

Wairarapa Line Recovery Plan

Date: 19 March 2025
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Status **FINAL**

Objective

Return to consistent provision of full train services on the Wairarapa Line as soon as possible.

Summary

The Wairarapa Service has been disrupted multiple times throughout the last 12 months. There have been issues with the network, that fall with KiwiRail, however a number, particularly in February 2025, have been operator issues due to insufficient staff to run the trains. As a result, services have been cancelled and replaced with buses, leading (rightly) to customer dissatisfaction.

Transdev provide the Train Managers (TM) and Passenger Operators (PO) for the service. The Locomotive Engineers (LE) are supplied and run by KiwiRail.

The role of the Train Manager is safety critical for the Wairarapa Services. They are specially trained for safety issues in the Remutaka Tunnel (including being able to move the train to safety), to shunt locomotives and carriages and operate the points in the Masterton Yard. The licences required mean that the training period and testing for new recruits is a minimum of three months, most likely four and a half months as there are minimum requirements that must be met.

Currently seven TMs are needed to cover the weekday services on the line. Although there are 12 TMs on the books, as at the date of this plan, there are only six available to be rostered onto the services. There were scheduled to be three new TMs at the end of last year, however two of those did not pass the practical competency assessment for the shunting licence and therefore were not safe to run the services.

This plan sets out the proposed recovery of the services to meet the objective of consistent provision of full train services as soon as possible. It is broken into immediate, medium- and long-term measures.

In summary, given the shortage of currently qualified TMs for the Wairarapa Service and the length of time to train or transfer new TMs, Transdev will need to continue to actively manage the availability of staff to cover the services. To do so, we will be

ensuring that we use the trainer and the relief TM on services, as well as wrap pastoral care around the remaining staff so that they are able to continue to work in a stressful environment. If services need to be cancelled, we will sacrifice weekends for weekdays, and the low patronage afternoon services for the peak services.

In the medium term (mid to late April), we have:

- Recruited two new staff who start training at the end of March
- Further recruitment underway to run a second training school starting in June
- Looked at bringing a Wellington based Rail Operator (RO) who has their shunting licence into shortened training for the Masterton yard (Rail Operators are the people who are qualified to do the train and carriage movements in the Wellington yard)
- A scheduled return for one TM from injury (subject to medical clearance)

Long term, we will relook at how the services are run. We will look at the right level of staffing for the service for TMs and trainers, as well as whether the shunting and yard operations are safer to be run by a specialised role. We will do that in collaboration with the GW team, as there may be timetable implications.

Financially, Transdev is only funded for the current level of TMs and is fiscally constrained across the wider network. This has created an environment where decisions about additional staff are difficult. The organisation has had to be reactive, rather than being able to proactively provide cover for situations like the one that is occurring at present in the Wairarapa.

There is a conversation underway about right-sizing the organisation across all lines as part of the contract extension variation negotiations. Where there is a small pool of staff, it is good practice to "pad" the establishment to provide resilience for events such as this. The wider discussion is to address the wider risk of having sufficient LEs and on-board staff to ensure a consistent supply of services in the Wellington network.

Background Information

Staffing Levels

Current establishment for Wairarapa:

- Train Managers - 12
 - Team Leader - 1
 - Relief Train Manager - 1
 - Passenger Operators - 11
- TOTAL - 14 TM

FTE required to run full weekday services - 7 (6 for the services plus 1 for cover)

FTE required to run full weekend services - 4 (2 for the services plus 2 for cover)

Current Staff Availability

- 1 x vacancy
- 4 x long term illness/injury
- 1 x short term sick leave
- 1 x leave week one, 1 x leave part week two
- 1 x roster safety rules (exceeds 12 days in a row) (week 1)

Which leaves:

- 5 FTE in week 1 (17 – 21 March)

Weekday schedule

- 10 services – 5 x return trips + 2 (late return) on Friday

Weekend Schedule

- 4 services – 2 x return trips

Wairarapa TM Qualifications

Competency Training Requirements

- Licence U1 (on board service train manager for carriage trains)
- Licence EAI (electrification awareness, for Hutt line)
- Licence E1 (train inspections passenger)
- Licence F1 (shunting duties passenger)
- Licence G (core stationary shunting)
- Licence AC (second person duties– if LE incapacitated the TM can move train to safety, use comms and effect safe shut down (tunnel))
- Licence 1 – TO (Tunnel Operations Metro Passenger)

Training Schedule

Location	Content	Duration
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On board Train Management• Yard Training	1 month
On the Job Training (OJT)		3 months
OJT On Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safety• Customer• Communications• Emergency response• Tunnel training	3 – 4 weeks
OJT Yard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yard safety• Train inspections• Shunting• Points	7 – 8 weeks
TOTAL		3 – 4 months

Licence Requirements and Competency Assessments

- Practical – complete:
 - A minimum of 20 x shunting shifts, and
 - A minimum of 10 x train inspections
- Need a rating of all 5s for:
 - A minimum of 6x consecutive shunting shifts, and
 - A minimum of 4x consecutive train inspections
- Competency Assessments to be passed within 6 months from commencement of on job training. If not complete / competent, move to non-TM role

Refresher Training and Compliance

- Safety observations – completed on the job every 8 months
- Tunnel Theory, training and assessment – annually
- Theory assessment – every two years
- First aid – every two years

Immediate Plan and Options – to 6 April

The team are managing the availability of staff on a day-to-day basis to ensure services are run without bus replacement wherever possible. This involves:

- Using the trainer as a TM
- Making overtime available up to safe shift day hours and consecutive workdays (12)
- Prioritising weekday peak services over weekends
- Prioritising peak over off peak. If required will bus replace:
 - 3.38 pm – WAI – WELL
 - 6.18 pm – WELL – WAI
- Maximum 8 cars per train, reducing PO/TM staffing levels required

Immediate plan will be extended if staff expected to return in April are not available.

The team are working to ensure bus services are more reliable. For the immediate term where we are 6 or less TMs, buses will be on standby.

The On-board team are working with the TMs to ensure that they are supported and have key messages if asked by disrupted or unhappy passengers.

We are working to improve update communication on trains and stations in conjunction with the GW team.

Availability (as at 18 March)

This will be updated daily to GW via the usual operations channels.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
17 – 23 Mar		5	6	5	5	2	1
Week One			1xFTE returning from leave	Need One return service dropped	Need Two	✓	One return service dropped
24 – 30 Mar	5	6	6	6	6	3	3
Week Two							
31Mar – 6 Apr	7	6	7	7	6	4	3
Week Three							

Code

Green	Full plus cover
Yellow	Full no cover
Orange	Not full but options still possible
Red	Not full, cover unlikely

Risks

- Current FTE falling ill or otherwise unavailable to work
- Notice requirement is only 2 weeks
- We are working with KiwiRail to ensure they have sufficient LEs for the service
- Trains and carriages have been recently serviced, so the likelihood of locomotive and carriages requiring maintenance is low
- Graffiti on the trains requires them to be removed from service and cleaned. There is not a great issue with graffiti on this line. If it occurs, we will consult with GW before removal

Medium Term Plan and Options – April / May 2025

The medium-term plan revolves around:

- Return to work of some staff
- Emergency roster changes to move weekend staff to weekdays. Staff will be compensated for the loss of weekend rates.
- As for the immediate response, if required we will prioritise peak over off-peak, and will bus replace:
 - o 3.38 pm – WAI – WELL
 - o 6.18 pm – WELL – WAI

Return to Work Options – April/May

Option	Objective	Advantages	Risks	Timeline	Likelihood
RO in training	RO partway through training and will have fundamental yard licences, add Wai specific and TM licences	Quicker than retraining another TM (needs shunting etc)	Need KR to provide second person duties training Union to confirm	Late April	Need to confirm with individual and union
Return 1 x Long Term Sick	On track to recover from injury. Needs refresher licence and OJT training.	Refresher training only	Subject to medical clearance	27 April	
Return 1 x sick	Return from sick leave	No training required	Currently suffering complications.	April	Unknown recovery time
2 x New Recruits	Two people in Training School starting 31 March	Full training required	Approx 4 - 5 months	August	
Upskill Wai POs	POs already familiar with route	Wairarapa POs already have the tunnel training	Need all other licences Need to investigate whether POs willing and capable	August	Unknown uptake
1 x PO was a TM	Request PO to resume duties		Retirement was TM choice and issues around physical capability	N/A	Not capable or available
Return 3x Long Term Sick			Current medical assessment is unlikely to return to duties.	N/A	Medically not capable

Details in Appendix One

Changes to Service or Roles Under Investigation

Option	Objective	Advantages	Risks	Timeline	Likelihood
Full Time Wai RO	Take RO duties off TMs	TM able to concentrate on single duty Reduced time on shift	Only saves 2 hours (first am shift)	Needs recruit plus local yard training (1 month)	Under investigation
Use KiwiRail ROs in Masterton	Take RO duties off TMs. More available for onboard shifts	TM able to concentrate on single duty Reduced time on shift	Only saves 2 hours (first am shift) Have requested before without success	Unknown	Under investigation
Use double loco	Have a loco at each end of the train to save turning in Masterton	Saves shunt time in yard Helps with long shifts or late running trains	Cost Unsure whether would help with this situation – under investigation	Availability of additional loco from KR	Under investigation
Use Wellington EMU LEs to retrain as TMs		Have train driving experience	Would need full suite of licences as trained on Matangi units, not locomotives (for recovery) Places risk on Wellington network where already an LE shortage	3 – 4 months	Unlikely to be uptake
Terminate at HVL	Potential to terminate at Upper Hutt or Waterloo and transfer to HVL.	Provide certainty for Remutaka leg	Requires a bus leg Would need to ensure capacity on HCL	unknown	potential

Details in Appendix One

Emergency Roster Changes

We are looking to implement an emergency roster from 31 March in the Wairarapa to provide stability and reliability to the roster.

The roster has Masterton trains replaced with buses on the weekends and running full services from Monday to Friday. The peak service will be an 8-car rather than a 9-car service, so there will be some capacity constraints.

Risks

- Current FTE falling ill or otherwise unavailable to work
- We are working with KiwiRail to ensure they have sufficient LEs for the service
- Trains and carriages have been recently serviced, so the likelihood of locomotive and carriages requiring maintenance is low.

- Graffiti on the trains requires them to be removed from service and cleaned. There is not a great issue with graffiti on this line. If it occurs, we will consult with GW before removal.

Long Term Plan and Options – June 2025 onwards

Recruitment - TM Pre-requisites - The last TM school only resulted in a single graduate due to two failing the physical duties tests. We are therefore changing our requirements.

The latest recruitment was based around the requirement for yard capability. Pre-selection tests include a physical test in the yard and physiological assessment, as well as customer skills for on-board.

Recruit Relief Trainer – there is a single trainer which means:

- We have to take them off services to train new recruits
- It places a constraint on the OJT
- They will need to take leave at some stage for health and wellness

Right Establishment for Service

- Identify best practice establishment for Wairarapa for TMs and POs (noting resilience requirements for small pool of staff)
- Ensure noted in contract extension discussions
- Make sure that the roster is safe and allows stand down time

Second Training School

- 2 schools:
 - School 1 starts 31 March
 - School 2 [TBC] June
(See timetable in Appendix 1)
 - Potential for RO training to be done by Wellington training
- Risks
 - KiwiRail rules say only 2 for second person training limiting concurrent training
 - Issues around OJT - availability of TM shifts, loco and yard,
 - Single trainer

HR Practice – review process for long term sick.

RO duties - investigate the potential to separate yard duties from onboard duties currently performed by the TMs. Look at options:

- i. For KiwiRail to provide the services
- ii. Timetabling changes to make the most of the separation(GW)
- iii. Master Roster change required
- iv. Cost implications

Communications

Stakeholder	Approach	TDW Owner	Action
GW - SLT	Take responsibility Transparent – provide background and plan	MD	Respond to GM/CE email on Monday
GW – Chair	Take responsibility Set out cause and effect	COO	Respond to Chair by Thursday
GW – Operations	Provide daily updates Regular planning	GM Ops Comms Manager	Forward work view using Immediate action table format Aim for as much notice as possible for change
Customers	Take responsibility Talk to GW about face to face between now and Friday	MD	Wairarapa Standing Cttee Tues 25 Potential community meeting
Customers Disruptions	Stations? GW On board – TMs, if in doubt, say something	On Board Manager	Reinforce the message to talk to a disruption Walk through if required Push comms through service alerts
Our TMs Messages for conversations with customers	Take it on the chin Don't fret about fare evasion	On Board Manager	Provide FAQs - Sorry - 12 people but only 5 - Our own people are leaning in to cover (coming off leave etc.) - Working with GW
Internal Comms	Weekly Newsletter	Comms Manager	- MD piece – what's happening - Updates as required

Union	Share with what is happening and need their support	GM Ops / RMTU	Share the plan and the messaging
TDA	Keep updated	MD	Use specialist assistance as required
KiwiRail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need LEs to be available to avoid further disruption - Potential medium-term relief (yard) 	Standards Manager	Daily check in

Appendix 1

Medium Term Options – Detail

Return to Work Options – April/May

1. **RO in training** – train as TM – potential start date late April. Look at intensifying training

Has

- Licence EAI (electrification awareness, for Hutt line)
- Licence E1 (train inspections)
- Licence F1 (shunting duties passenger)
- Licence G (core stationary shunting)

Requires

- R Licence U1 (on board service train manager for carriage trains)
- Licence AC (second person duties– if LE incapacitated the TM can move train to safety, comms and safe shut down (tunnel))
- Licence 1 – TO (Tunnel Operations Metro Passenger)
- On Job Training for Yard and On Board

Risks

- Will need to work with KR training for second person training and licence
- Will need RMTU consent to change roles

2. **Return 1 x Long Term Sick** – refresher training – estimate 27 April

- Injury from pulling points
- Needs refresher licence and OJT training late March
- Expected to return 27 April
- Subject to medical clearance

3. **Return 1x sick**

- Non-work related injury with complications
- Was due to return to work late March, but currently in hospital receiving medical treatment.
- Unknown date of return.

Return to Work Options – June onwards

4. **2 x people in Training School starting 31 March** – approx 4.5 months - August 2025

1x new to rail – needs:

- PO training 2 weeks
 - PO OJT 2 weeks
 - Full Wairarapa TM training 4 months (optimum)
- Total – 5 months

1 x TDW

- PO training 2 weeks
- Full Wairarapa TM training 4 months (optimum)

Total – 4.5 months

5. Upskill Passenger Operators on Wairarapa Line – 4 months – August 2025

Training needed:

- Licence U1 (on board service train manager for carriage trains)
- Licence E1 (train inspections passenger)
- Licence F1 (shunting duties passenger)
- Licence G (core stationery shunting)
- Licence AC (second person duties – if LE incapacitated the TM can move train to safety, comms and safe shut down (tunnel))

Estimated time – Full training 4 months (optimum)

Return to Work Options – Not feasible

6. One current PO was a TM
 - elected to retire as TM
 - No longer physically capable of TM role
7. Return 3x Long Term Sick
 - 1 x Chronic Injury (from pulling points) – not able to shunt, complete train inspections or be second person, currently doing PO duties. Medical advice that will not be able to return to full TM duties in near future.
 - 1 x Chronic Injury (non-work) not able to shunt, complete train inspections or be second person, currently off work. Unable to do PO duties due to physical requirements of the job. Medical advice that will not be able to return to full TM duties in near future.
 - 1 x multiple past injuries, close to retirement, now doing PO duties.

Changes to Service or Roles Under Investigation

8. Dedicated RO for Masterton. Potential to ask the Wellington ROs to work in Masterton.
 - Current roster only saves 2 hours (would cover from start at 0300 to first service leaving at 5.46)
 - Potential to save one shift per day
 - Would need 2 – Would put the Wellington Roster at risk
 - Training requirement – approx 3 – 4 weeks to learn the operations of the Masterton yard.
 - Would need to be accommodated in Masterton. Weekday start time 0345, last shift finishes at 2145.
9. Use KiwiRail ROs in Masterton
 - Current roster only saves 2 hours (would cover from start at 0300 to first service leaving at 5.46am)
 - Potential to save one shift per day
 - Need to check availability. Recent enquiries have been negative.
10. Look at whether double locomotive would assist (less shunting required)
11. Use Wellington EMU LEs to retrain as TMs. Would need full suite of licences as trained on Matangi units, not locomotives (for recovery)
 - Licence U1 (on board service train manager for carriage trains)
 - Licence E1 (train inspections)

- Licence F1 (shunting duties)
- Licence G (core stationery shunting)
- Licence AC (second person training – if LE incapacitated the TM can move train to safety, comms and safe shut down (tunnel))
- Licence 1 – TO (Tunnel Operations Metro Passenger)

12. Potential to terminate at Upper Hutt or Waterloo and transfer to HVL.

- Will need to look at timetable potential changes
- Network timetabling with KiwiRail freight?
- Potential for some services – off-peak? Weekends?

Appendix Two

Mar		Apr-25																												
31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W
WRL PO Training (x2 Trainees)						WRL PO Training (x2 Trainees)			1st Aid	WPO OJT			WRL On Job Training (x2 Trainees)									WRL On Job Training (x2 Trainees)						WRL TM Training (x2 Trainees)		

May-25																														
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa
WRL TM Training (x2 Trainees)				WRL TM Training (x2 Trainees)							Yard Training Theory (x2 Trainees)					Yard Practical Trg (x2 Trainees) (need to work in with KiwiRail)				Yard Practical Trg/OJT (x2 Trainees) x1 Trainer & x1 OBTL needed for Light Ups & Shutdowns					Yard Practical Trg/OJT (x2 Trainees) x1 Trainer & x1 OBTL needed for Light Ups & Shutdowns			WRL TM On Job Training		

Jun-25																															
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	WRL TM On Job Training							WRL TM On Job Training							WRL TM On Job Training							WRL TM On Job Training							W	T	M
								WRL PO Training (x2 Trainees)			1st Aid			WRL PO Training (x2 Trainees)					WRL PO On Job Training							W	P	O	O	J	T

Jul-25																														
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T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T

WRL TM On Job Training			WRL TM On Job Training			WRL TM On Job Training			WRL TM On Job Training					
W PO	W PO									WRL TM Training (x2 Trainees)		WRL TM Training (x2 Trainees)		Yard Training Theory (x2 Trainees)
OJ T	OJ T													

Aug-25																															
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	M	T	W	T	F	Sa	Su	
			WRL TM On Job Training							WRL TM On Job Training							WRL TM On Job Training							WRL TM On Job Training							
	Yard Practical Trg (x2 Trainees) (need to work in with KiwiRail)				Yard Practical Trg/OJT (x2 Trainees) x1 Trainer & x1 OBTL needed for Light Ups & Shutdowns					Yard Practical Trg/OJT (x2 Trainees) x1 Trainer & x1 OBTL needed for Light Ups & Shutdowns		WRL TM On Job Training																			