Hon Chris Bishop

Attorney-General
Minister of Housing
Minister for Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for RMA Reform
Minister of Transport
Associate Minister of Finance

TCB26-1334

Daran Ponter
Chair
Greater Wellington Regional Council
Daran.Ponter@gw.govt.nz

Dear Daran,

Thank you for your email of 26 August 2026 to Prime Minister Luxon about investment in a European Train Control System (ETCS) in Wellington. I am replying to you as the issues you raise fall within my portfolio responsibilities as the Minister of Transport.

This Government supports aspirations for a modern metro rail network in Wellington that makes public transport a more attractive and practical choice for more people. As you know, the Government has invested $802.9 million for new hybrid trains and rail infrastructure improvements that will improve travel times and passenger experience on the Wairarapa and Manawatū lines. This is alongside investment to address overdue renewals, including $153.1 million in Wellington from Budgets 2024 and 2025 and $106.9 million for Auckland and Wellington from Budget 2026. The Government has also invested $137 million to upgrade Wellington's metro rail substations.

The Government provided $20.6 million to KiwiRail to develop a detailed business case to replace the Wellington signalling system. Officials advise me that KiwiRail has been progressing an update to this business case which will be completed in the coming months. I expect the business case to traverse all relevant options, including different levels of ETCS, with a thorough assessment of the costs and benefits of each option. The next step will be for KiwiRail to submit the updated business case to the New Zealand Transport Agency to consider funding it through the National Land Transport Programme.

Officials advise me that KiwiRail has offered to engage with your officers on the updated business case.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely,

Hon Chris Bishop
Minister of Transport

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