

Music on Buses Guidelines

1. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist operators and their drivers in knowing Horizons Regional Council's expectations around the playing of music on buses.

2. Background

The Horizons transport team had received feedback via electronic survey from bus passengers stating they were uncomfortable with the silence of Palmerston North's new fully electric bus fleet. Officers also received feedback from drivers who were unsure about what they could or could not do regarding playing music on their buses. Drivers stated there were no rules from either their operator or Horizons around music on buses, particularly for the Palmerston North fleet.

The community feedback received and driver questions, resulted in Horizons officers starting to investigate the creation of guidelines for music on buses. At the same time these guidelines were being investigated, the Passenger Transport Committee received public feedback supporting the position that no music should be played publically on Horizons bus services.

This created an issue where officers were receiving feedback from the community wanting conflicting outcomes. Due to this, the Passenger Transport Committee sought to make a decision around what approach needed to be taken.

A survey for a targeted consultation around music being played was implemented to help create an informed decision.

After community consultation regarding the playing of music on buses, the total survey votes were counted. For the question, do you mind if drivers play music on Connect bus services? The following votes were received: I like it – 34.02% (133 votes), I don't mind – 31.46% (123 votes) and I really don't like it – 34.53% (135 votes).

The Passenger Transport Committee was then given three options to choose from, when it came to developing guidelines for music on buses:

1. Develop guidelines allowing a driver's choice for music on buses.
2. Develop guidelines for compulsory music on buses.



3. Develop guidelines for no music or radio on buses.

Horizons officers recommended option 1 of allowing a drivers choice of music and the creation of guidelines in conjunction with bus operators.

The Passenger Transport Committee voted and selected option 3. This results in the development of guidelines around no music to be played on buses, despite officer's recommendations.

3. Guideline Objectives

Provide passengers with the option of choice for their journey. Passengers can bring their own devices on board if they are wanting to listen to music or other forms of audio entertainment.

Passengers can enjoy conversations with family, friends and fellow passengers, without interruptions or disruptive background noise.

Guarantees no passengers are in the uncomfortable position of listening to music they do not enjoy or find distasteful and/or offensive.

Ensures a level of accessibility for people who can be overwhelmed by too much noise.

Provides flexibility for the possible future implementation of audio announcements on-board.

4. Operation Guidelines

With option 3 having been selected, the playing of music is now restricted on the bus. Passengers should now be able to enjoy their journey in silence, when it relates to music.

Drivers will need to ensure any form of personal music entertainment is kept to a respectable volume level, of which only they can enjoy.

Drivers need to ensure their volume levels do not impact passengers on their journey.

Radio stations including talkback, or podcasts, are to be treated in the same manner as music.



In line with our responsibilities to ensure good road safety practices are upheld, Horizons does not support the use of headphones or ear buds for entertainment purposes while operating a vehicle.

