTP review will assess the eBus network holistically and assess the best way to serve patronage beyond the existing timetable.

Route 4

4.23 To address consistent late running on this route, officers recommend a small frequency change, with services operating every 35 minutes rather than every 30 minutes at present. This change should have minor impact on users, would address late running and reliability issues and is expected to result in a small improvement in cost per passenger and public share (with four less services operated each day).

5. Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP)

RPTP 2027-2037 review

5.1 Through undertaking the PT review and analysing the first two years of the eBus service, additional substantive improvements will be considered under the next stage of the RPTP review to be implemented between 2027–2037.

5.2 These improvements and changes will aim to maximise the benefits and increase the attractiveness of public transport to increase patronage.

5.3 These could include but not limited to:

- new public transport connections to serve The Junction Shopping Centre;

- implementing and maximising the ticketing model (Motu Move/National Ticketing Solution);
- extending the operating times of Routes 1 and 2;
- consider the long-term future of the Late Late Bus;
- increased peak hour frequency on key urban routes;
- weekend services for Routes 5 and 6;
- adjustments to service frequency throughout the day to match current demand;
- bus priority measures;
- supporting community transport options for Golden Bay and Hira; and
- any items not approved in the meeting that this report is received at.

6. Important considerations for decision-making

6.1 Fit with Purpose of Local Government

Providing and giving effect to Regional Land Transport Plan and Regional Public Transport Plan is a requirement of the Land Transport Management Act 2003.

NZTA Waka Kotahi through their development guidelines for developing regional public transport plans, outline that public transport authorities must undertake annual pricing reviews and six-yearly fare structure reviews.

6.2 Consistency with Community Outcomes and Council Policy

Councils have adopted a joint Regional Land Transport Plan and joint Regional Public Transport Plan as a requirement of the Land Transport Management Act 2003. The development and operation of a Public Transport service contributes to the community outcome “our infrastructure is efficient, cost effective and meets current and future needs”.

Through the Public Transport Review, transport officers have developed a number of measures to optimise and improve the eBus service and grow patronage with the resources available.

6.3 Risk

Changes in the level of service are likely to reduce transport choices for some members of the Nelson Tasman communities who have few transport choices and also discourage other users. This could result in a reduction in patronage of the services.

6.4 Financial impact

All proposed improvements will be funded within existing budgets. The proposed improvements and optimisations will help grow patronage and increase revenue.

6.5 Degree of significance and level of engagement

Implementing the proposed changes to the ebus service will improve the public transport service by offering greater reliability and connectivity.

All changes will be communicated to the public and new timetables printed to display at all bus stops.

6.6 Climate Impact

Support for growing public transport use and improving the public transport offering will contribute to reducing transport emissions.

Increasing patronage leads to mode shift away from the private car which reduces the environmental impact of land transport and reduces transport emissions. Greater public transport use also reduces congestion on the local road network.

6.7 Inclusion of Māori in the decision-making process

No engagement with Māori has been undertaken in preparing this report

6.8 Delegations

The Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee (JNTRTP) is a joint committee of the Nelson City and Tasman District Councils, established in accordance with section 105(9) Land Transport Management Act 2003 ('the Act') and Schedule 7 clauses 30(1)(b) and 30A Local Government Act 2002. The JNTRTP is governed by a Terms of Reference.

The joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee has the following delegations to consider in relation to the report

Areas of Responsibilities:

- Provide the relevant councils with any advice and assistance requested in relation to their transport responsibilities.

Powers and limitations:

- The Joint Regional Transport Committee is responsible for the operational oversight of the joint Nelson Tasman Public Transport Operations Contract and associated public transport activity, including the authority to make decisions and approve policies that support operations.
- The Joint Regional Transport Committee may approve changes to the Public Transport Operations unless the change requires:
 - A permanent change of route; or
 - A permanent change to fares; or
 - A permanent change to timetable.
- Other than the powers outlined at clauses 3.1, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 (in the Terms of Reference) the Joint Regional Transport Committee may only make recommendations to:
 - The partner councils.

The Joint Regional Transport Committee has no financial responsibilities or budgets. If a change to public transport operations requires additional un-

budgeted funding, the Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee has the power to recommend budgets for approval by each Council that is affected

7. Attachments

- | | | | |
|----|---|----------------------------------|----|
| 1. |   | JRTC Workshop September 2025 | 12 |
| 2. |   | Ebus financial efficieny summary | 28 |

Public Transport Workshop: Optimisations and Improvements

Joint Regional Transport Committee of Tasman District and
Nelson City Councils
10 September 2025



Te Kaunihera o
te tai o Aorere

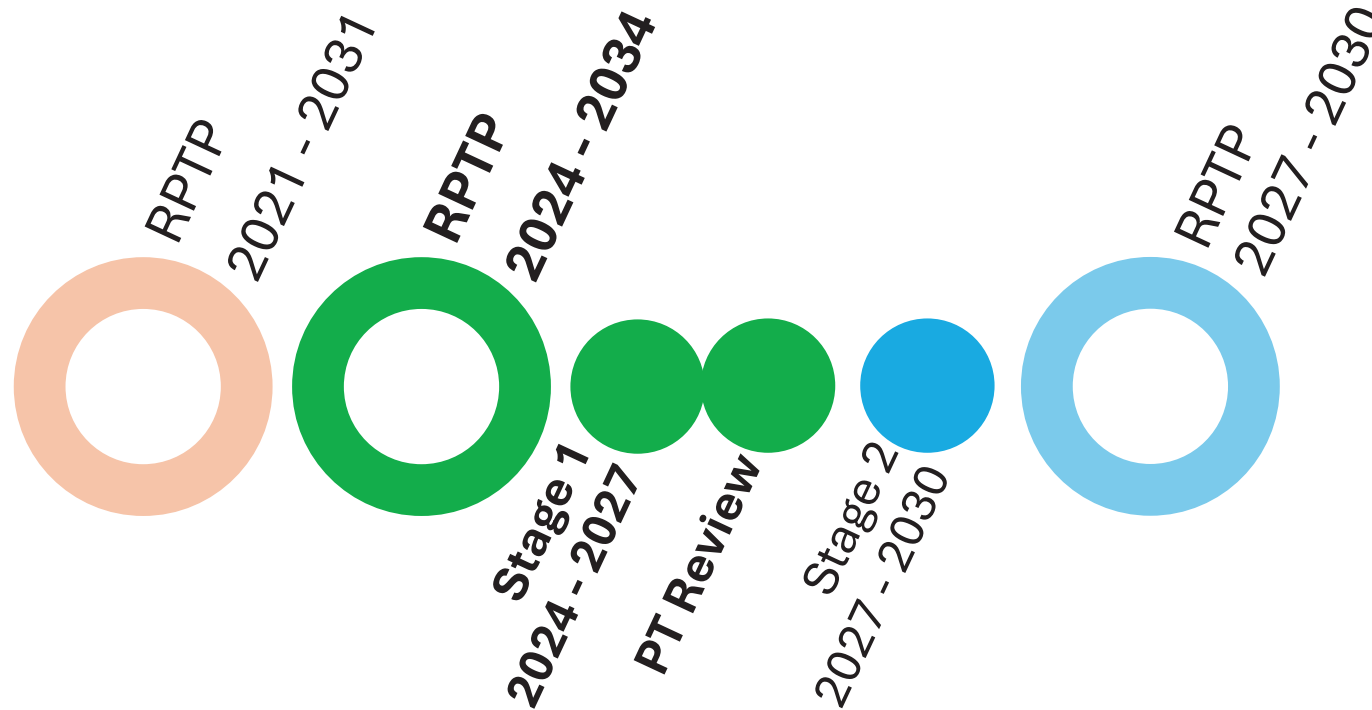


Nelson
City Council

Te Kaunihera o
Whakatū

Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP): Timeline

We are currently undertaking a PT Review as part of Stage 1 of the RPTP 2024-2034.



Regional Public Transport Plan: Stage 1

Implementation of the Plan includes two stages.

- **Stage 1: PT Review**, following 12 months of service including analysing real time operational data and public feedback to inform potential adjustments and improvements in service reliability frequency and accessibility.
- Further to decisions made at the May 2025 JRTC, officers were directed to explore the following optimisations and improvements as part of the PT Review:

Route Number	Optimisations & Improvements
1	Additional Morning Trips
2	Additional Morning Trips
3	New stop on Atawhai Drive opposite Paremata Street
4	Pascoe Street rerouting from Bolt Road
	Pascoe Street new stops x2
	Move stops from Bolt Road to Quarantine Road and Parkers Road
5 & 6	Additional stop near Aquatic Centre (existing bus stop)
	Additional stop at Girls College (existing bus stop)
Late Late Bus	Remove last trip and re-allocate it as an earlier trip
Network Wide	Optimise timetable to improve reliability and incorporate other changes
	Transition to Millers Acre Bus Hub terminus
	Transition to Motu Move (National Ticketing Solution)



Regional Public Transport Plan: Stage 1

At the August JRTC, officers presented on the proposed improvements and network optimisations. The JRTC:

- supported a number of those improvements (the non-highlighted items) and
- asked that further information be provided on other changes and these be brought back to the next JRTC meeting (the highlighted items).

Cost estimates are not yet available for timetable improvements but likely to be substantive




- Seeking support to proceed with changes subject to total final cost not exceeding \$250k already budgeted

Route	Summary	Scale of change / cost (Budget \$250,000)
R1 & R 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier services. • Timetable improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive. • Approx \$75K each route (for earlier services). • Cost unknown for timetable improvements.
R8 (LLB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier services. • Remove services after 0200. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-substantive optimisation change. • Less than \$5K
R3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable improvements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes recommended currently
R4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in frequency, 35 mins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-substantive. • Savings: four fewer trips a day
R5 & R6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate additional stops at Nelson College for Girls & Aquatics Centre. • Minor change to timetable (optimisation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal optimisation change. • Less than \$2K



Summary: Proposed Short-Term Changes

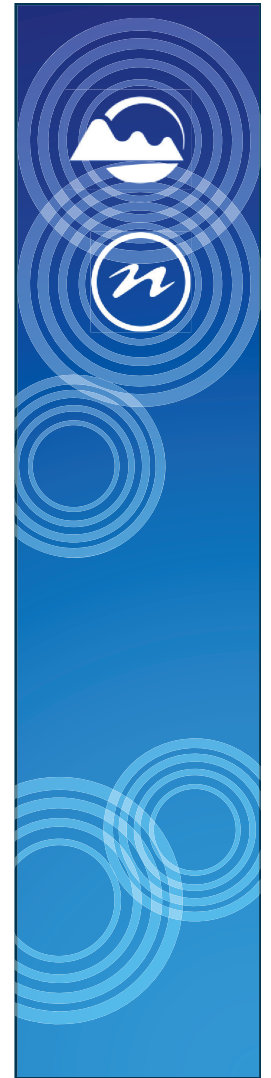
The proposed operational changes still requiring approval:

Route	Operational change	Scale of change / cost*	Financial Efficiency – Cost per Passenger Trip
R1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earlier services. Increase in run time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantive. Approx \$75K (for earlier services). Additional cost for run times unknown, but likely to be substantive . 	\$5.09  \$4.75
R2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earlier services. Increase in run time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantive. Approx \$75K (for earlier services). Additional cost for run times unknown, but likely to be substantive 	\$5.60  \$5.54
R4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in frequency, 35 mins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-substantive. Minimal cost. 	NA
R8 (LLB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earlier services. Remove services after 0200. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-substantive optimisation change. Minimal cost. 	\$26.20  \$22.93

*NZTA meets 51% of the total service costs with the remaining 49% split 76% NCC / 24% TDC



Discussion/workshop direction



Data update



Financial efficiency - current services

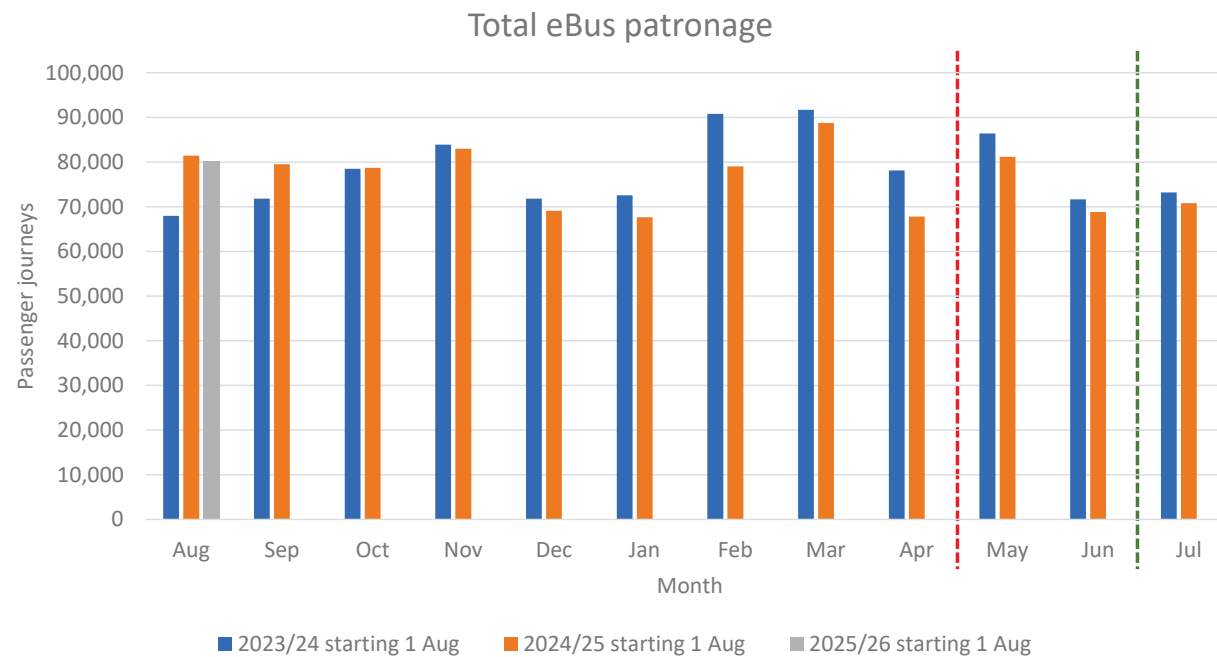
On a cost per passenger trip basis:

- All routes other than the Late Late bus perform more efficiently on weekdays.
- Routes 1, 2 and 7 are the most financially efficient routes.
- Route 7 demonstrates the financial efficiency of the commuter routes at peak times
- Routes 3, 4 and 5 are similar in financial efficiency.
- Route 6 is the least financially efficient of the normal routes.
- The Late Late bus is the least financially efficient overall.

		2024/25 Summary							
		Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 7	Late Late Bus
All days	Proportioned cost per route	2,011,681	1,948,816	1,370,458	1,603,059	678,942	559,499	44,006	81,725
	Total cost per passenger trip	5.09	5.60	13.35	14.14	14.95	18.53	0.41	26.20
Weekdays	Proportioned cost per route	1,436,915	1,392,012	978,899	1,145,042	678,942	559,499	44,006	20,431
	Total cost per passenger trip	4.20	4.79	11.98	12.80	14.95	18.53	0.41	47.49
Weekends	Proportioned cost per route	574,766	556,805	391,559	458,017	-	-	-	61,293
	Total cost per passenger trip	9.60	9.16	18.49	18.97	-	-	-	22.53



Performance - current services

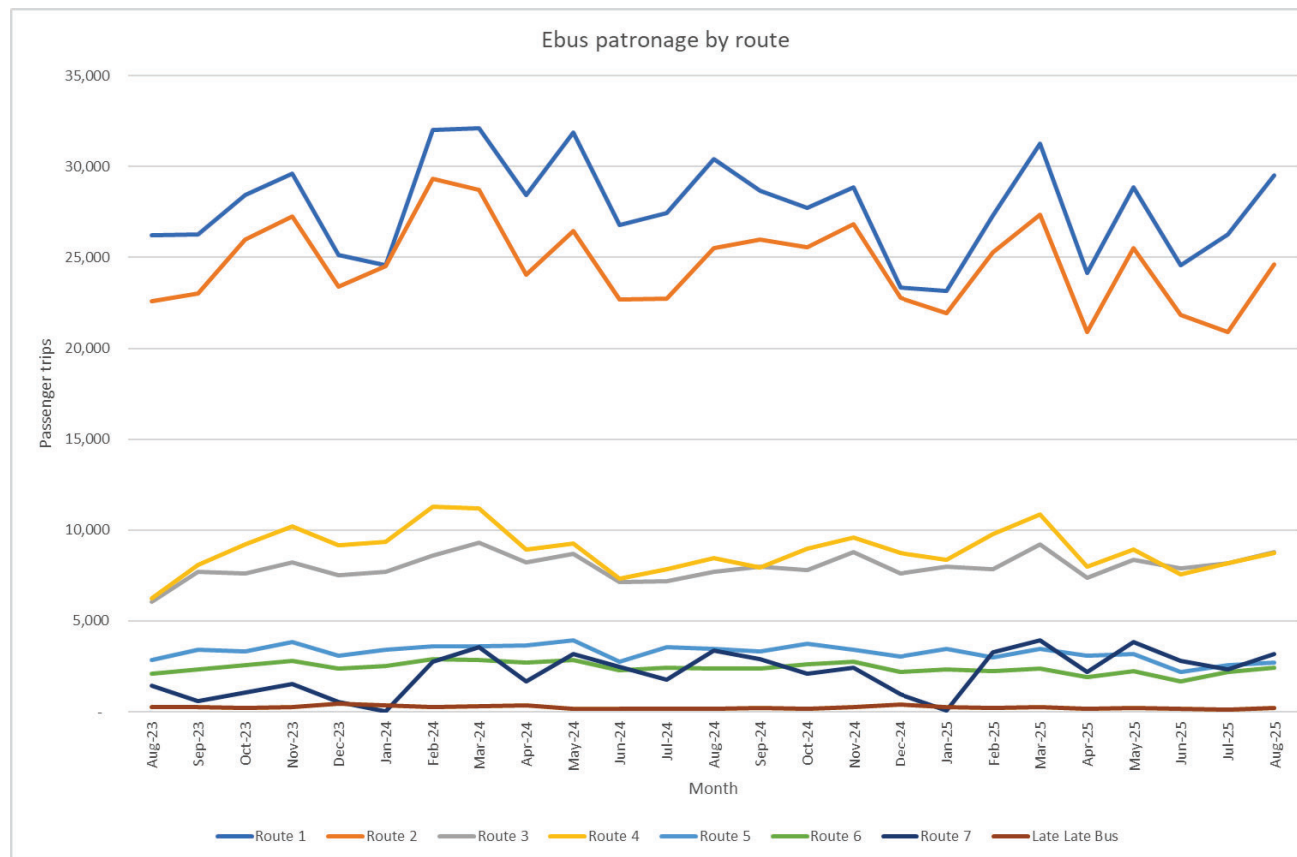


----- Removal of free fares/half price fares (2024)

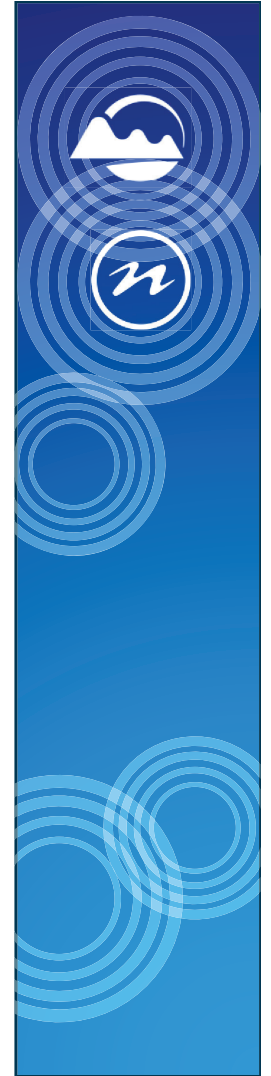
----- Increase in fares (2024)



Performance - current services



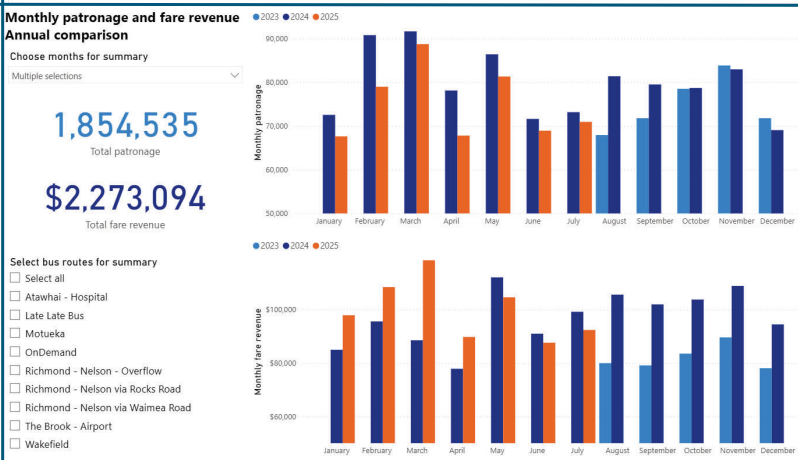
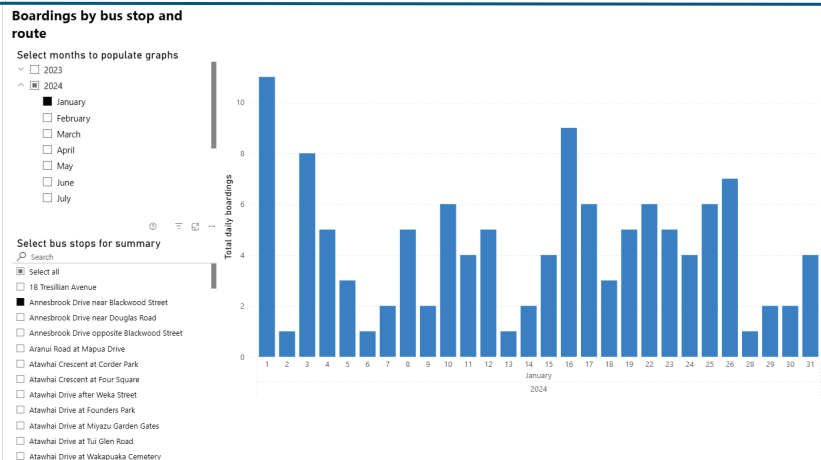
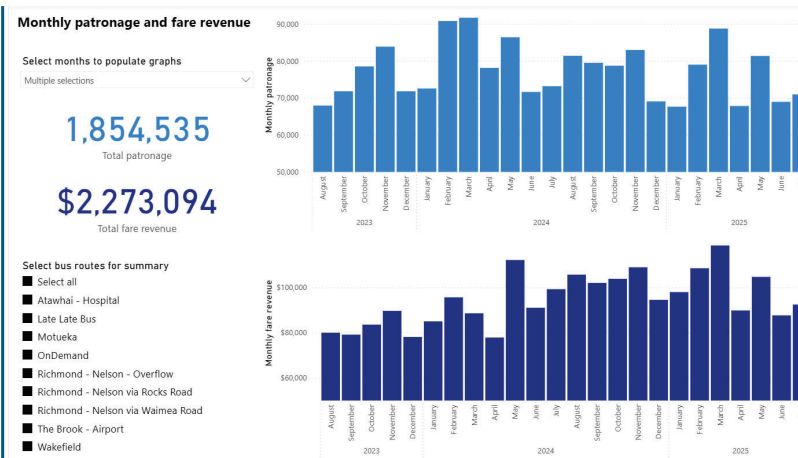
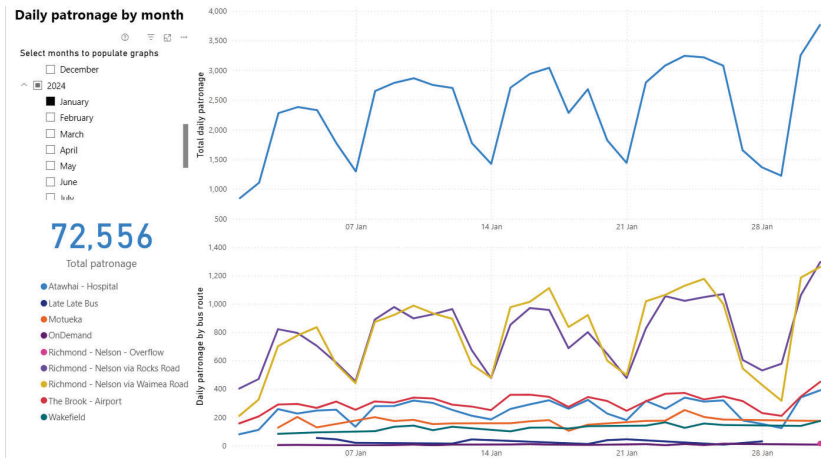
Questions?



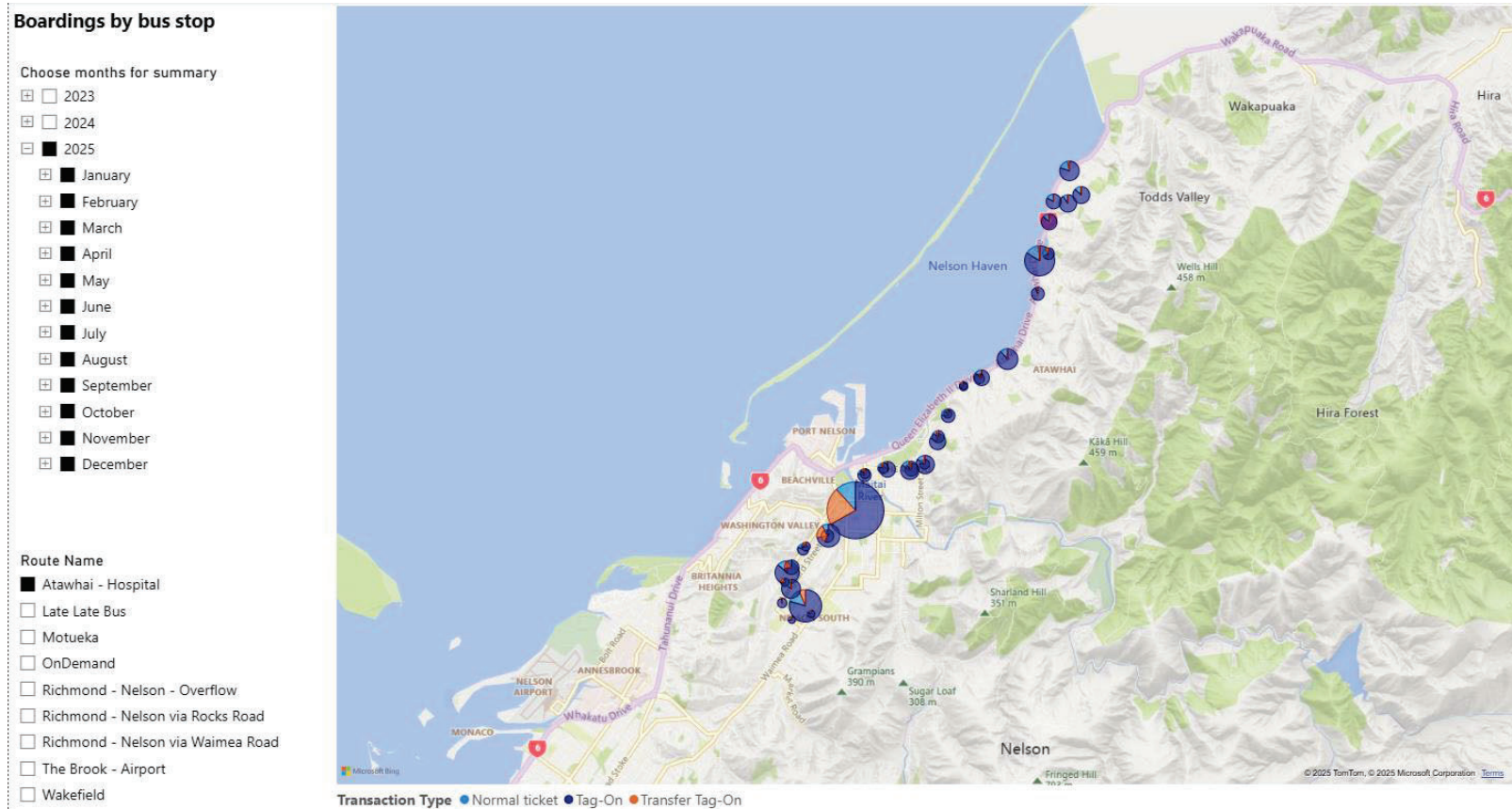
Next Steps?



Future reporting – Sneak peak



Future reporting – Sneak peak



Regional Public Transport Plan: Stage 2

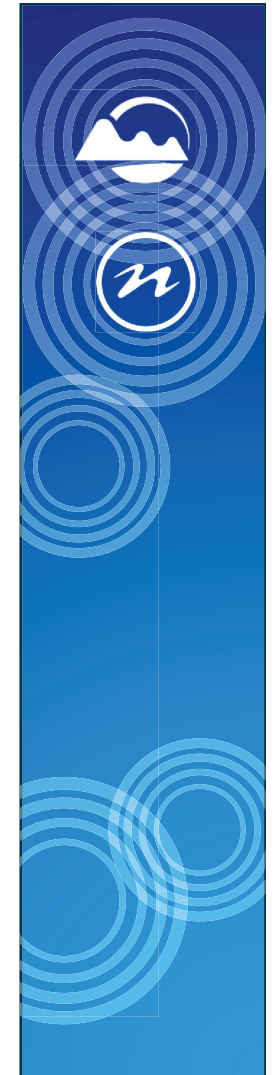
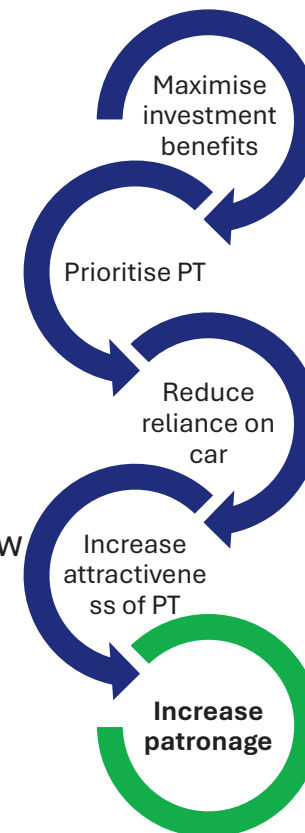
Stage 2 of the RPTP to be identified in the 2027-30 review and informed by the Stage 1 review:

Shown in the 2024-2034 RPTP

- Increased peak hour frequency on key urban routes.
- Supporting community transport options for Golden Bay and Hira.
- Bus priority measures.
- Weekend services for routes 5 and 6.

Further mid to long-term options as identified through the PT Review and wider policy changes, for example:

- Access to The Junction Shopping Centre.
- Ticketing model (Motu Move / National Ticketing Solution).



Regional Public Transport Plan 2027-2037

- Longer term improvements/changes from the current PT review along with Stage 2 of the 2024-2034 RPTP will be considered as part of the 2027-2037 RPTP.
- At this stage the original objectives, service goals etc can be updated and ensure they are consistent with the latest Government Policy Statement (GPS).



Ebus financial efficiency analysis summary (Please read key assumptions on following page)

		2024/25 Summary							
Total annual operational cost	\$ 8,298,186	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 7	Late Late Bus
All days	Annual service km	320,000	310,000	218,000	255,000	108,000	89,000	7,000	13,000
	Proportioned cost per route	\$ 2,011,681	\$ 1,948,816	\$ 1,370,458	\$ 1,603,059	\$ 678,942	\$ 559,499	\$ 44,006	\$ 81,725
	Annual income from route (last full financial year)	\$ 352,380	\$ 310,903	\$ 91,667	\$ 118,489	\$ 95,495	\$ 49,312	\$ 31,725	\$ 11,369
	Cost minus fare income	\$ 1,659,302	\$ 1,637,914	\$ 1,278,791	\$ 1,484,570	\$ 583,448	\$ 510,187	\$ 12,280	\$ 70,355
	Private share estimate	18%	16%	7%	7%	14%	9%	72%	14%
	Total trips in last financial year	325,814	292,306	95,770	104,999	39,021	27,535	29,820	2,685
	Estimated passenger km travelled in last financial year	2,446,754	2,188,451	337,492	454,722	828,127	382,343	206,461	17,182
	Total cost per passenger trip	\$ 5.09	\$ 5.60	\$ 13.35	\$ 14.14	\$ 14.95	\$ 18.53	\$ 0.41	\$ 26.20
	Total cost per passenger km	\$ 0.68	\$ 0.75	\$ 3.79	\$ 3.26	\$ 0.70	\$ 1.33	\$ 0.06	\$ 4.09
All days With additional morning trips on R1 and R2	Annual service km	340,336	319,424	218,000	255,000	108,000	89,000	7,000	13,842
	Proportioned cost per route	\$ 2,086,681	\$ 2,023,816	\$ 1,370,458	\$ 1,603,059	\$ 678,942	\$ 559,499	\$ 44,006	\$ 81,725
	Annual income from route (last full financial year)	\$ 386,913	\$ 326,137	\$ 91,667	\$ 118,489	\$ 95,495	\$ 49,312	\$ 31,725	\$ 12,994
	Cost minus fare income	\$ 1,699,768	\$ 1,697,680	\$ 1,278,791	\$ 1,484,570	\$ 583,448	\$ 510,187	\$ 12,280	\$ 70,355
	Private share estimate	19%	16%	7%	7%	14%	9%	72%	16%
	Total trips in last financial year/estimated change	357,744	306,629	95,770	104,999	39,021	27,535	29,820	3,069
	Estimated passenger km travelled in last financial year	2,686,536	2,295,685	337,492	454,722	828,127	382,343	206,461	19,637
	Total cost per passenger trip	\$ 4.75	\$ 5.54	\$ 13.35	\$ 14.14	\$ 14.95	\$ 18.53	\$ 0.41	\$ 22.93
	Total cost per passenger km	\$ 0.63	\$ 0.74	\$ 3.79	\$ 3.26	\$ 0.70	\$ 1.33	\$ 0.06	\$ 3.58

Key assumptions

1. Patronage on the new early Route 1 and 2 trips will be half of that on the current first morning trip.
2. For each additional morning passenger trip on the new Route 1 and 2 times will have a corresponding additional afternoon or evening return passenger trip.
3. Additional patronage on the Late Late bus assumes that the last two trips were empty and the same number of people will use the early bus as the average on the rest of the existing trips.

6.1 Ministry of Education - integration of school buses with public transport

**Joint Nelson Tasman Regional
Transport Committee**

24 September 2025

Report Title: R25-408 Ministry of Education - integration of school buses with public transport

Report Author: Alec Louverdis (Deputy Chief Executive / Group Manager Infrastructure)

Report Authoriser:

Purpose of Report

1. To approve next steps following the presentation from the Ministry of Education (MoE) to the Joint Regional Transport Committee (RTC) with respect to progressing the integration of school buses and public transport (PT) in the Nelson/Tasman region – including a possible trial.

Summary

2. The MoE, after been approached by Nelsons Mayor Nick, presented to the RTC on the 13 August 2025 on the matter of integrating school buses and PT in Nelson/Tasman and the intent to undertake a trial. The MoE advised that the trial has support from the Minister of Education.
3. Local Government NZ approved a remit on this matter at their 2025 SuperLocal Conference in July 2025.
4. Officers from both Council's do not have any capacity nor specific expertise in this matter nor do the Councils have budget set aside for this work. Due diligence is required, and independent external support is essential to guide good decision making for the incoming Council's and the Joint RTC.

Recommendation

That the Joint Nelson Tasman Regional Transport Committee

1. **Agrees that due diligence is required to assess the proposal to integrate Ministry of Education school buses with the Nelson/Tasman Public Transport system; and**
2. **Notes that neither Nelson or Tasman Council staff have the capacity or budget to undertake due diligence; and**
3. **Agrees that a commencement date of July 2026 for a trial is premature; and**

6.1 Ministry of Education - integration of school buses with public transport

- 4. Agrees that a suitable date for any trial will be subject to the outcome of due diligence; and**
- 5. Approves, that the Mayors of Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council and the Chair of the Joint RTC write to the Minister of Education noting that the estimated cost of a due diligence exercise is \$250,000 and request full financial funding for this work to enable both Council's to participate in the initiative of integrating school buses with Public Transport in the Nelson/Tasman region.**

Background

5. The proposed integration to align public and school bus services and to undertake a trial has been initiated by Mayor Nick who has led the remit to LGNZ on this matter - that remit was approved by LGNZ with 85% support, 9% against with 5% abstaining.
6. The details surrounding this proposal are not replicated in this report as this has been covered in several meetings and workshops. However, the MoE presented to the RTC on the 13 August 2025 and their powerpoint is attached to provide the necessary background and context.

Discussion

7. Officers do not have a view at this stage on the viability of the proposal or trial as they simply do not know enough. However, all indications following the MoE presentation to the RTC is that this will be both complex and challenging. Officers need time and space to understand all the issues, both in short supply.
8. Any integration will not be straight forward and there is a need to undertake due diligence that will allow officers to advise both the RTC and their respective Councils on this matter.
9. July 2026 was suggested as the date to commence a trial, but officers are of the view that this is not achievable. An appropriate trial date can be set once the necessary due diligence has been undertaken and should the outcome favour a trial.
10. There is no funding in either Council's budgets (this year or the next) to fund any due diligence work, which will have a direct impact on rates as this will be treated as opex.
11. Whilst the MoE have kindly offered their own staff resources to sit alongside NCC/TDC officers to work the issue through, the challenge is that neither NCC nor TDC officers have any spare capacity nor head space to put towards this.

6.1 Ministry of Education - integration of school buses with public transport

12. External support is needed. It was always envisaged that MoE would provide funding to assist with this due diligence, but they have indicated that they have not budgeted for this and that this is unlikely.
13. In addition, other parties will need to be involved in any due diligence including NZTA and potentially others still yet to be identified.
14. Things front of mind for both NCC/TDC include, but are not limited to, TDC is going through a restructure; NCC is going through a major transformation; TDC staff are busy with recovery following the June/July floods; a full PT review is underway; LG elections will soon commence, and planning is underway for the RLTP and RPTP as well as for the next LTP's.
15. Officers have previously estimated that a due diligence exercise could cost around \$180,000.
16. TDC/NCC officers have worked on a due diligence scope and asked a reputable transport consultant to price this. That high level estimate is between \$220,000 and \$250,000 (excluding GST and excluding disbursements).
17. In summary, existing and upcoming commitments from both Council's and lack of internal capacity means that no meaningful effort can be put into due diligence no matter how many staff MoE provide.
18. Collectively we will need external assistance to move this forward, accepting that even with external support that there will still be a high level of input from key staff from both Council's.

Options

19. This report highlights that both Council's will struggle to give this matter the attention it deserves, and that officers will need external assistance to move this forward. Currently staff do not have the either the resources or budget to undertake the required due diligence.
20. Officers request that the two Mayors and the RTC Chair write to the Minister of Education requesting funding of \$250,000 to undertake due diligence as without an external advisor, officers cannot see how this can be moved forward.
21. It is worthwhile to note that this amount is purely an estimate. Actual costs may be less or more than the estimate provided. The request and intent is for the Ministry to cover the full costs.

Important considerations for decision making

6.1 Ministry of Education - integration of school buses with public transport

<p>Fit with Purpose of Local Government</p> <p>The proposal to integrate school buses and PT in Nelson/Tasman is not within the traditional purpose of Local Government - but is touted as a trial and has received support from the Minister of Education.</p>
<p>Consistency with Community Outcomes and Council Policy</p> <p>Integrating school buses with PT will potentially address community concerns and show that our community is resilient.</p>
<p>Risk</p> <p>Officers will not be able to move this matter forward without external assistance.</p>
<p>Financial impact</p> <p>Neither Council has funding to undertake the necessary due diligence.</p>
<p>Degree of significance and level of engagement</p> <p>This matter is potentially significant, and some sort of engagement may be required with Nelson/Tasman residents as part of officers preparing the NLTP, NPTP and respective Council's LTP's.</p>
<p>Climate Impact</p> <p>Any due diligence will look at how this proposed integration addresses climate change.</p>
<p>Inclusion of Māori in the decision making process</p> <p>No engagement with Māori has been undertaken in preparing this report.</p>
<p>Delegations</p> <p>This is a matter for the Joint RTC to consider.</p>

Attachments

1. Ministry of Education presentation

Attachment 6.1.1

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]



[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

Background



- The Ministry of Education provides school transport assistance to students who meet our eligibility criteria. To be eligible for a place on a school bus, students must:
 - attend their nearest state or state-integrated school
 - live more than a certain distance from school (3.2km for Years 1-8, or 4.8km for Years 9-13)
 - not have access to public transport.
- For the purposes of assessing eligibility, public transport means any public or commercial service that:
 - travels within 2.4km of the student's home and their school or kura
 - picks the student up after 7am and collects them within an hour of school finishing
 - does not require the student to transfer between services more than once.
- Ministry-contracted school bus services are funded based on our eligibility criteria and are fully subsidised for eligible students.
- Eligibility is a key concept in the Ministry's contracts with transport providers.

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

Context and purpose



- Mayor Smith has identified an opportunity to transfer delivery of school bus services currently funded and contracted by the Ministry to public transport authorities (PTAs).
- Nelson City Council submitted a remit advocating for reform of the school transport system to the LGNZ SuperLocal conference in July 2025.
- The Minister of Education, Hon Erica Stanford, has directed the Ministry to work with Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council to explore this opportunity. The Ministry has prepared some preliminary analysis to support these discussions.
- Further work is required to:
 - agree on the objectives of any trial or proof of concept
 - define the scope of services that could be transferred as part of a trial
 - develop a feasible funding or delivery model
 - undertake due diligence (legal, financial, and policy)
 - develop and agree an implementation and transition plan.
- The Ministry is able to support this work and other tasks associated with implementation as required.

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

Proposed objectives



Flexible and responsive

- Planning of school bus services happens at a local level, based on local priorities and conditions.
- Consultation through regional public transport planning enables communities to be engaged in decision-making.
- Services are responsive to demand, enable greater choice for students and families, and expand existing public transport networks.

Minimal impact

- Eligible students continue to have access to fit for purpose services to get to and from school.
- Disruption for students and communities is minimised during the transition.

Efficient

- Transition and ongoing administration costs are affordable for the Ministry and councils.
- The funding model is sustainable and supports shared priorities and outcomes.
- Integrated planning and procurement of services allows public transport authorities to optimise routes, achieve efficiencies, and leverage economies of scale.

4

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

education.govt.nz

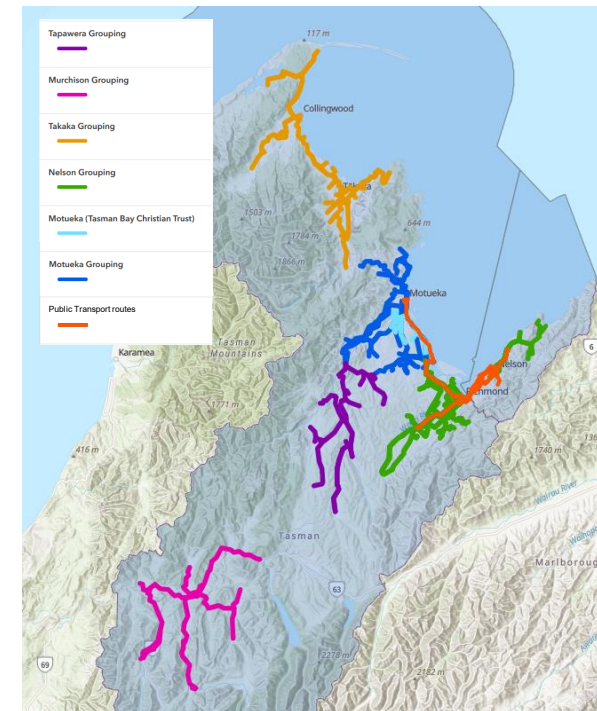
[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

Defining the scope of a pilot

- The Ministry currently provides daily bus services for 2,701 eligible students in Nelson–Tasman, representing 16 percent of the student population in the region.
- There are currently 71 Ministry-contracted daily bus routes across six contract groupings, costing \$5.29 million in 2024/25.
- Ministry-contracted routes operate across the breadth of the Nelson/Tasman region, extending well beyond the core public transport network in Nelson.
- There is limited overlap between Ministry-funded services and the core public transport network.
- The Ministry also contracts operators to deliver 14 technology bus services to Year 7-8 students to attend technology classes across the region.

5

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]



education.govt.nz

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

Opportunities for integrating services



- Councils could assume responsibility for managing existing services either through contract novation or assignment, or through a separate co-funding agreement with the Ministry.
- Under a co-funding model, councils could make changes to existing routes by replacing the existing Ministry-contracted route with a council-procured service with partial subsidies for student patronage.
- The Ministry would likely need to define its requirements for transporting eligible students and continue to fund these services based on the current cost of service delivery.
- This approach would provide councils with the flexibility to plan and implement changes to public transport services and dedicated school bus services simultaneously, based on the needs of their communities.
- There are limited opportunities for integrating technology bus services with the public transport network, as these are event-based services designed to meet a specific curriculum requirement. Given that technology services are bundled with daily bus services under the Ministry's contracts, this may limit or inform the scope of any pilot.

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

What an agreement would need to cover



- If both parties agree in principle to progress the pilot, the Ministry will need to enter into an agreement with both councils to define the funding model and responsibilities for each party during the pilot. The agreement would need to cover:
 - the duration of the pilot, including extension and termination rights
 - the Ministry's requirements for transporting eligible and ineligible students (including minimum levels of service, whether fares may be levied, conditions of carriage, and stakeholder management)
 - controls and levers available to the Ministry as a funder to influence service planning and route design (e.g. whether services should primarily support students to attend their closest school)
 - reporting requirements and governance arrangements during the pilot.
- The Ministry and councils will also need to consider any one-off and ongoing administration costs associated with assignment or novation, and any resourcing requirements for councils.

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

Implementation constraints



Land transport funding and policy	Councils will need to determine implications for its policy settings, long-term plans, and the balance of NLTF funding and local share. If consultation with communities is required, this will impact the timeframe for implementation.
Potential integration with core public transport services	The scale and opportunities for integration will differ depending on the scope and scale of the pilot, as Ministry-funded services operate in some parts of Nelson–Tasman where there are no public transport services.
Resourcing or staffing requirements	Councils will need to assess resourcing and administration requirements during the pilot to undertake additional functions (including route design, contract management, and procurement if applicable).
Enabling systems	The Ministry will likely continue to use its ICT systems for any services it retains. Councils may be able to leverage the Ministry's existing contract administration system for co-funded services, but this would need to be explored.
Fleet requirements	The scale of the school bus fleet significantly exceeds peak vehicle requirements in the public transport network. PTAs are subject to the RUB, which does not apply to Ministry-funded services.

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

Implementation constraints (continued)

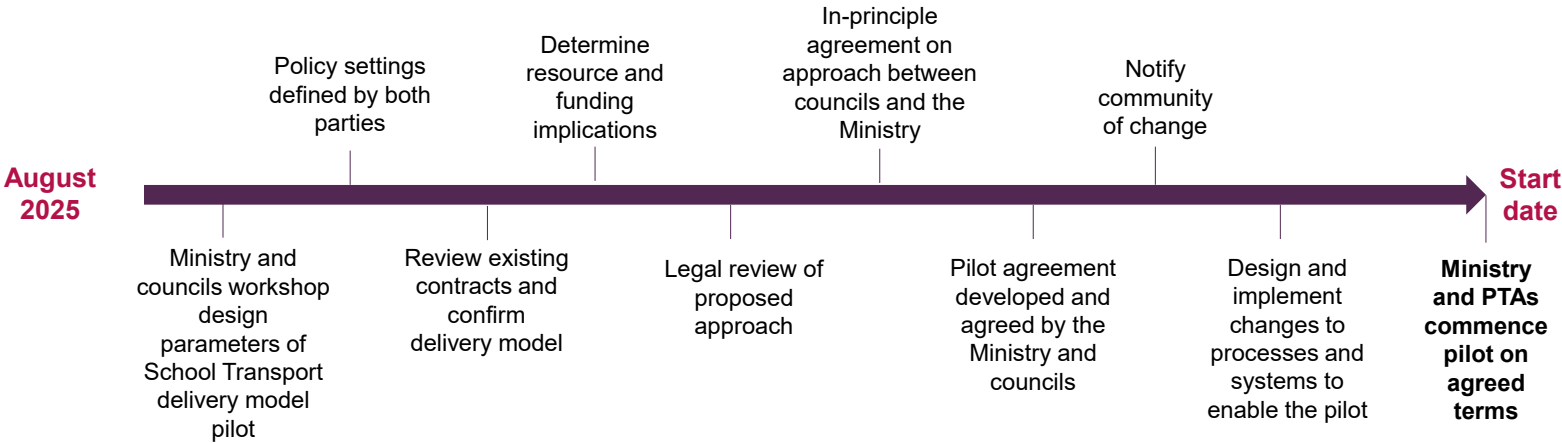


Contract structure and mechanisms	<p>If the preferred option is bulk funding rather than novation or assignment, using existing public transport contracts is likely to provide the greatest efficiencies as it will reduce procurement activities and cost.</p> <p>However, the performance regime and other contract components are likely to differ materially from existing school bus contracts held by the Ministry.</p>
Driver workforce implications	Workforce requirements are different for Ministry-funded bus services and public transport services, and it is unlikely that the terms of collective agreements will be aligned.
Other forms of school transport assistance	The Ministry will need to determine the impact of any change at a regional level on other forms of school transport assistance (e.g. SESTA, bulk funding agreements with schools, and Conveyance Allowances).
Crown funding limitations and requirements	The scope of the school transport appropriation is currently limited to providing services to eligible students. If councils and the Ministry agree in principle to implement a pilot, Cabinet approval may be required to amend the scope of the appropriation from FY 2026/27.

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

High-level implementation timeline



[IN-CONFIDENCE - RELEASE EXTERNAL]

Attachment 6.1.1

