

19 June 2025

Daran Ponter, Chair  
Adrienne Staples, Wairarapa Councillor  
**Greater Wellington Regional Council**

Dear Daran and Adrienne,

## **WAIRARAPA LINE PERFORMANCE ISSUES**

KiwiRail's Chief Executive Peter Reidy has passed your 9 June letter onto me. Thank you for writing. I addressed a number of points about signals and the Wairarapa service locomotives in my response to your letter of 20 May so I have not repeated those points here.

I would reiterate, that our upgrades to the Wairarapa Line and in the Remutaka Tunnel have significantly reduced the number of temporary speed restrictions (TSRs), which currently cause 9:42 minutes of delay on the Up Main (to Masterton) and 7.15 minutes on the Down Main (to Wellington).

I understand Metlink have factored 10 minutes into the Wairarapa service timetable, so these delays should not affect service performance. For context, in September 2023 there were close to 20 minutes of delays due to TSRs in each direction.

There are currently three worksites in Wairarapa, where trains are required to stop and get radio confirmation before proceeding through them. I have been advised each of these stops likely adds a few minutes to travel times. Wherever possible we put stop boards at a station, where trains must stop anyway, to reduce this delay. These worksites are part of the Wairarapa signals project, which along with the level crossing upgrades, are designed to meet safety requirements that will allow Metlink to run more frequent hybrid trains in 2029.



We are well progressed through our upgrade of the Wairarapa Line and Wellington metro network, but the upgrades themselves can be disruptive in the short term – either as track settles or new technology is integrated with the existing, older technology. For example,

- We are replacing the out of support train control system (Realflex) with a new system (ICONIS). will allow trains to run closer together, but the introduction did cause sporadic signals faults at Upper Hutt.
- You will be aware of two incidents with the new Wellington Railway Station signals in the last few months, one major and one lesser disruption. Our investigations have found that a small component was incorrectly calibrated. We are speaking to the manufacturer about this and have checked all those components across the station signals system and made sure they are set correctly. My point is that despite rigorous testing, there are sometimes bugs still to be ironed out with complex systems.

Finally, to your point about log trains running to schedule – they generally do but are not comparable to passenger services. Most of our log trains between Waingawa and CentrePort run at night, and they usually have at least two hours to make the journey. Those that run between peak periods during the day often wait for 30 minutes at Featherston to avoid any conflicts with passenger services. Essentially, they don't have a tight schedule like passengers services, and passenger movements do get network priority.

KiwiRail is committed to delivering for the people of the Wellington region. We have a lot of work to do, and where we can reduce disruption we will.

I hope you find this information useful and thank you again for writing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D Gordon".

**David Gordon**

Chief Metro and Capital Programme Officer  
KiwiRail

