



will be considered to be released in full

MINO-591 Auckland Public Transport update

22 February 2023

Providing an update on Auckland public transport service cancellations, and staff recruitment, shortfall and retention in comparison to January 2022.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

- The number of bus service cancellations in Auckland peaked at around 45,000 cancellations in September 2022. The January 2023 figure was 32,000.
- Around 1,000 daily services were removed from the timetable on 6 November 2022, reducing the extent of cancellations and providing more certainty for passengers.
- Bus operators have reported that the increases in driver wages, with most paying at least \$28 per hour, has made a significant difference to staff retention and the ability to recruit both domestically and internationally, and as such their staffing numbers are improving.
- The Auckland shortfall of bus drivers required to return to normal service levels dropped from 518 drivers in December 2022 to 468 drivers in February 2023. More new drivers are currently in training, and at least another 250 drivers have been recruited and are going through immigration processes.
- Waka Kotahi is working with MBIE on the Immigration sector agreement for bus drivers, which is currently out for industry consultation. This work is important because the lift to Median Wage later this month places the Accredited Employer Work Visa scheme out of reach for the industry; and because an immigration pathway is key to attracting strong candidates.
- While the ability to recruit internationally is imperative with the scale of shortages, we note that because of the cost implications of recruiting and relocating international drivers, the sector's preference is always to secure local drivers where possible.
- We are closely monitoring driver numbers and progress and are in regular discussion with bus operators and public transport authorities. We are confident that significant improvements in service reliability will be seen in coming months.