



COMMISSION FOR ECOLOGY, JUSTICE AND PEACE
INTEGRAL ECOLOGY COMMITTEE

**SUBMISSION TO GREATER WELLINGTON REGIONAL COUNCIL
ON THE FUTURE FARES CONSULTATION**

The quality of life in cities has much to do with systems of transport, which are often a source of much suffering for those who use them. Many cars, used by one or more people, circulate in cities, causing traffic congestion, raising the level of pollution, and consuming enormous quantities of non-renewable energy. This makes it necessary to build more roads and parking areas which spoil the urban landscape. Many specialists agree on the need to give priority to public transportation. Yet some measures needed will not prove easily acceptable to society unless substantial improvements are made in the systems themselves, which in many cities force people to put up with undignified conditions due to crowding, inconvenience, infrequent service and lack of safety.

Pope Francis: *Laudato Si'* - On the Care of our Common Home, 2015 (paragraph 153)

The Integral Ecology Committee of the Archdiocese of Wellington's Ecology, Justice and Peace Commission supports communities of the Archdiocese and the wider community to hear and respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. We are informed by Catholic social teaching on stewardship and care for the environment, especially as expressed and taught by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* on care for our common home.

We recognise that human activity is changing our climate. We also recognise this is a threat to life. We know that change is required at all levels of our society. That includes the changes we can make as individuals, families and households, and together as communities. This requires structural change, including change in policy and practice which is beyond the control of individuals, and must be made by central government, local government, businesses and community leaders.

Accessible, inclusive and frequent public transport hubs and affordable pricing is critical. Public transport services need to be significantly improved in existing socially deprived areas.

Q1: Please give us your comments on Greater Wellington's adoption of the Government's Community Services Card half-price fares initiative.

We support all measures which make public transport more affordable. We believe it is not only community card holders who need and would benefit from subsidized public transport. However, we are pleased that the Greater Wellington Regional Council is working to avail residents of our region of the opportunity provided in Budget 22 for targeted public transport assistance to community card holders

Q2: Metlink should increase the off-peak travel discount from 25 to 35 percent to encourage greater off-peak usage.

We support all measures which make public transport more affordable. We support a reduction in off-peak travel discounts. However, it is also necessary to make provision for people unable to change the time they

need to travel. For example, our EJP Commission Poverty Committee recently heard that hardship due to daily transport costs for commuting students is more visible in some Catholic secondary schools than food insecurity. School students do not usually have the option of delaying their transport until off-peak hours, as they would late for school. This is also the case for workers with fixed hours.

Q3: Metlink should introduce cumulative off-peak discounts for all concession holders.

We support all measures which make public transport more affordable. We support measures which simplify any discounts to passengers.

Q4: Metlink should introduce a policy that allows children to travel free on weekends when accompanied by their parent or guardian.

We support all measures which make public transport more affordable. This measure will make it more likely that recreational and optional outings for family groups using public transport are more affordable, which will reduce car use.

Q5: Metlink should consider including a fare capping discount of 35 percent on a daily and weekly basis.

We support all measures which make public transport more affordable. We welcome concessions which do not require a lump-sum payment in advance, which are more accessible for low-income households.

Q6: Metlink should consider introducing new targeted fare products for group, visitor, family and event travel across the region.

We support all measures which make public transport more affordable. To reduce private car use, it benefits us all when visitors to Wellington use public transport to get here, and also use public transport to get around while they are here. We welcome measures which make that more accessible and attractive.

Q7: Metlink should consider introducing a distance-based Integrated Fare Structure.

We believe the guiding principle here should be making public transport more accessible and affordable for all commuters and passengers, especially for people from low-income communities who may have fewer transport options.

We do not wish to make an oral submission to the Greater Wellington Regional Council.

Members of our Committee live in Wellington City, Kāpiti Coast, Hutt City, and Reefton (West Coast).

For more information please contact:

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