



20 July 2023

Tēnā koe

On 21 June 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

according to Treasury's Climate Emergency Response Fund (CERF) Monitoring and Reporting Document Library (<https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/data/climate-emergency-response-fund-cerf-monitoring-and-reporting-document-library>), MSD received or has been budgeted capex funding for the following project:

** Community Connect – Public Transport Concessions for Community Services Cardholders - \$563,000*

I would like to request the following information under the OIA:

** what exactly was or will be bought with the provided capex funding for this project, how much did it cost, and how is it intended to reduce emissions? If any part of the funding has been or will be spent on vehicles, I would like the make and model, price, fuel efficiency, and vehicle emissions (in gCO₂ / km).*

On 29 June 2023, the Ministry contacted you stating that your request had been transferred in full to the Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency pursuant to section 14(b)(ii) of the Act. On 30 June 2023, Waka Kotahi reconsidered the full transfer, and as an alternative they provided the Ministry with contributing information to this request. At this point, the Ministry resumed ownership of your request.

Community Connect is an initiative aimed at making public transport more affordable for targeted groups. From 1 July 2023, Community Connect started to provide a 50 percent discount on public transport services for Community Services Cardholders. Community Connect is eligible for funding from the Climate Emergency Response Fund as it supports actions in the Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP).

Community Connect has a range of important societal, equity and environmental benefits:

- Improve transport equity – people on a low income spend a greater proportion of their household budgets on transport than higher income earners. This creates equity and access issues. Reducing the price of public transport for lower income public transport users allows us to target price decreases in a fairer and more equitable way.
- Reducing congestion – by encouraging people to use public transport instead of private vehicles
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transport – by supporting mode shift away from private vehicles to public transport. On a larger scale, reduced emissions from having less cars on the road as a result of greater public transport use will reduce the health impacts that emissions cause. This will support the wider work of achieving a 41 percent reduction in transport emissions by 2035, as set out in the ERP.
- Improving health outcomes – greater use of public transport, and reduced emissions from having less cars on the road as a result, will reduce the health impacts that emissions cause
- Improving road safety - reduces the number of private vehicles on our roads, particularly around congested areas like schools (where there are a number of vulnerable road users).

More information about Community Connect can be found on the Ministry of Transport's website: www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/public-transport/community-connect/

A client with a Community Services Card (CSC) will be able to apply for Community Connect through their local Public Transport Agency (PTA), as part of this, they must consent to providing the Ministry with the information that they provided to their local PTA.

It was forecasted for the initial budget that the Ministry would need to design, develop, and test a new program interface to operationalise Community Connect. Once work had commenced on implementing the initiative nationwide it was determined that the Ministry's infrastructure that was built for an earlier Community Connect pilot undertaken with Auckland Transport would be adequate, resulting in an underspend.

Please see the **Appendix** which provides a breakdown of the Ministry's expenditure for the Community Connect – Public Transport Concessions for Community Services Cardholders .

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui



Rebecca Thurlow
Director
Income

Appendix

Ministry expenditure of the Treasury's Climate Emergency Response Fund Community Connect (Nationwide Rollout) – Public Transport Concessions for Community Services Cardholders.

Expenditure Component	Total Sum of Actual Cost
Capacity Planning Workshops	\$4,755.00
CISO and ITSEC Meetings TOU and MOU	\$785.00
Partner Onboarding to SandBox	\$28,881.42
Production Onboarding and Support	\$10,415.00
Resilience for Community Connect	\$10,490.94
Sandbox Partner Testing Support	\$7,664.18
Other ¹	\$17,872.16
Grand Total	\$80,863.70

CISO = Chief Information Security Officer
ITSEC = Information Technology Security
TOU = Terms of Use
MOU = Memorandum of Understanding

¹ The *Other* category includes prorated contracted project management costs and outset IT costs including consultation and partner onboarding.