

Report No.	20-145
Information Only - No Decision Required	

BEE CARD IMPLEMENTATION

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To update Members on the rollout of the Bee Card electronic ticketing system.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 20-145.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. No financial impact as a result of this report. Costs associated with the Bee Card electronic ticketing system are accounted for in current budgets.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. A substantial marketing campaign was carried out for the launch of the Bee Card in July 2020, as well as the return to full fare charging on 28 September 2020.
- 4.2. Activities included a programme of social media posts, newspaper advertising, a full bus wrap, media releases, digital billboard displays, decals at bus shelters, in bus posters and rippa pads, radio advertising and electronic/hardcopy mail outs to community groups and organisations.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. No significant business risk impact.

6. CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT

- 6.1. No climate change impact as a result of this report.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. The Bee Card electronic ticketing system was launched on Horizons' contracted bus services in Whanganui on 9 December 2019 and on services across the rest of the Horizons region on 20 July 2020.
- 7.2. As part of the 2020 transition to Bee Card, the free fares offered during COVID-19 Alert Levels 3 and 4 were extended until July 2020 and a simplified fare structure in place from 20 July until 27 September 2020. The simplified fare structure meant that concessions were not required to be loaded on to the Bee Card, thereby reducing the level of face-to-face customer interaction required to support this activity in line with COVID-19 requirements around physical distancing. Bee Cards were also issued free of charge for customers during this transition period.
- 7.3. On 28 September 2020, fares returned to pre COVID-19 levels across all Horizons' contracted bus services. Charging for Bee Cards for customers also commenced from this date, cost \$5.00 (non-refundable card issuance fee) with a minimum top up of \$5.00.

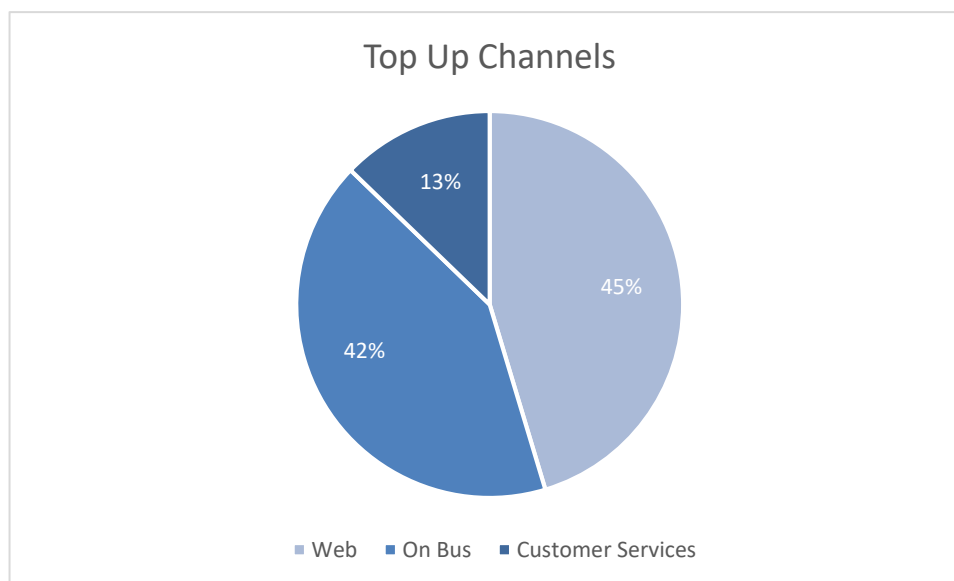
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Bee Cards ordered through BeeCard.co.nz continue to be available free of charge until 31 October 2020 after all nine regions have transitioned to the scheme.

- 7.4. In terms of the national Bee Card rollout, eight regions are now in live operations with Taranaki transitioning to the scheme in mid-October 2020.

8. SNAPSHOT OF BEE CARD USAGE

- 8.1. The Passenger Services activity reports contained elsewhere in this agenda provide detail of passenger trips for the year to date. The information below provides more detailed information relating to Bee Card sales and registrations across our networks. Note that all figures in this section are for the period 20 July to 29 September 2020. Verbal updates will be provided at the meeting to incorporate more recent data.
- 8.2. A total of 17,287 Bee Cards have been issued to date. This includes cards that have been pre-issued but not yet handed out, for example for promotional activities and supply to tertiary providers in preparation for their transition (approximately 3,500). 44% of the issued cards are now registered, an increase from 31% in August 2020. Note this percentage includes the cards that are pre-issued but not yet in circulation.
- 8.3. Customers are able to top up their Bee Cards at BeeCard.co.nz, on bus with cash or at Horizons Regional Council. The chart below shows the split of top ups to date, note that the customer services figure also include GoCard balance transfers (refer to section 8.6 for further detail).



- 8.4. The table below outlines the trips by type per network. Note:
- Data is for the period 20 July to 30 September 2020. Concession fares resumed on 28 September 2020.
 - Count includes promotion, under five trip, SuperGold Card and tertiary free customers – the trip is recorded manually by driver
 - Palmerston North count percentage is high due to tertiary free schemes not yet transitioned to Bee Card
 - Usage on the Levin off peak, Day Out in Town and Levin to Waikanae is predominately SuperGold Card holders. From 28 September, SuperGold Card holders started using their Bee Card to access free off-peak travel. Bee Card usage is expected to increase.

Network	Bee Card	Cash	Count
Palmerston North	53%	7%	40%
Whanganui	85%	10%	5%
Feilding	82%	5%	13%
Ashhurst	80%	10%	10%
Marton commuter	95%	2%	3%
Levin commuter	83%	11%	6%
Levin off peak	12%	4%	84%
Day Out In Town	4%	21%	75%
Levin to Waikanae	6%	6%	88%

- 8.5. A significant change for customers has been the introduction of 'Tag On, Tag Off'. Figures for failures to tag off remain stable at approximately 2% of all tag on/tag off transactions. Numbers of missed tag offs are being monitored on a monthly basis and should we observe a spike, we are able to target the areas of concern through working with the service operator/driver.

Month	Missed tag offs as % of total Tag On Tag off transactions
July 2020	3.2%
August 2020	2.2%
September 2020	2.2%

- 8.6. GoCard balance transfers were available until 30 September 2020, with close to \$11,000.00 transferred from GoCards to Bee Cards between July and September 2020. Far less balance transfers occurred during the Whanganui transition (approximately \$1,100.00) as customers were encouraged to run down the balance of their GoCards before the go-live. This opportunity was not available for the rest of region transition as the move to free fares was implemented overnight as part of the COVID-19 level 4 lockdown, and when fares were introduced it was on the new ticketing system.

9. NEXT STEPS

- 9.1. Focus now shifts to transitioning our free tertiary travel scheme providers to the Bee Card. Staff are working with Massey University on a pilot over the summer semester ahead of the full cohort returning in February 2020. The other free tertiary providers will be transitioned for the start of Semester One 2021.
- 9.2. Bee Card usage by **SuperGold Card (SGC)** holders is the other area of focus for the remainder of the calendar year. SGC customers have been accessing free off-peak travel by showing their SGC to the driver and the trip is recorded using a count function. Following a 2015 government review of the SGC scheme, SGC card holders are required to use smartcards to access free off-peak travel (introduced as smartcard ticketing technology becomes available¹). To ensure alignment with the scheme requirements, we will continue to work with operators and community groups to ensure that SGC holders

¹ <https://www.transport.govt.nz/land/supergoldcardtransportfunding/>

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have their concession loaded on to the Bee Card and are supported to use the card to access the travel entitlement.

- 9.3. Work also continues on a reporting dashboard to provide automated reports on usage across route and time of day by passenger type, as well as supporting the reporting to Council/Committee and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency. In addition to the regular reporting, the ability to access and interrogate the data as required for ad hoc instances is already providing valuable insights. Examples include being able to determine usage at particular bus stops which need to be moved or closed due to roadworks, or monitoring uptake of concessions by service/route and then providing targeted communications.
- 9.4. In terms of the wider project, one of the functions of the Bee Card website not yet deployed is the Auto Top Up feature. Testing has been completed on this functionality and is planned to be made live in late October /early November.

10. SIGNIFICANCE

- 10.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Kelly Curry
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ANNEXES

There are no attachments for this report.