

Progress Update

Wairarapa Line Recovery Plan

Date:	13 th May 2025
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Approved By	Brandon Robins – General Manager Operations
Status	Final

Objective

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

Summary

Train Manager availability on the Wairarapa Line remains constrained, with only 4–5 Train Managers available each week out of a master roster of 12. This is due to two vacancies and several staff away due to illness or injury.

Three Train Manager trainees in the current school are progressing well—one is expected to enter full service in June, with the remaining two joining in September. A returning Train Manager is currently undertaking retraining, with a planned return to service in August. One staff member, initially expected to return on 7 May, is now not anticipated to return this year.

Recruitment is in its final stages, with two new Train Managers scheduled to begin training in the June school. This will support improved service stability from September onwards. Discussions are ongoing regarding the return of a qualified Wellington-based relief Train Manager to assist with Wairarapa services.

Weekday peak services remain the priority. The 3:38 pm Masterton–Wellington and 6:18 pm Wellington–Masterton services continue to be replaced with buses and have low patronage. Transdev Wellington and Greater Wellington Regional Council remain focused on keeping customers informed of any changes as early as possible.

Locomotive issues caused several service delays last week. KiwiRail has investigated each incident, and the team is reviewing the faults to determine whether any systemic issues need to be addressed.

During the Easter Block of Line, rusty rail conditions (which are explained [here](#)) resulted in significant delays, and commuters were not warned in advance. A process change has now been implemented to ensure such issues are identified early and communicated ahead of time. Transdev Wellington is working closely with KiwiRail to mitigate the impact of rusty rail conditions following work on the track and acknowledges the previous lack of warning. Steps have been taken to prevent a recurrence.

Staff wellbeing remains a priority. We are actively managing fatigue by limiting overtime and ensuring the 12-day maximum consecutive work rule is followed. Regular staff check-ins are underway, and we continue to ask passengers for their patience and support of our frontline teams.

Weekly Operational Review

- Reliable = Ran as a train.

		Departure	Service Details	Actions Taken
Monday	AM	05:46	Reliable, 8 minutes and 27 seconds late Delay Reasons: Passenger dwells, Speed restrictions	Conducting time study for travel through worksites to determine extent of delay
		06:20	Bus Replaced due to a KiwiRail Locomotive Engine mechanical issue.	Following up with KiwiRail regarding spare loco allocation
		06:47	Reliable, 21 minutes and 32 seconds late Delay Reasons: Train size built up due to 6:20 service bus replacement	Following up with KiwiRail regarding spare loco allocation
	I/P	08:21	Bus replaced between Wellington and Upper Hutt due to 1603 bus replacement. 16 minutes and 45 seconds late. Delay Reasons: Late bus connection at Upper Hutt, Speed restrictions	Following up with KiwiRail regarding spare loco allocation
		12:45	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff
		10:30	Reliable, 19 minutes and 59 seconds late Delay Reasons: Speed restrictions, Passenger dwells	Conducting time study for travel through worksites to determine extent of delay
		15:38	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff
	PM	16:25	Reliable, 23 minutes and 38 seconds late Delay Reason: Coupling (connection) issue with KiwiRail Locomotive Engine	Investigating specific cause and reasoning of fault
		17:30	Reliable, 19 minutes and 52 seconds late Delay Reason: KiwiRail Locomotive Engine late due to 16:25 service delays	Investigating specific cause and reasoning of fault
18:18		Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff	

		Departure	Service Details	Actions Taken
Tuesday	AM	05:46	Reliable, 1 hour and 24 seconds late Delay Reasons: Locomotive Engine late due to a points fault, and ICONIS (Train Control) system signalling issues at Taita	Additional testing of ICONIS (Train Control) system (KR) and moved back to Real Flex (old train control system) in the meantime, investigating options for changing loco allocation
		06:20	Reliable, 35 minutes and 17 seconds late. Delay Reasons: Waited for 5:30 service to clear section of track before receiving track warrant (Track warrant provides authority for the train to be on the single line track)	Additional testing of ICONIS (Train Control) system (KR) and move back to RealFlex (old train control system) in the meantime
		06:47	Reliable, 50 minutes and 39 seconds late. Delay Reasons: Waited for 6:20 service to clear section of track before receiving track warrant (Track warrant provides authority for the train to be on the single line track); ICONIS (Train Control) system signalling issues at Taita	Additional testing of ICONIS (Train Control) system (KR) and move back to RealFlex (old train control system) in the meantime
	I/P	08:21	Reliable, 1 hour 19 minutes and 31 seconds late Delay Reasons: Crew arrived from the 6:20 service, KiwiRail Worksite delay at Featherston	Additional testing of ICONIS (Train Control) system (KR) and move back to RealFlex (old train control system) in the meantime. Discussing worksite delays with KiwiRail.
		12:45	Reliable, 2 hour 41 and 5 seconds late. Unable to define delay reasons due to missing data between Wellington and Woodside	Additional testing of ICONIS (Train Control) system (KR) and move back to RealFlex (old train control system) in the meantime. Discussing worksite delays with KiwiRail. Data source under investigation
		10:30	Bus replaced due to 12:45 service delayed	Additional testing of ICONIS (Train Control) system (KR) and move back to RealFlex (old train control system) in the meantime.
		15:38	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff
	PM	16:25	Pre-planned train size reduction due to staff unavailability. 4 minutes and 55 seconds late	Active training of additional onboard staff
		17:30	Reliable. 20 minutes and 43 seconds late. Delay Reasons: ICONIS (Train Control) system signalling issues at Featherston	Additional testing of ICONIS (Train Control) system (KR) and move back to RealFlex (old train control system) in the meantime.
		18:18	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff

		Departure	Service Details	Actions Taken
Wednesday	AM	05:30	Reliable, 20 minutes and 36 seconds late Delay Reasons: KiwiRail Locomotive Engine late from a Non-Metlink Freight service	Investigating options for changing loco allocation
		06:20	Reliable, 6 minutes and 19 seconds late Delay Reasons: Waited for 5:30 service to clear section of track before receiving track warrant (Track warrant provides authority for the train to be on the single line track)	Investigating options for changing loco allocation
		06:47	Reliable, 20 minutes and 15 seconds late Delay Reasons: Waited for 6:20 service to clear section of track before receiving track warrant (Track warrant provides authority for the train to be on the single line track)	Investigating options for changing loco allocation
	I/P	08:21	Reliable, 11 minutes and 32 seconds Delay Reasons: Speed restrictions, KiwiRail Worksite delay at Carterton	Conducting time study for travel through worksites to determine extent of delay
		12:45	Reliable, 33 minutes and 18 seconds late Delay Reasons: Speed restrictions, Train carriages were formed by the 10:30 service	Investigating reason for delay in departure, following up with Train Control
		10:30	Reliable, 28 minutes and 2 seconds late Delay Reasons: Speed restrictions, Waited for departure signal at Upper Hutt	Investigating reason for delay in departure, following up with Train Control
		15:38	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff
	PM	16:25	Pre-planned train size reduction due to staff unavailability. 3 minutes and 46 seconds late	Active training of additional onboard staff
		17:30	Reliable. 2 minutes and 11 seconds late	On-time
		18:18	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff

		Departure	Service Details	Actions Taken
Thursday	AM	05:30	Reliable. 3 minutes and 20 seconds late	Within KPI
		06:20	Reliable. 1 minute and 36 seconds late	Within KPI
		06:47	Reliable. 21 minutes and 30 seconds late Delay Reasons: Waited for 6:20 service to clear section of track before receiving track warrant (Track warrant provides authority for the train to be on the single line track); Speed restrictions	Conducting time study for travel through worksites to determine extent of delay, following up with Train Build (KiwiRail)
	I/P	08:21	Reliable. 12 minutes and 57 seconds late Delay Reasons: Speed restrictions, KiwiRail Worksite at Carterton	Conducting time study for travel through worksites to determine extent of delay
		12:45	Reliable. 21 minutes and 50 seconds late Delay Reasons: Signal issue at Ngauranga; Train carriages were formed by the 10:30 service	Engineering on-site diagnosing issue (KR), following up with KR to determine cause of fault
		10:30	Reliable. 30 minutes and 32 seconds late. Delay Reasons: Signal issue at Ngauranga; Train carriages were formed by the 8:21 service	Engineering on-site diagnosing issue (KR), following up with KR to determine cause of fault
		15:38	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff
	PM	16:25	Pre-planned train size reduction due to staff unavailability. 6 minutes and 10 seconds late Delay Reasons: Speed restrictions; Bike loading and unloading	Active training of additional onboard staff
		17:30	Reliable. 6 minutes and 39 seconds late Delay Reasons: Train carriages late to Wellington platform	Investigating specific cause and reasoning of fault
		18:18	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff

	Departure	Service Details	Actions Taken	
Friday	AM	05:30	Reliable. 16 minutes and 53 seconds late Delay Reasons: Following late HVL 6:40 service impacted by a signalling issue	Following up with KR to determine cause of fault
		06:20	Reliable. 12 minutes and 38 seconds late Delay Reasons: Door issue at Featherston; Held in the Wellington area for the Northern Explorer	Following up with Rotem regarding door issue
		06:47	Reliable. 14 minutes late Delay Reasons: Held in the Wellington area for the Capital Connection, Speed restrictions	Flow-on delays caused by signal fault on HVL, following up with KR to determine cause of fault
	I/P	08:21	Reliable. 35 minutes and 36 seconds late Delay Reasons: Track obstruction north of Upper Hutt, Speed restrictions	Following up with KR to determine cause of signalling fault, delayed 13 mins due to track obstruction
		12:45	Reliable. 24 minutes and 24 seconds. Delay Reasons: Train carriages were formed by the 10:30 service, Speed restrictions, Wheelchair ramp utilised.	Flow-on delays from track obstruction (1602)
		10:30	Reliable. 26 minutes and 2 seconds. Delay Reasons: Train carriages were formed by the 8:21 service	Flow-on delays from track obstruction (1602)
		15:38	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff
	PM	16:25	Pre-planned train size reduction due to staff unavailability. 2 minutes and 47 seconds.	Active training of additional onboard staff
		17:30	Reliable. 1 minutes and 12 seconds late	Within KPI
		18:18	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff
		20:14	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff
		22:25	Pre-planned, bus replacement due to staff unavailability	Active training of additional onboard staff

Resourcing forward look

Immediate risks to service delivery

- Staff member who was off medium-term is now likely to be off long-term.
- Another staff member is on leave 15/16 May which may continue to impact services in the short term
- Staff member completing return to work programme needs to be re-certified

Estimated Availability as at 12/5

- 6 Train Managers are required to run all services per weekday, but as we are bus replacing the 3:38 pm Masterton–Wellington and 6:18 pm Wellington–Masterton services, 5 are required.
- Transdev is looking at contingency options for the 22nd & 23rd May.

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
12th - 18th May	Available	5	5	5	5	5	2	2
	Required	5	5	5	5	5	2	2
	Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19th - 25th May	Available	5	5	5	4	4	2	2
	Required	5	5	5	5	5	2	2
	Delta	0	0	0	-1	-1	0	0
26th May - 1 June	Available	5	5	5	5	5	2	2
	Required	5	5	5	5	5	2	2
	Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2nd - 8th June	Available	2	5	5	5	5	2	2
	Required	2	5	5	5	5	2	2
	Delta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Recovery Plan - Short and Medium Term Workstreams

The purpose of these workstreams is to:

- increase the number of Train Managers as quickly and safely as possible, and
- investigate whether there are any operational improvements that could reduce the number of Train Managers required to work while there is a shortage.

Workstream	Activity	Notes/Update	Due Date	Status
Recruitment	2 x new recruits for June TM School	We had advertised for WRL recruitment on 07.04.25 and closed on 28.04.25. We have started the process of shortlisting and interviews. Have two candidates for interviews on Thursday 1 st May.	June	
	New trainer	At this stage we're unable to start training another Trainer as our current Trainer is busy delivering training. This will need to be a long-term plan and we would need to advertise it internally. Consider alternatives	August	
Training	2 x new recruits in TM Training	Completed their WRL PO training started the WRL classroom training from 28.04.25. Expected to start their On Job Training from 29 th May 2025.	June	
	RO in training as TM	RO and union have agreed to Wai TM training. Currently completing TM On Board OJT. He is progressing well completed 22 out of 35 tasks/competencies/practical. Will have more update on his progress on 12 th May. Waiting for 2 person training due to LE availability from KiwiRail.	June	
	Return 1 x Long Term Sick	As per estimated, TM has returned to full duties from 28.04.2025	April	
	Return 1 x sick	Due to being off for longer period has to go through the proper training process to get him recertified. Expected to full duties by end of June.	TBC	
	Upskill Wai POs	A number of current POs are retired TMs so will not be willing or are not capable of returning to the role. Will check in with other POs, but will need all licences (around 4 months)	August	
	Upskill Wai Team Leader to be a trainer	Current Wai TL has all licences and already is a tutor and has all licences	June	
Operations Changes	Full Time Wai RO to do shunting and pull points	Short Term - Unlikely to assist with current resourcing issues as only saves time pre-first shift. Long term potentially an option in conjunction with timetable changes	Sept 2025	
	Use KiwiRail ROs in Masterton	Unlikely to assist with current resourcing issues as only saves time pre-first shift. Potential for current shunter to assist if option is viable.	Sept 2025	
	Use double loco	Unlikely to assist with current resourcing issues as only saves shunting time in Masterton not TM availability	May 2025	

	Use Wellington EMU LEs to retrain as TMs	No current interest from LEs to retrain as TMs.	May 2025	
	Terminate at HVL and move to bus or train service	Customer feedback indicates preference to not change vehicles or modes during single journey. Does not alleviate current issues as requires TM on board and return journeys would need to stay to original timeline, therefore require stabling at UH	May 2025	
Reporting	Bus Replacement numbers not highlighted in monthly reporting	TDW to change monthly reporting to have BRT specific reporting. Example attached as Appendix A	April	

Key

Green	On track
Orange	At Risk
Red	Delayed/Not possible

Risks

Risk	Detail	Notes/Update	Status
People and Welfare	Current FTE falling ill or otherwise unavailable to work	Regular welfare checks are being conducted by the Onboard team	
	Notice requirement for staff is only 2 weeks	Risk of stress of current environment making it more likely for TMs to leave the role	
KiwiRail LEs	Further disruption if LE availability drops	In contact with KiwiRail	
Train Availability	Further disruption if loco and carriage availability drops	Trains and carriages have been recently serviced	
	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	
Tunnel gas incident	If tunnel gas readings are higher than the threshold, passenger services will not be allowed to run through the Remutaka tunnel.	Our staff are equipped with gas monitors they check regularly, and they receive an alarm for any high readings.	
Disruption on Hutt Valley line	Any disruption to the Hutt Valley line has the potential to affect Wairarapa line services.	We prioritise Wairarapa line services to come into Wellington where possible. The Wairarapa line is naturally more resilient in issues to do with overhead disruption due to being a locomotive pulled service.	

Recovery Plan – Long Term Workstreams

The purpose of these workstreams is to create a sustainable model for the Wairarapa that enables reliable running of the timetable with minimal bus replacement.

Workstream	Activity	Notes/Update	Due Date	Status
Recruitment	Adapt requirements to include physical capability for shunting and changing points	New recruits for March school included physical yard test and physiological assessment as well as customer skills. Action Review once school complete	March	Complete
	Right size – ascertain correct establishment numbers for TMs and POs	Context has changed across the network since bid. More track disruptions and speed restrictions as well as additional sick leave and Matariki Public holiday. Action Assess right numbers for on-board staff at Wai Depot	June	Part of contract extension negotiations
	Relief Trainer, Team Leader, TMs and POs	As above but for relief available from other parts of network. Action Assess right numbers of relief for all roles	June	Part of contract extension negotiations
Training	Review need for all licences	Consider whether second person training is required, or assess extent of training. Action Raise with KiwiRail	June	Response from KR and NZTA unknown
	Yard and Shunting	TM training reduced if not required to shunt or shift points. See action below to separate roles	June	
People & Capability	Assess process for long term sick	Understand current situation (across TDW) and why staff on long term sick/ACC. Look at: - policy around return to work - status of LTS in establishment - cost implications	June	
Operations Changes	Full Time Wai RO to do shunting and pull points	Long term potential savings in shift times, length of training and H&S risk in dual roles. Could enable timetable changes. Will require assessment of level of staffing and additional funding Action	Sept	
	Use KiwiRail ROs in Masterton	As above but using KiwiRail ROs. Action Assess appetite from KR	Sept	
	Use double loco	Action Investigate and provide assessment of any efficiency gains	June	
	Terminate at HVL and move to bus or train service	Customer feedback indicates preference to not change vehicles or modes during single journey. Action Investigate and provide assessment of any efficiency gains and customer feedback	June	

Background Information

Key

Acronym	Description
GW	Greater Wellington Regional Council (Metlink)
TDW	Transdev Wellington (Service Operator and maintain carriages)
KR	KiwiRail – maintain tracks and signals, provide and drive locomotives (engines)
Loco	Locomotive Engine
TM	Train Manager – Licenced to manage train
PO	Passenger Operator – Assists the Train Manager
RO	Rail Operator – Trained to shunt and move points
OJT	On the Job Training

Required Staffing Levels

Train Managers	12
Passenger Operators	11
Team Leader	1
Relief Train Managers	1 (under review)
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)

Timetable

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

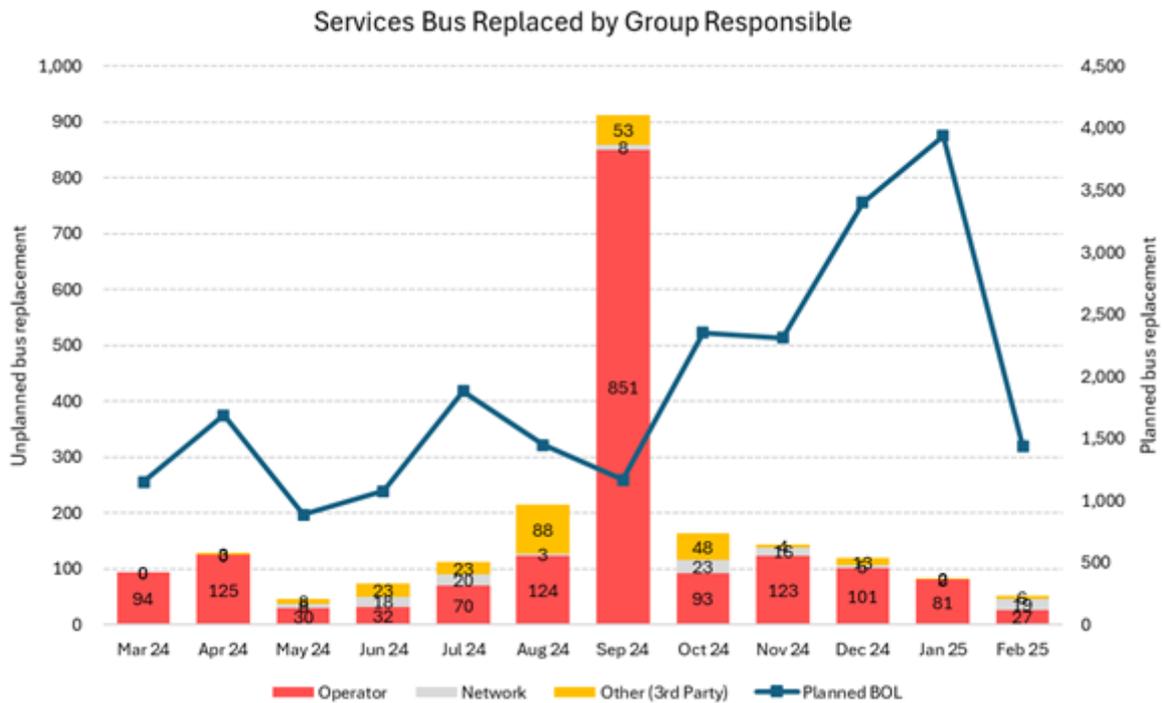
- Practical – complete:
 - A minimum of 20 x shunting shifts, and
 - A minimum of 10 x train inspections
- Need a rating of all 5s for:
 - A minimum of 6x consecutive shunting shifts, and
 - A minimum of 4x consecutive train inspections
- Competency Assessments to be passed within 6 months from commencement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

Refresher Training and Compliance

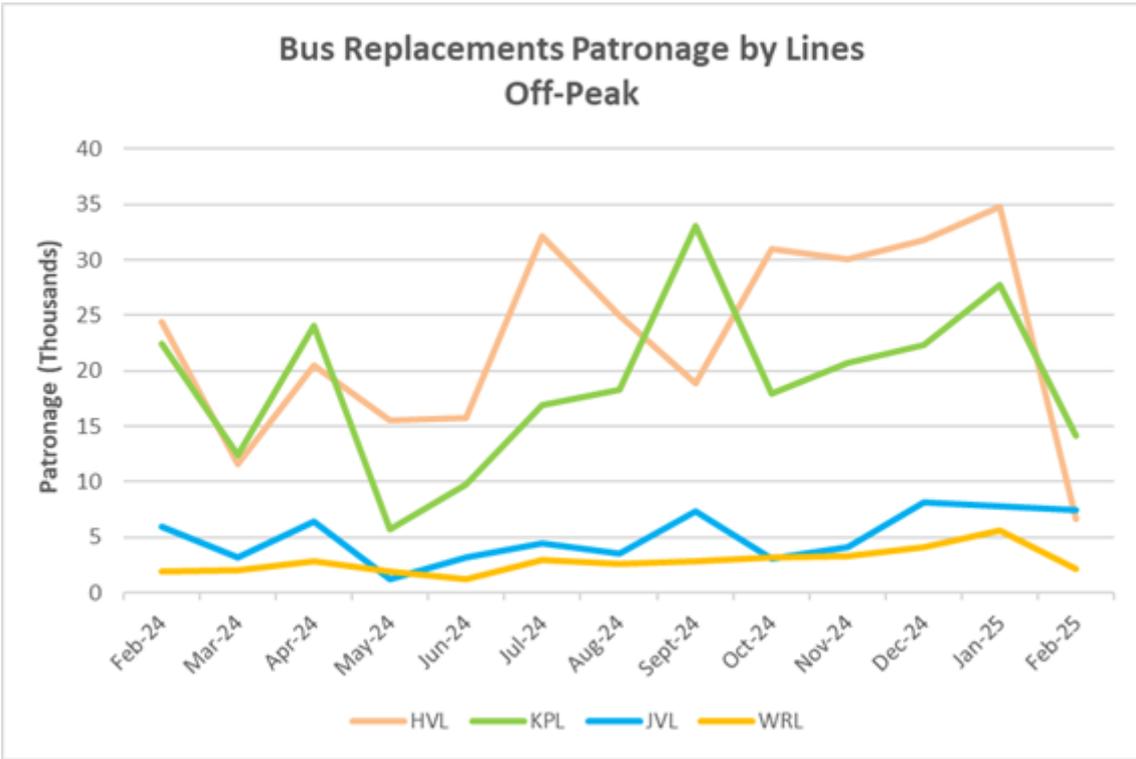
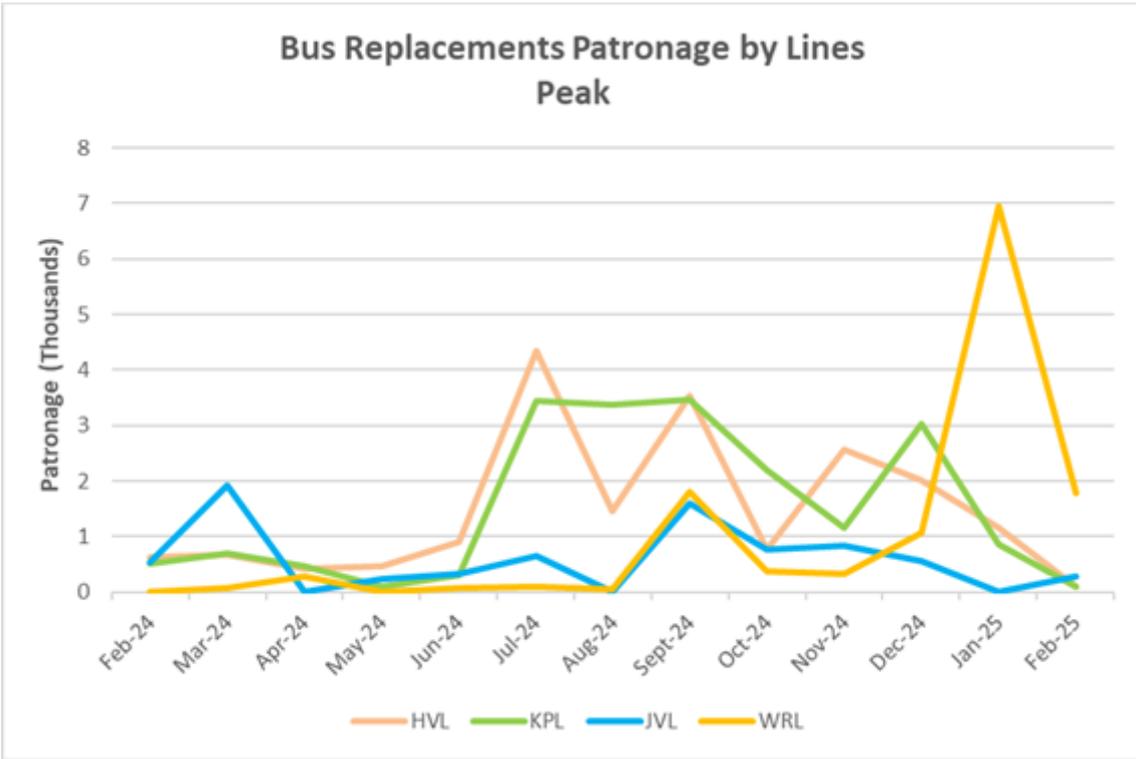
- Safety observations – completed on the job every 8 months
 - Tunnel Theory, training and assessment – annually
 - Theory assessment – every two years
 - First aid – every two years
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Appendix A

These graphs represent the number of services being bus replaced due to Network (KiwiRail), Operator (TDW), Other (3rd Party), and Planned BOL.



The following graphs shows the number of bus replacement patronage by lines.



Combined

Bus Replacements Patronage by Lines

