

Report 11.253
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Committee Economic Wellbeing Committee
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Customer Feedback

1. Purpose

This report outlines the feedback system for complaints and compliments received by the Metlink Service Centre (MSC).

2. Significance of the decision

The matters for decision in this report **do not** trigger the significance policy of the Council or otherwise trigger section 76(3)(b) of the Local Government Act 2002.

3. Background

At the Economic Wellbeing Committee meeting on 5 May 2011, the General Manager Public Transport reported on the feedback received by the Metlink Service Centre in January, February and March of 2011.

The committee members asked for further explanation of some of the categories of feedback and the process followed when complaints are made to the operators in the Metlink Service Centre.

4. Current situation

The Metlink Service Centre (MSC) takes between 45,000 and 50,000 calls per month. The numbers remain almost constant during the year but change according to the events happening in the city, the weather, unplanned and planned disruptions, public holidays etc.

To put things into context, the following factors need to be taken into consideration:

In January the MSC received 46,174 calls and 271 pieces of feedback. Twenty of these were compliments for the service provided. As a percentage, the feedback represents 0.013% of the 2,046,779 passengers trips across all services. January is usually a quieter month as many people are still on leave

until late in January. The majority of the callers were seeking information on when buses were replacing trains and/or which timetables were being used as over the holidays a different timetable is in place.

In February, the MSC took 47,139 calls and received 412 pieces of feedback. Twenty one of these were compliments. At 0.014% the feedback represents a very small percentage of the 2,952,709 passenger trips during that month. Traditionally February is a busy month for feedback due to the various events held during that month. This year the timetable changes accounted for a large number of calls received.

March's figures show that the MSC took 48,783 calls and received 438 pieces of feedback. This number is higher than usual and attributed mainly to the changes in timetables that happened on 20 February and a stop work meeting for NZ Bus. As a percentage the feedback represents 0.012% of the 3,569,432 passenger trips for the month.

5. Feedback categories

Committee members requested clarification of the categories of feedback:

Driver/Guard communication

This usually refers to an actual or perceived lack of communication by the driver/guard when there are unexplained delays across the network or on one specific trip.

Dangerous driving

This feedback comes in from passengers on the bus, other drivers on the road or pedestrians.

Ticket discrepancy (Refers mainly to Snapper card use)

Passengers call when the readers are not working or they've not tagged off and subsequently get charged the full fare.

Failed to run

A bus or train does not arrive or depart as per timetable information.

Failed to uplift passengers

Mainly refers to buses. Passengers complain of the bus not stopping at a bus stop. The operators report that it may be due to a passenger not seen at the stop at night when wearing dark clothing, remaining in the bus shelter until the bus is right at the stop (it may be unsafe to suddenly stop or there may be no room to safely pull over with other traffic behind the bus). The bus may also be full and the driver will not stop to advise passengers that this is the case.

Heavy loading

People feeling that the bus or train is overloaded. Often mentioned during the months of February – April when congestion occurred across most of the train lines.

In all cases one must remember that the feedback is the opinion of the caller but where a serious event is reported, the matter is escalated to the Manager Customer Services and/or to the General Manager of Public Transport as well as the relevant operator so that immediate action can be taken.

6. Process followed when feedback is given

When a customer calls to complain or submits an electronic feedback form the MSC enters the information into our feedback database. The customer is then given the option of being contacted directly by the operator of the service. If no feedback is required the complaint is still submitted to the operator with a note to say “no response is required”.

A complaint about our website or any infrastructure issues results in automatically generated email being sent to the relevant department. The MSC responds to all complaints within 2 working days.

In terms of our contracts the operators have five working days to respond, even if only an interim response. A regular check is made by the Team Leader in the MSC as to the progress made on all complaints. Regular feedback is requested on any open complaints and a reminder sent if undue delays are noted.

A similar process is followed when feedback is received by email or via the feedback form. An interim response is sent back to the customer and this includes their reference number. The feedback then follows the same trail as the verbal ones.

7. Conclusion

Feedback is received from a very small percentage of public transport users. It is important to note that some people will give feedback on a regular basis and this means that the number of items received does not reflect the number of people giving feedback.

8. Communication

No communication is required.

9. Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Receives the report.*
- 2. Notes the content of the report.*

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