

2 May 2023

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Tēnā koe David

### **Wellington Rail Network issues**

As you are aware, Greater Wellington funds and delivers public transport in the Wellington region, and an adequately maintained Wellington metropolitan rail network is critical to enable passenger rail services to be provided to thousands of people on a daily basis.

We are very disappointed to have learned of the failure of the EM80, KiwiRail's one and only track assessment vehicle, and the consequent imposition of speed restrictions, so late last week. The failure of this critical asset and its potential impact is something that we would expect KiwiRail would have been aware of several weeks ago. The lack of timely communication has put the Metlink rail service under severe pressure this week. I welcome the Government's review of KiwiRail announced today, to look into these matters.

We are concerned this is the tip of the iceberg in terms of the critical risks and issues on the Wellington metro network and, in particular, those that are a single point of failure that could take down the whole or a significant part of it.

In addition to the EM80, other fragilities we are aware of include slope instability and signals. What other end-of-life assets are there that might fail before they can be replaced?

KiwiRail has received significant funding for significant works on the metro network, but we are concerned that scope and timing of works is not consistently controlled by KiwiRail, often leaving additional cost and risk on the table for GW to pick up. In an environment where funding is constrained such as it has been in the last three years, it is vital that KiwiRail is able to properly triage and prioritise its investment. This requires mature asset management frameworks and practices. We are aware that KiwiRail is attempting to improve their asset management and has put some significant effort into the Auckland metropolitan network. However, in my view, this is not moving at pace. It is an area that needs Executive and Board oversight to ensure it is

progressing to a level commensurate with the importance of this network to the Wellington region, and indeed to Aotearoa New Zealand.

As you will be aware, in a pre-Budget announcement the Government has confirmed Crown funding for new trains for the Manawatu and the Wairarapa lines. The business case supporting the funding bid assumes an appropriate level of progress has been made on the currently funded metro network upgrades that are underway. The Budget announcement also provides funding for further network upgrades that will be delivered by KiwiRail. We need to be confident that KiwiRail's part of this work will be delivered.

In summary, need your assurance that:

- critical points of failure impacting the Wellington metropolitan rail network and the operation of Metlink services on the network, have been identified and are being appropriately managed by KiwiRail
- adequate resources are being allocated to assets that are currently end of life
- KiwiRail will work with GW urgently and in a transparent manner to identify current and future funding requirements to address key risk areas for our metro network - both operational and capital funding streams
- KiwiRail will progress its asset management maturity at pace to ensure the network improves rather than declines – in other words, the funding you do have is spent in areas that best manages the risks
- the existing programme of metro upgrade work will be completed in full to enable the benefits of the new trains to be purchased.

Our delivery of public transport services on the Wellington metropolitan rail network relies on KiwiRail's performance. I look forward to your response to these points.

Nāku iti noa, nā



**Daran Ponter**  
Heamana | Chair  
Greater Wellington Regional Council

Copy:  
Hon Michael Wood, Minister of Transport  
Regional Mayors