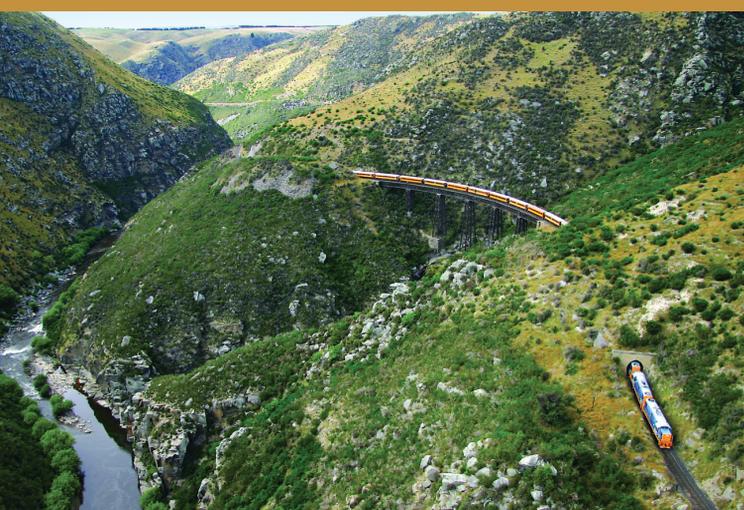


# LINKING THE TAIERI GORGE RAILWAY AND THE OTAGO CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL: A SURVEY OF USERS DEMANDS



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# Linking the Taieri Gorge Railway and the Otago Central Rail Trail: A survey of users demands

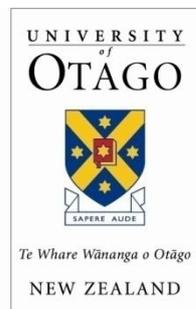
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This project was funded by the Otago Excursion Train Trust.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main aim of this research was to assess the demand for increased frequencies of service offered by the Taieri Gorge Railway (TGR) between Dunedin and Middlemarch – the start (or terminus) of the Otago Central Rail Trail (OCRT). The study comprised two survey questionnaires administered to rail trail visitors and train travellers that compared their current use and satisfaction levels with the service provided by the TGR. Interviews with key train, community and tourism stakeholders were also undertaken to gain a broader understanding of the impacts of an expanded train service to Middlemarch on the community, on businesses involved and on tourists to the region.

The survey data (Train n=501; Rail Trail n=190) revealed that most visitors access and exit the rail trail using a private car (40.7% of rail trail respondents and 37.9% of train respondents), but a significant proportion of rail trail respondents indicated they had accessed the trail by bus/shuttle (33.3%) and were exiting it using the TGR (23.7%). This result was confirmed in interviews with rail trail tour providers who indicated that the vast majority of their customers include the train experience in their trip to the OCRT. A significant proportion of rail trail users answered, however, that they were not aware of the TGR prior to visiting to the OCRT (21%).

Results from the survey conducted with train passengers revealed that the vast majority (89%) of users prefer the Middlemarch service. Results also showed that almost half (44.9%) of the train passengers surveyed using the Middlemarch service were using it as a one-way trip, instead of the common round trip offered. Train passengers also indicated that their choice for the service they were currently using was based on day/time convenience and availability, and not on preference. Only 3.7% of respondents indicated choosing the Pukerangi service because it was the cheaper option, 17.9% because it was the most scenic section of the railway and 7.1% because it was a shorter trip. 22.3% of respondents indicated they had chosen the Middlemarch train due to the longer duration of the trip. In addition, train respondents who were using the Pukerangi service were asked if their schedule allowed, would they prefer to take the train to Middlemarch. 61% of passengers indicated that yes, they would prefer to take the train to Middlemarch.

When asked about the reasons for not using the TGR to access or exit the OCRT, train and rail trail respondents indicated that not going/coming from Dunedin and having other options were the main rationale for choosing not to use the train service. It is interesting to note here, however, that more than 20% of train passengers who had previously used the rail trail did not use the TGR services because of being unaware of the train service. Again, it seems that tourists are not well informed about the potential to combine both rail products.

The interview material provided important insights into the OCRT/TGR tourism product. In general, all individuals and groups directly involved with either the OCRT or the TGR agree that there is enough demand for an expanded train service to Middlemarch. All participants agree also that the association between the Otago Central Rail Trail and the Taieri Gorge Railway is greatly beneficial for all those involved with tourism in the region and should be fostered and further strengthened to increase the benefits of such a powerful product.

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# SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research Objectives

### 1.1.1 Research Aim

The main aim of this research was to assess the demand for increased frequencies of service offered by the Taieri Gorge Railway between Dunedin and Middlemarch – the start (or terminus) of the Otago Central Rail Trail.

### 1.1.2 Research Objectives

- To measure the demand for creating an improved link between the train service operating between Dunedin and Middlemarch and to the Otago Central Rail Trail (OCRT);
- To assess the constraints related to the development of an expanded transportation option for rail trail users in Middlemarch;
- To obtain demographic and motivational data from train and rail trail users.
- To examine train, community and tourism stakeholder' perspectives regarding the establishment of a stronger link between the train system and the OCRT.

## 1.2 Study Area

The study area encompasses the Taieri Gorge Railway from Dunedin to Middlemarch and the Otago Central Rail Trail from Middlemarch to Clyde, through Central Otago (see Figure 1).

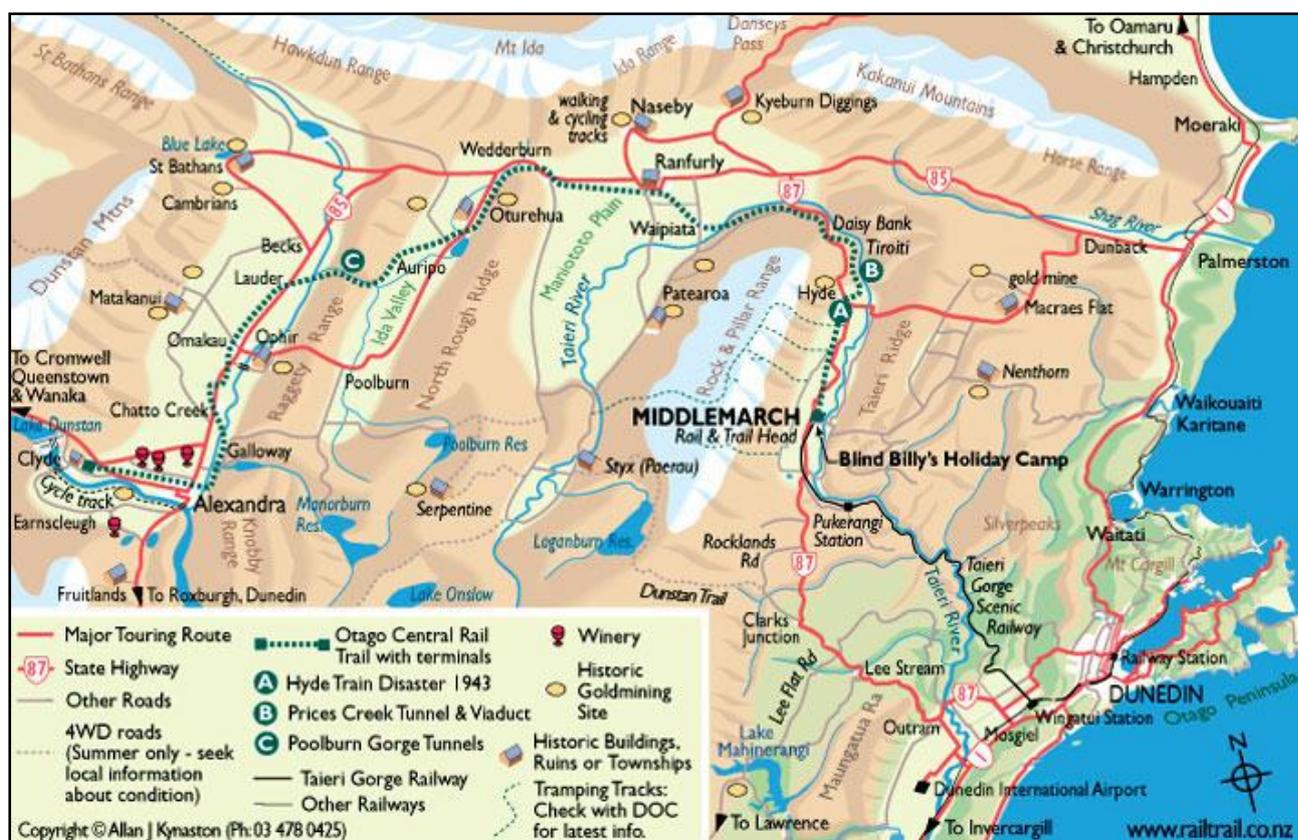


Figure 1: Map of Taieri Gorge Railway and Central Otago Rail Trail

Source: [http://middlemarch-motels.co.nz/location\\_map.html](http://middlemarch-motels.co.nz/location_map.html)

## SECTION 2: RESEARCH METHODS

The following section discusses the methods undertaken for this research. A mixed method approach included both quantitative survey and qualitative interview components. In order to accomplish the objectives listed above, data collection was conducted in two different stages:

Stage 1: Questionnaire distribution to train and rail trail users

Stage 2: Interviews and focus groups with train, community and rail trail stakeholders

### 2.1 Survey

A self-completion survey was delivered by volunteers from the Otago Excursion Train Trust to train users during their trip from/to Dunedin. Volunteers were trained by the researchers before survey delivery commenced and a series of guidelines were developed to instruct them in the process. Volunteers delivered surveys on 20 pre-selected random week and weekend days, from November 17<sup>th</sup> to April 25<sup>th</sup>. Middlemarch and Pukerangi services were targeted equally, as well as morning and afternoon trains. The selection of days aimed at allowing for passengers on the variety of services to be sampled. The survey was administered once a fortnight (excluding Christmas/New year) for eleven weeks, and excluded trains serving cruise ship passengers. Volunteers distributed questionnaires, answered any questions from participants, collected completed surveys onsite and filled a 'log sheet' for the service at the end of the day, the latter task aimed at informing the researchers of any significant occurrences regarding survey delivery and completion by participants.

The survey distribution respected the following routine:

1. The Train Manager makes an announcement to passengers about the survey (after Wingatui), asking passengers for their co-operation.
2. After the announcement, distribution of the questionnaires begins.
3. The questionnaires are distributed on a randomised basis – starting with a random number, the questionnaires are given to adult passengers (>18years) in every fifth seat until the allocated number of questionnaires for that trip have all been distributed (30 questionnaires in average per round trip).
4. Volunteers introduce themselves to participants and briefly explain the purpose of the questionnaire.
5. If the passenger does not wish to participate, then they re thanked for their time and the volunteer moves on to the next 'random' passenger.
6. After all questionnaires are delivered, volunteers move through the train and collect the filled questionnaires before the train arrival at final destination (Pukerangi, Mmiddlemarch or Dunedin).

Survey questionnaires were distributed also on the return trip – to sample those passengers that boarded the train at Pukerangi or Middlemarch. Distribution of the survey proceeded in the same manner as on the outward journey. A total of 501 surveys were collected by volunteers, with 498 usable surveys and 3 uncompleted, the latter being discarded for analysis purposes.

A second version of the survey was delivered to rail trail users along different parts of the trail by research assistants contracted for this purpose. Research assistants were employed for 7 weekend days during the summer and autumn of 2010 to distribute the questionnaire to rail trail users (dates: 08 and 09 January; 06 and 14 March; 16, 17 and 18 April). Targeted rail trail users were those actively participating on the trail, using any kind of transport. Research assistants were based at one of the transition points on the eastern end of the trail (Ranfurly, Hyde and Middlemarch) and approached all cyclists and walkers met from 8 am until 5 pm. Researchers introduced themselves to independent and guided tourists explaining about the research and asking for their participation. A prize draw was included to rail trail participants as a form of incentive for participation. Rail trail visitors were given the option of filling out the survey onsite or mailing it back to the researchers using a pre-paid envelope provided by the research assistants. A total of 190 completed surveys were returned; completed 144 (75.8%) on site and 46 (24.2%) posted.

The draft survey questionnaires were subject to rigorous review, pre-testing and analysis before release. Research peers and Trust members were involved in this process.

Participants were required to complete a survey form that addressed their Taieri Gorge Railway and/or Otago Central Rail Trail experience, other transportation options to and from the rail trail, and basic demographic information. The questionnaires comprised 3 sides A4, with an extra page as information sheet, outlining the aims of the study, and inviting participation (see Appendix 1, 2 and 3). The information sheet clarified that all data gained from the survey would be treated confidentially and published only in aggregate form. The information sheet also outlined that results would be available to participants – again only in aggregate form.

The survey questionnaire completed by train users was comprised of sections covering: “Demographic Information”; “Your Use of the Taieri Gorge Railway Service”; and “The Otago Central Rail Trail”.

The rail trail users’ survey comprises: “Demographic Information”; “Your Visit”; and “Your Awareness of the Taieri Gorge Railway.”

## **2.2 Interviews**

Interviews were arranged with pre-selected stakeholders (purposive sample) in order to assess the constraints related to the development of an expanded transportation option for rail trail users wishing to travel to and from Middlemarch, and to examine different perspectives of the establishment of a stronger link between the train system and the OCRT.

Interviews were conducted in the preferred site of participants and were semi-structured in nature. Interviewees participated of their own volition. They were provided with an information sheet, outlining the aims of the study, the topics to be addressed in the interview, and inviting their participation. This was provided by email in advance of the interview whenever possible. The information sheet clarified that all information gained from the interviews would be treated confidentially.

In addition, one researcher attended an Otago Central Rail Trail product update meeting in Cromwell, where four rail trail service providers presented an update of their products to i-SITE staff from the Central Otago region. In this occasion, the researcher introduced the present study to all meeting participants and opened a debate to investigate the position of the various stakeholders represented there, subsequently writing a diary with the different perspectives presented.

For all the above, an eligibility criteria applied; no data was collected from people younger than 16 years of age and all participants should have an active engagement with, or knowledge of, the Taieri Gorge Railway and/or the Otago Central Rail Trail.

## **2.3 Analysis**

### **2.3.1 Survey Analysis**

The data entry and analysis were undertaken at the Centre for Recreation Research, University of Otago, using SPSS Version 15 and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics are provided for each question. Graphs and tables illustrate the total number of responses for each question; non-responses are not included unless otherwise noted. Percentages and/or raw data are presented in tables.

### **2.3.2 Interview Analysis**

The process of data analysis was inductive and data-led. Interview recordings were listened to several times, and themes that emerged in each individual interview were noted. Also, significant parts of interviews were transcribed in order to provide examples of themes, and quotes for reporting results. Notes from informal (not recorded) interviews and from the product update meeting were included in the analysis and themes emerging from these data sources were also identified and clustered with formal interview themes. Subsequently, themes were compared and contrasted, and major trends identified. After all the relevant points was synthesised from the data, the interviews were re-listened to and diary notes re-read to ensure that all the important aspects of the topic matter were accounted for.

## **2.4 Ethical Considerations**

University of Otago Category B ethics approval was granted for this study. Data was compiled in aggregate form and participant anonymity ensured. Data entry and analysis was conducted only by the named researchers. For the interview participants, anonymity is ensured, pseudonyms are assigned and any data that could lead to participants being identified is treated to prevent this or is removed from the analysis. All returned questionnaires, as well as the interview transcripts and digital recordings remain in secure storage in the Centre for Recreation Research for five years, and then will be destroyed.

## SECTION 3: SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The following section presents demographic data for gender, nationality, country/place of permanent residence, age, education, travel party and group size.

### 3.1 Gender

Total response by gender was predominately female. Trail respondents included 94 female (49.7%) and 93 male (50.3%) respondents; train respondents included 256 female (53.0%) and 227 male (47.0%) respondents.

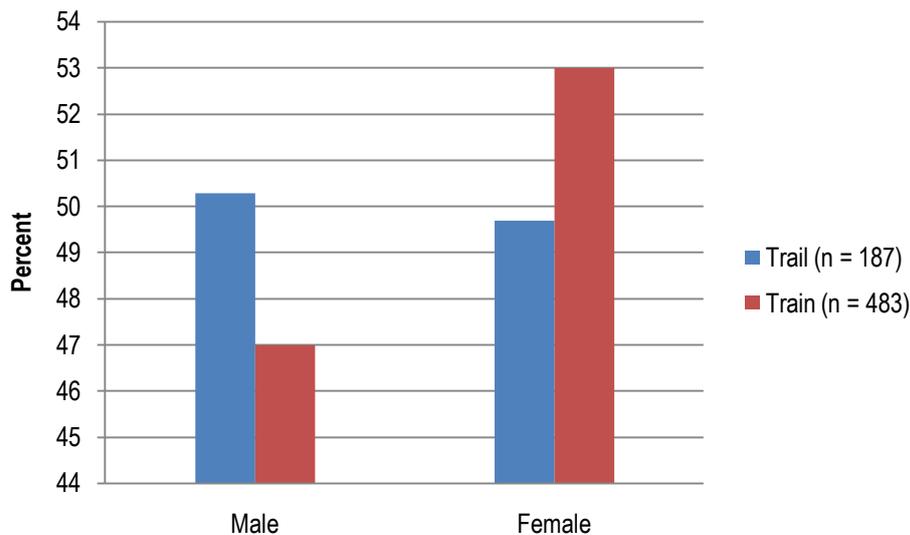
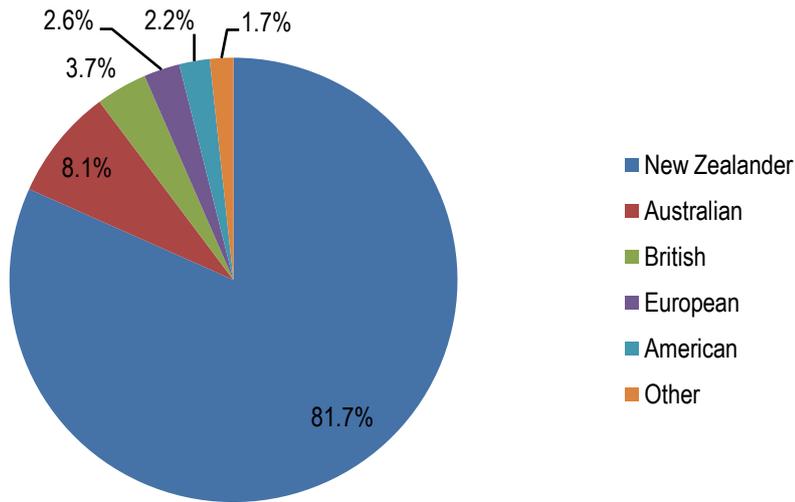


Figure 2: Gender

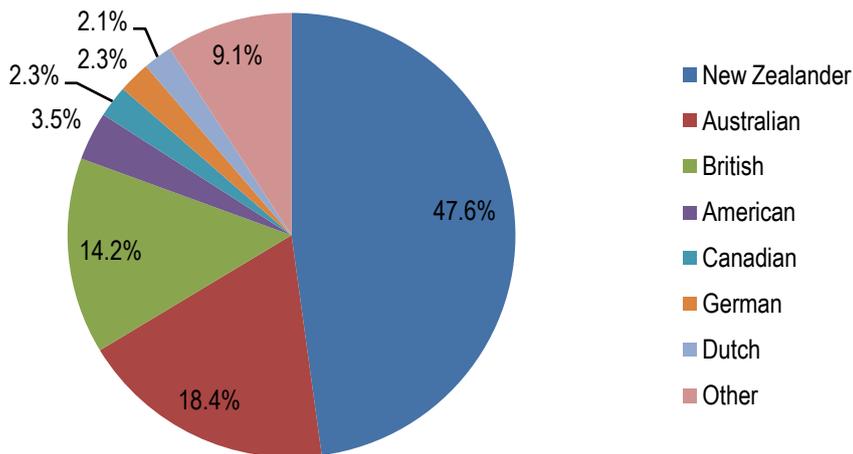
### 3.2 Nationality

All respondents were asked their nationality with an open-ended response. The majority of trail respondents indicated New Zealander (n=152, 81.7%) followed by 8.1% Australian (n=15), 3.7% British (n=7), 2.2% American (n=4), 1.1% Dutch and 1.1% Brazilian (n=2). Eleven nationalities were represented in the sample of trail respondents.

The majority of train respondents indicated New Zealander (n=231, 47.6%) followed by 18.4% Australian (n=89), 14.2% British (n=69), 3.4% American (n=17), 2.2% German and 2.2% Canadian (n=11). A total of 35 nationalities were represented in the sample of train respondents (please see Appendices 4 and 5 for a complete list of nationalities).



**Figure 3: Nationality of Rail Trail Respondents**

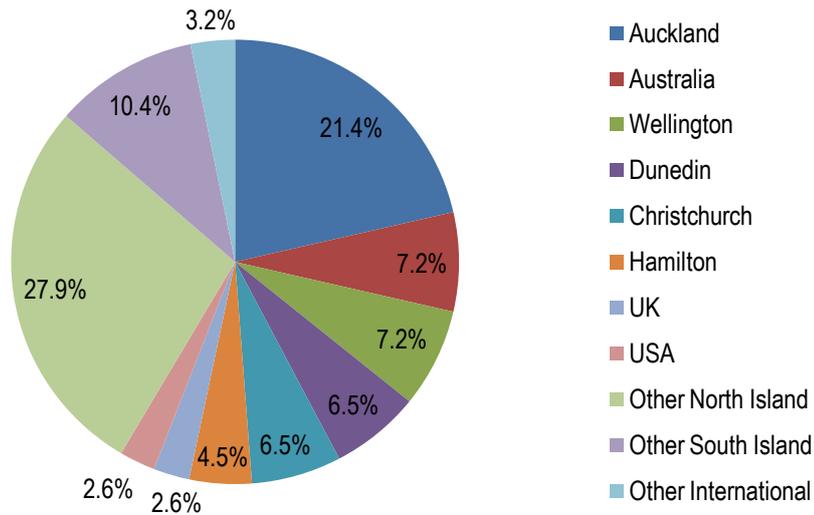


**Figure 4: Nationality of Train Respondents**

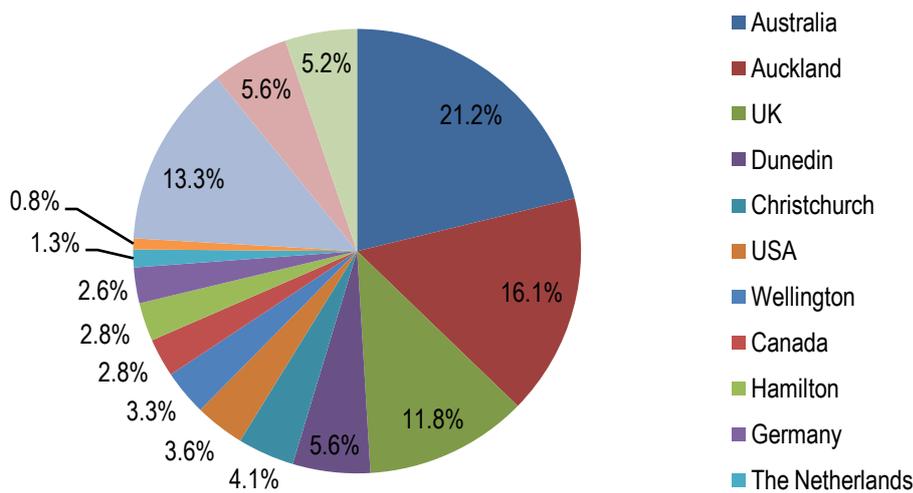
### 3.3 Country/Place of Residence

All respondents were asked their place of residence. For trail users, 81.2% were from New Zealand and only 18.2% international visitors; whereas train users had less New Zealand users at 47.5% and 52.5% international visitors. The top five places for residence for trail users were 21.4% Auckland, 7.2% Australia, 7.2% Wellington, 6.5% Dunedin and 6.5% Christchurch. A total of 47 different places of residence were indicated by trail users.

The top five places for residence for train users were 21.2% Australia (n=83), 16.1% Auckland (n=63), 11.8% UK (n=46), 5.6% Dunedin (n=21) and 4.1% Christchurch (n=16).



**Figure 5: Country/Place of Residence Rail Trail Respondents**

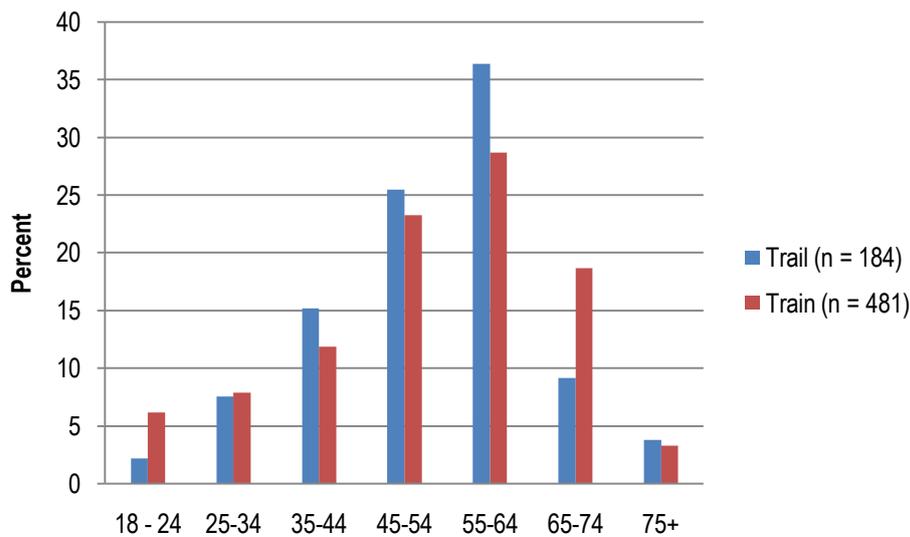


**Figure 6: Country/Place of Residence Train Respondents**

### 3.4 Age

All respondents were asked to indicate their age. Seven age categories were provided, including “18 – 24”, “25 – 34”, “35 – 44”, “45 – 54”, “55 – 64”, “65 – 74”, “75+”. For the trail respondents, 4 respondents were ‘18 – 24 years of age’ (2.2%); 14 respondents were ‘25 – 34 years of age’ (7.6%); 28 respondents were ‘35 – 44 years of age’ (15.2%); 47 were ‘45-54 years of age’ (25.5%); 67 were ‘55-64 years of age’ (36.4%); 17 were ‘65-74 years of age’ (9.2%); and seven respondents were ‘75+ years of age’ (3.8%).

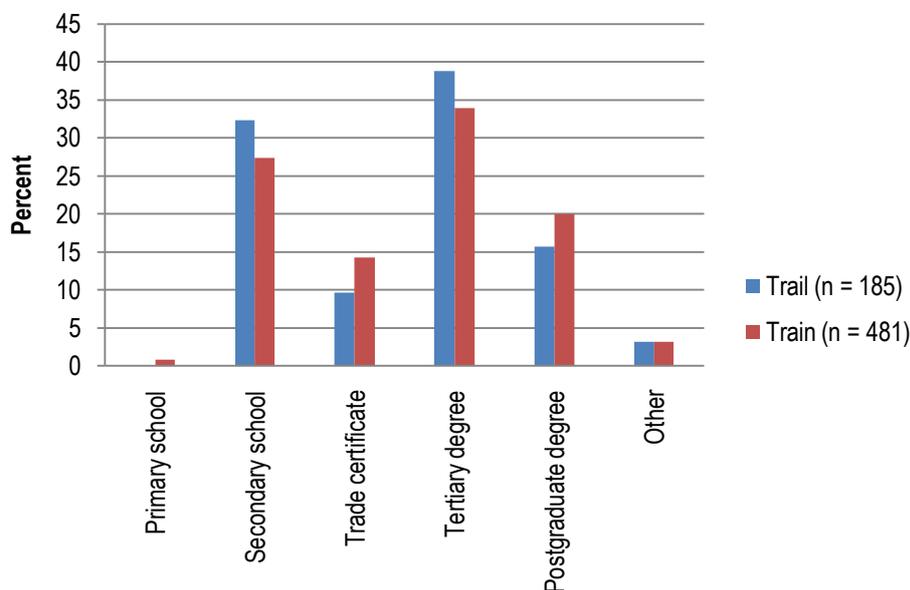
For the train respondents, 30 respondents were ‘18 – 24 years of age’ (6.2%); 38 respondents were ‘25 – 34 years of age’ (7.9%); 57 respondents were ‘35 – 44 years of age’ (11.9%); 112 were ‘45-54 years of age’ (23.3%); 138 were ‘55-64 years of age’ (28.7%); 90 were ‘65-74 years of age’ (18.7%); and 16 respondents were ‘75+ years of age’ (3.3%).



**Figure 7: Age**

### 3.5 Education

All respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of formal education. Six categories were provided: 'Primary school', 'Secondary school', 'Trade certificate', 'Tertiary degree', 'Postgraduate degree' and 'Other'.



**Figure 8: Education**

For the trail respondents, no respondents indicated primary school; 32.4% indicated secondary school; 9.7% had a trade certificate, 38.9% had a tertiary education, 15.7% had a postgraduate degree and 3.2% indicated another level of education. Six other levels of education provided included business diploma (1), college (1), industrial engineer (1), n/a (1), nursing (2), and TTC (1).

For the train respondents, 0.8% respondents indicated primary school; 27.4% indicated secondary school; 14.3% had a trade certificate, 34% had a tertiary education, 20% had a postgraduate degree and 3.2% indicated another level of education. Thirteen other levels of education provided included one for each of the following: advanced trade certificate, airline pilot, college, diploma, diploma in agriculture, HNC, nursing, professional law, secretarial college, SRN, teachers college, teaching and university art teacher.

### 3.6 Travel Party

All respondents were asked to best describe their travel party and were provided eight categories, with multiple responses permitted. The graph illustrates the total number of responses rather than percentages. For trail respondents, the majority of respondents were travelling with friends and/or with their partner. Similarly, train respondents also mainly travelled with partners and friends, followed by travel with children or others. For trail respondents, ten other travel party descriptors included arrangements by eco-tours, other family members/relatives, and naturist group. For train respondents, 28 other responses elicited many descriptions including other family members/relatives and organised trips (e.g. probus, tours, etc.).

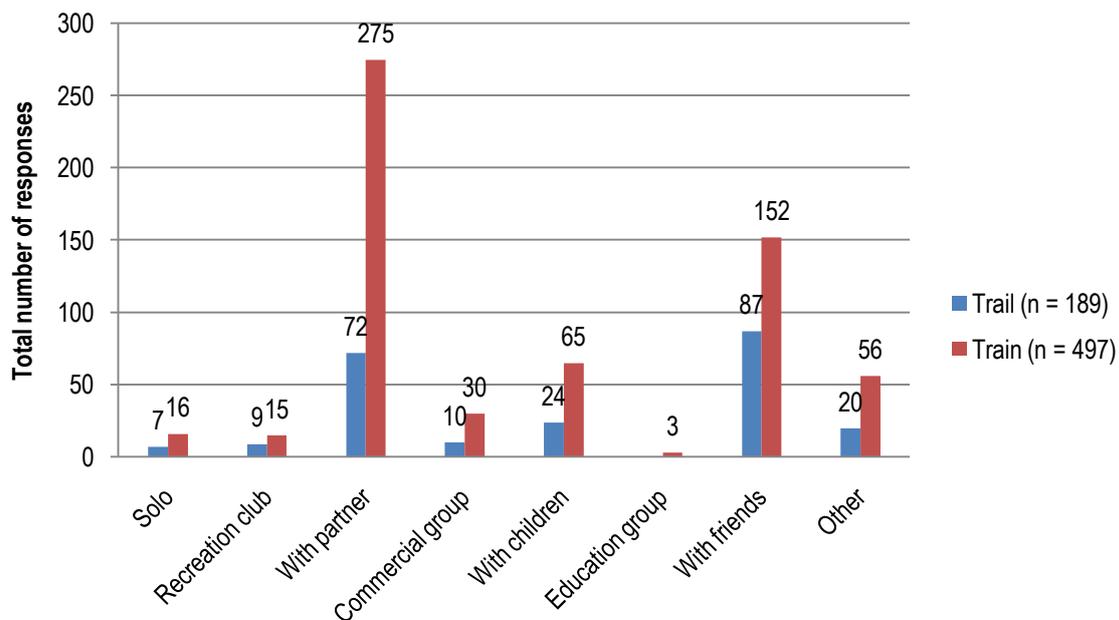


Figure 9: Travel party

### 3.7 Group Size

An open-ended question asked respondents to indicate their travel party size. For trail users, the majority of respondents indicated groups of one to five (57%) followed by 19.2% travelling in groups of six to ten, 12.8% in groups of 11 to 15, 2.9% in groups of 16 to 20, 8.1% in groups of 21 to 30 and zero respondents in a group over 30 people. For train users, the majority of respondents also indicated groups of one to five (49.8%) followed by 14.3% travelling in groups of six to ten, 2.7% in groups of 11 to 15, 5.1% in groups of 16 to 20, 1.1% in groups of 21 to 30 and 4.5 respondents in a group over 30 people. The maximum group size for train travellers was 52.

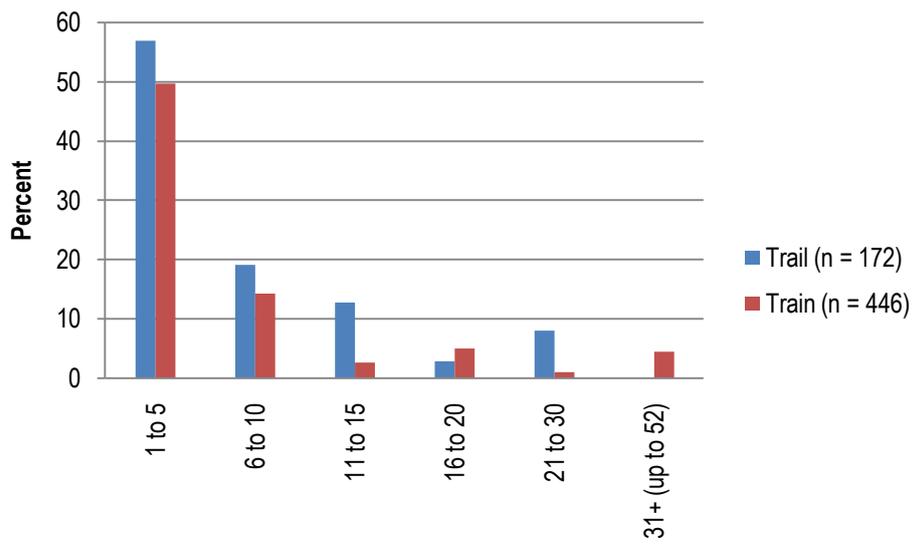


Figure 10: Group size

## SECTION 4: RAIL TRAIL TRAVELLERS ONLY – USE OF TAIERI GORGE RAILWAY

This next section addresses use of the Otago Central Rail Trail and the Taieri Gorge Railway by trail visitors.

### 4.1 First Visit to Otago Central Rail Trail?

Trail visitors were asked if their trip was their first one to the Otago Central Rail Trail. The majority of respondents (n=164, 87.7%) indicated it was their first trip.

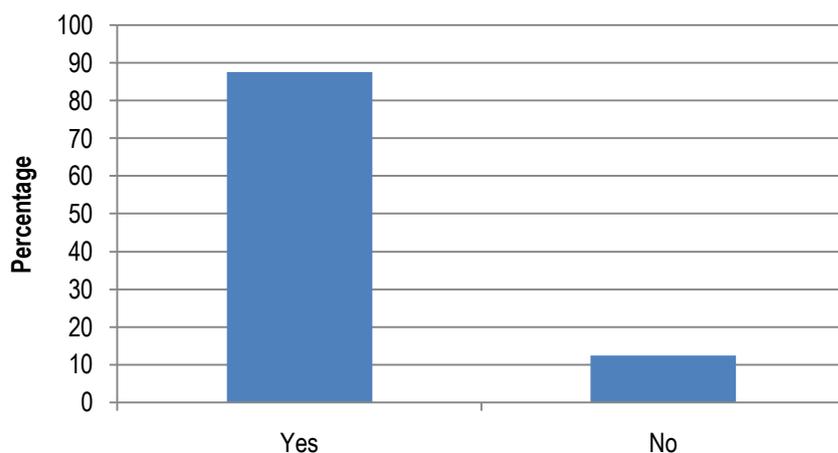


Figure 11: First Visit to OCRT

### 4.2 Main Activity on Otago Central Rail Trail

All respondents were asked their main activity on their trip to the Otago Central Rail Trail. Cycling, Walking and Other were provided as categories. The majority of respondents (n=185, 97.4%) indicated cycling as their main activity, followed by 2.6% (n=5) indicating walking. Two other main activities mentioned were photography (1) and visiting historic sites (1).

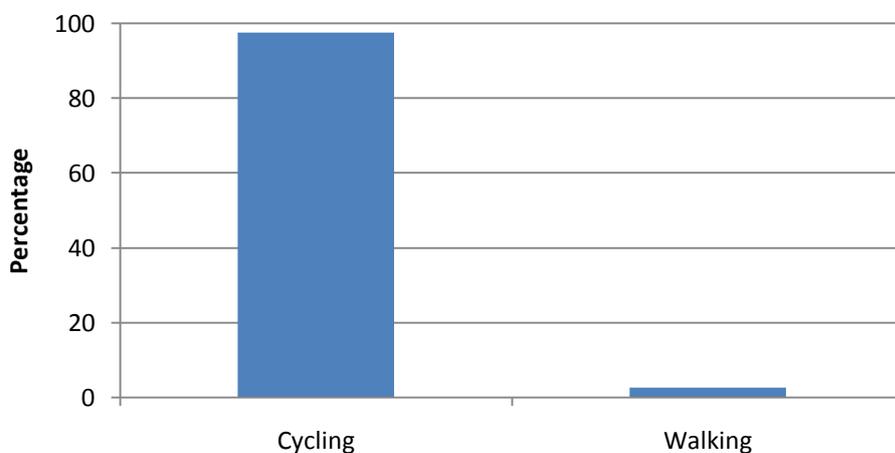


Figure 12: Main Activity for Rail Trail Visitors

### 4.3 Start and End Destination for OCRT Trip

Each respondent was asked where they began and where they ended their Otago Central Rail Trail trip. The main three trip starting points include Clyde, Middlemarch and Hyde. Approximately 68.4% of trail users began in Clyde (n=130), 14.7% begin in Middlemarch (n=28) and 4.7% began in Hyde (n=9). Other locations for starting points include Ranfurly, Alexandra, Taieri Gorge, Otago Gorge, Wedderburn, Dunston, Omakau, Kokonga and Oturehua.

The three main end destinations for trail users also were Clyde, Middlemarch and Hyde. Approximately 17.1% of respondents ended in Clyde (n=32), 77% end in Middlemarch (n=144) and 3.2% end in Hyde (n=6). This corresponds to the starting destination responses with the majority of trail users indicating they were cycling the entire 150 km trail, with the majority cycling west to east. Additional ending destinations include Ranfurly, Alexandra, Lauder, Dunedin, and Oturehua.

### 4.4 Trip Duration

Each respondent was asked how long their visit would be during their trip on the Otago Central Rail Trail. Three options were provided: one day, overnight, and more than one night. If the respondent was staying overnight for more than one night, they were asked to indicate the number of nights. The majority of respondents (n=178, 93.7%) indicated more than one night followed by 4.2% (n=8) overnight and 2.1% (n=4) were day visitors.

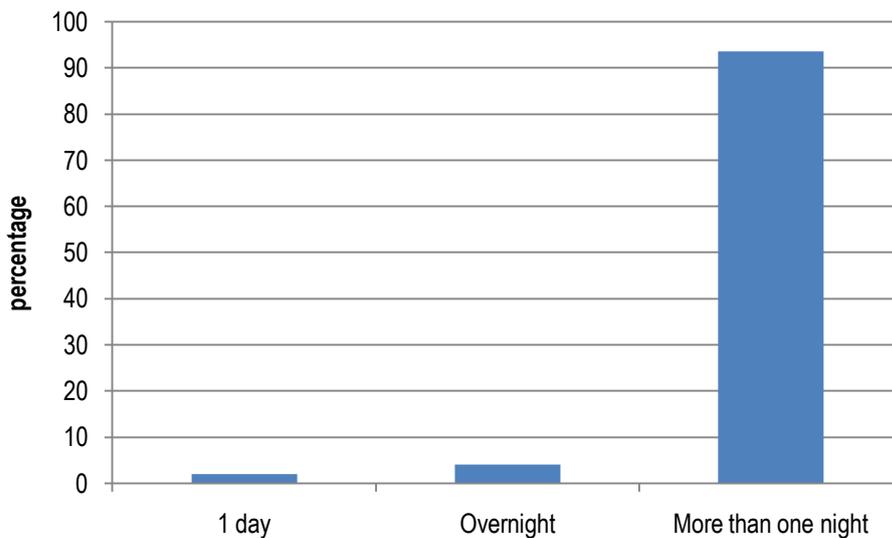


Figure 13: Length of Visit to OCRT

When asked how many nights visitors stayed along the Otago Central Rail Trail, the majority (n=61, 42%) indicated four nights followed by 26.2% (n=38) staying three nights and 12.4% (n=18) staying five nights. The highest number of nights spent along the Otago Central Rail Trail was 14.

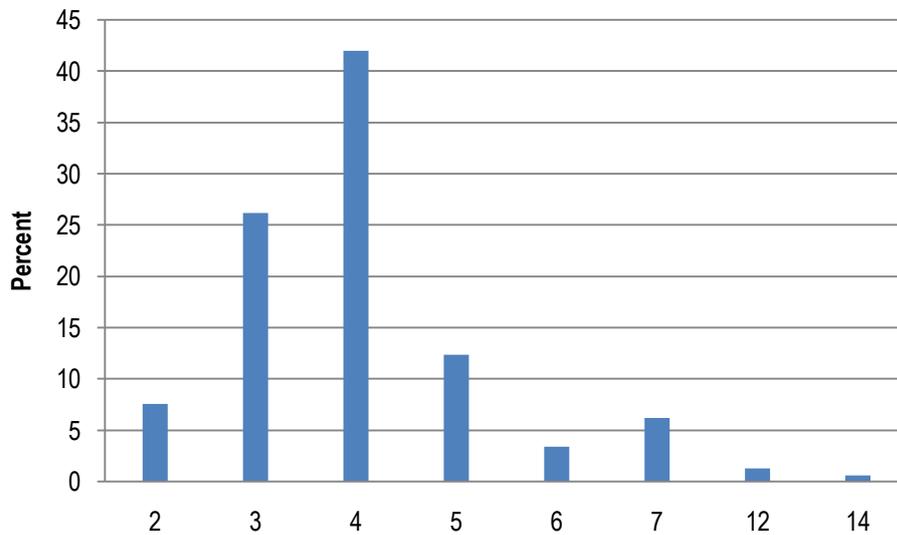


Figure 14: Number of Nights on the OCRT

#### 4.5 Mode of Travel to Access and Finish OCRT Trip

Respondents were asked to indicate how they accessed and exited the Otago Central Rail Trail. The majority of visitors accessed the OCRT by private car (n=77, 40.7%) followed by bus/shuttle (n=63, 33.3%), then via package tour (n=20, 10.6%), Taieri Gorge Railway /from Middlemarch (n=13, 6.7%), bicycle (n=8, 4.2%), and lastly Taieri Gorge Railway from Pukerangi and hired car (n=3, 1.6% each). Other modes of travel (11.1%) to access the OCRT include motorhome (n=7), campervan (n=5), caravan (n=2), plane (n=2), friend drove (n=1), and house in Middlemarch (n=1).

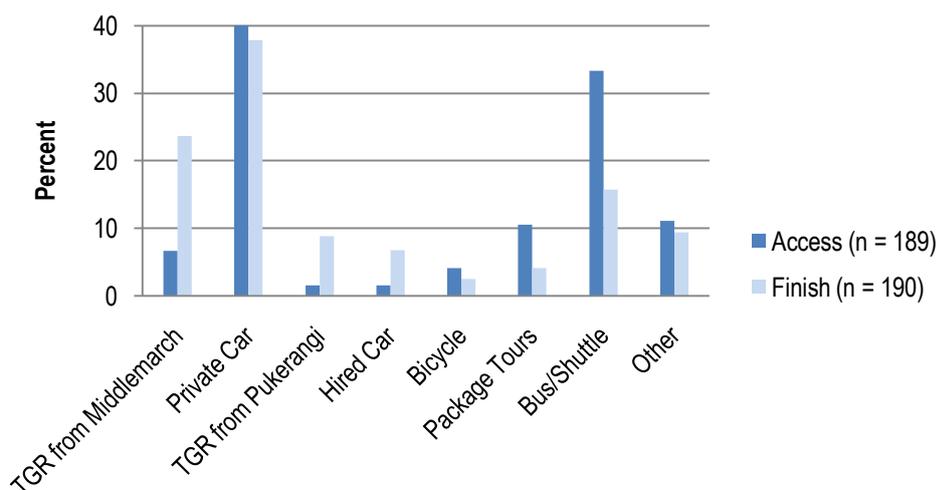


Figure 15: Mode of Travel to Access and Exit the OCRT

Mode of travel to exit the Otago Central Rail Trail trip reflects responses from the end destination question. The majority of respondents (n=72, 37.9%) exited the OCRT by private car, followed by the Taieri Gorge Railway from Middlemarch (n=45, 23.7%). This response was followed by bus/shuttle (n=30, 15.8%), Taieri Gorge Railway from Pukerangi (n=17, 8.9%), hired car (n=13, 6.8%), package tour (n=8, 4.2%), and bicycle (n=5, 2.6%). Other exit modes of transport included motorhome (n=7), campervan (n=5), plane (n=4), caravan (n=2), house in Middlemarch (n=1).

## 4.6 Awareness of Taieri Gorge Railway

Trail respondents were asked if they were aware of the Taieri Gorge Railway prior to visiting the Otago Central Rail Trail as well as if they were aware of the train schedule options. The majority of respondents (n=149, 79%) stated they were aware of the Taieri Gorge Railway prior to visiting the OCRT. However, fewer respondents (n=77, 42%) were aware of the train schedule options.

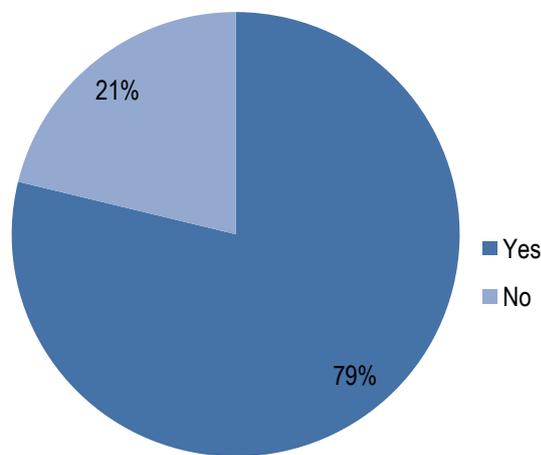


Figure 16: Visitors to OCRT Awareness of Taieri Gorge Train Service

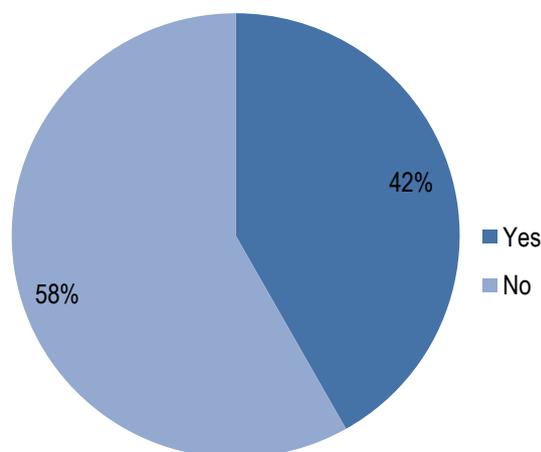


Figure 17: Visitors to OCRT Awareness of Taieri Gorge Train Schedule Options

## 4.7 Prior Use of the Taieri Gorge Railway Service

Trail respondents were asked if they had ever used the Taieri Gorge Railway service before and, if so, how many times. The majority of respondents (n=139, 75.5%) have not used the Taieri Gorge Railway service. Of the 24.5% of respondents who had used the train service (n=45), 70.5% (n=31) have travelled on the train once, 25% (n=11) have travelled twice, one respondent indicated travelling by train 5 times and one indicated 50 times.

Trail respondents who had used the train service were also asked to indicate for what purposes they had travelled. Five options were provided, including: sightseeing, travel with an organised group/excursion, transport to/from Otago Central Rail Trail, transport to/from Middlemarch, and to host visitors that come to Dunedin. A category for 'other' was also provided.

The majority of respondents (n=41, 78.8%) indicated sightseeing as the primary purpose for prior use of the Taieri Gorge Railway service. This response was followed by 17.3% (n=9) travelling with an organised group, 15.3% (n=8) using the railway for transport to/from Otago Central Rail Trail, 9.6% (n=5) as transport to/from Middlemarch, 7.7% (n=4) hosting visitors in Dunedin and 3.8% (n=2) responded to 'other' purposes. Other purposes indicated were media (1) and with a secondary school (1).

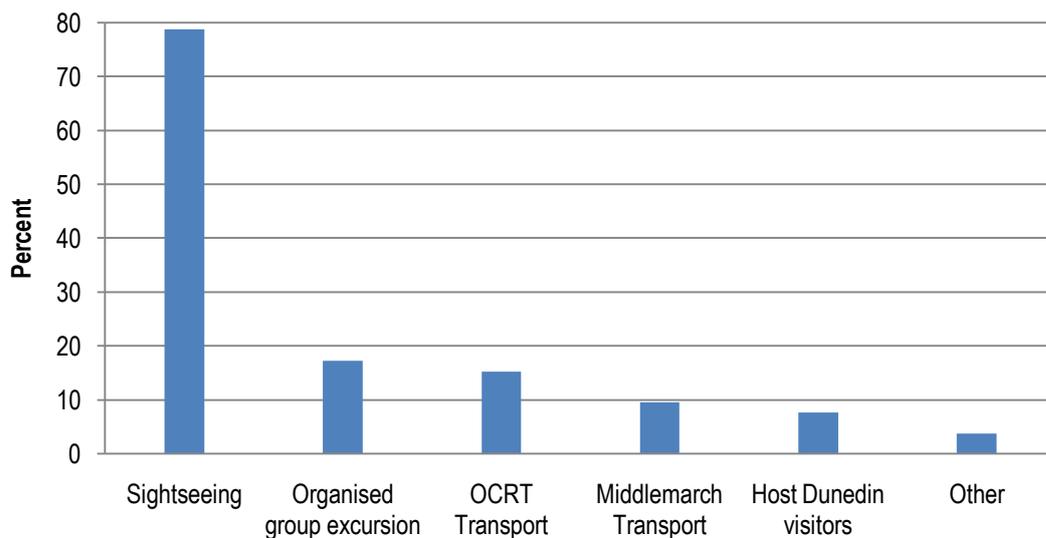
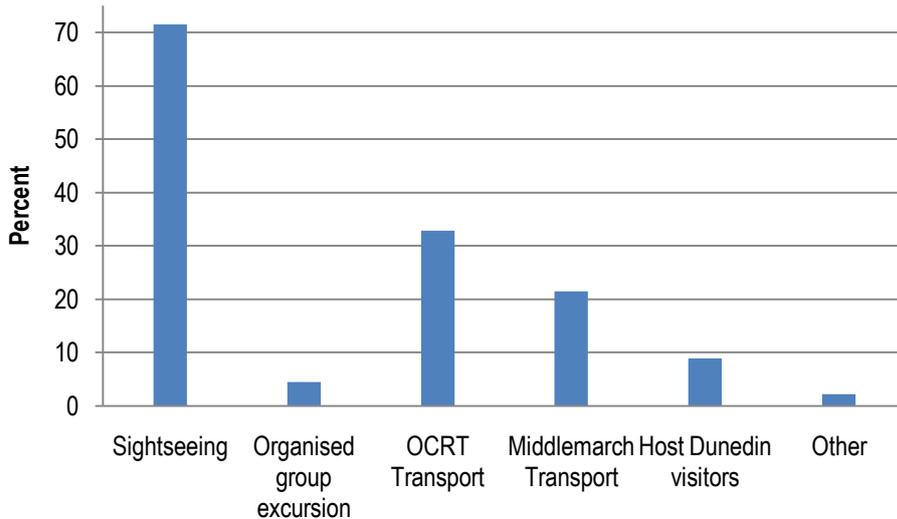


Figure 18: Prior Purpose for Using the Taieri Gorge Railway

## 4.8 Future Use of the Taieri Gorge Railway Service

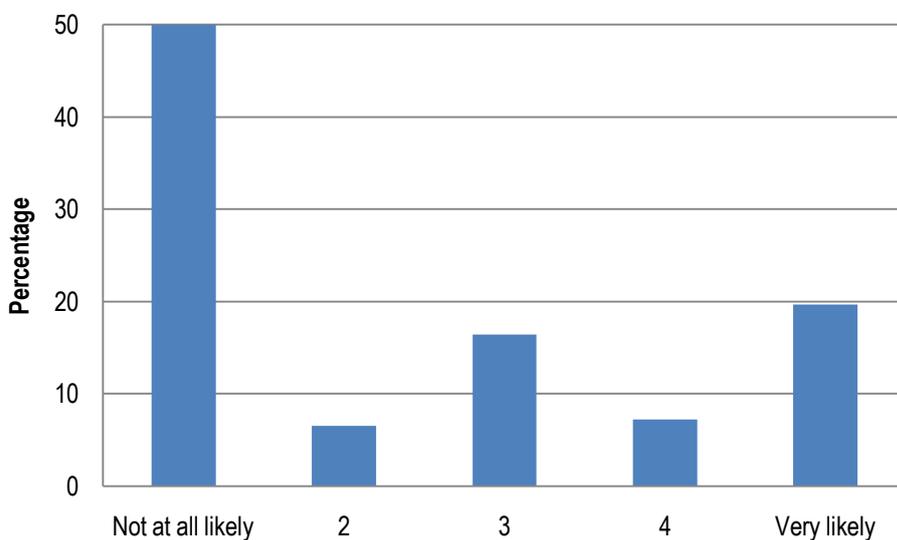
Trail respondents were asked to indicate if they plan to use the railway in the future. The majority (n=96, 57.1%) indicated they plan to use the railway in the future. With regards to the purpose for future use, the majority (n=63, 71.5%) indicated sightseeing, 32.9% (n=29) for transport to/from Otago Central Rail Trail, 21.5% (n=19) transport to/from Middlemarch, 9% (n=8) to host visitors to Dunedin, 4.5% (n=4) as an organised group excursion and 2.3% indicated other reasons. The other reasons were 'not sure' (2), 'I love train rides' (1), if returning to New Zealand (1), if schedule works (1).



**Figure 19: Future Purpose for Using the Taieri Gorge Railway**

## 4.9 Taieri Gorge Railway Service Middlemarch Option

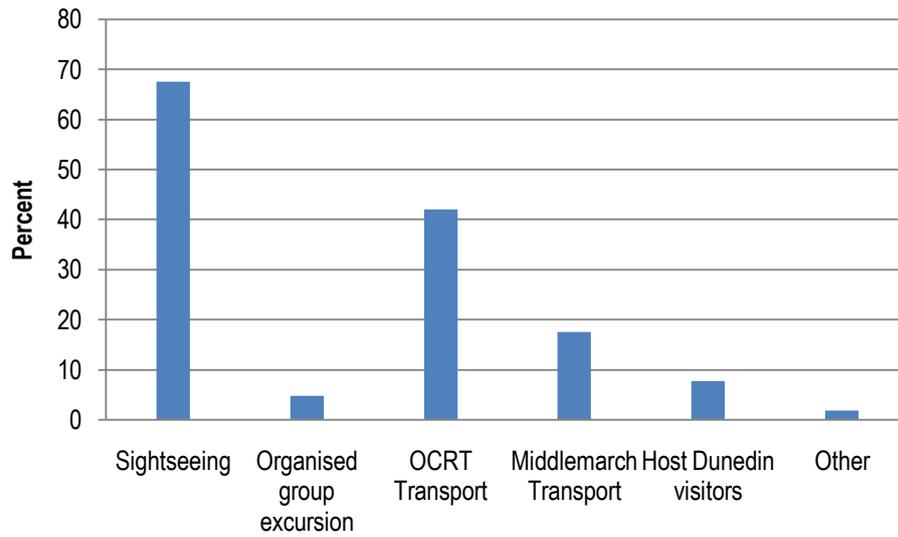
Trail respondents were asked if the Taieri Gorge Railway provided a daily service to and from Middlemarch, what was the likelihood of them using the service. Respondents were provided a five-point scale ranging from 'not at all likely' to 'very likely'. The majority of trail respondents (n=76, 50%) indicated they were not at all likely to use a service to Middlemarch; however, 19.7% (n=30) indicated it was very likely, and 5.8% (n=11) indicated it was likely (by choosing option 4).



**Figure 20: Likelihood of Future Use of TGR Service to Middlemarch**

Respondents were also asked for what purpose they would use the TGR service to Middlemarch, and 53.7% (n=102) responses were recorded. The majority of respondents (n= 69, 67.6%) indicated their purpose for using the TGR to Middlemarch would be for sightseeing followed by 42.2% (n=43) as transport to/from Otago Central Rail Trail, 17.6% (n=18) as transport to/from Middlemarch, 7.8% (n=8)

to host visitors to Dunedin, 4.9% (n=5) travel in an organised group, and 1.9% would use the service for other purposes. Other purposes included to connect to Dunedin for a flight to the North Island (1).



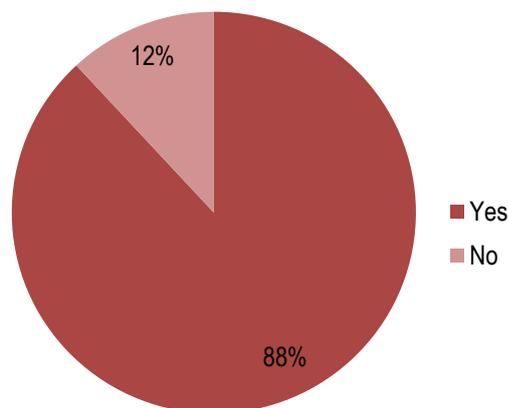
**Figure 21: Purpose for Using the TGR Service to Middlemarch**

## SECTION 5: TRAIN TRAVELLERS ONLY – USE OF TAIERI GORGE RAILWAY

This next section addresses train travellers' use of the Taieri Gorge Railway service and the Otago Central Rail Trail.

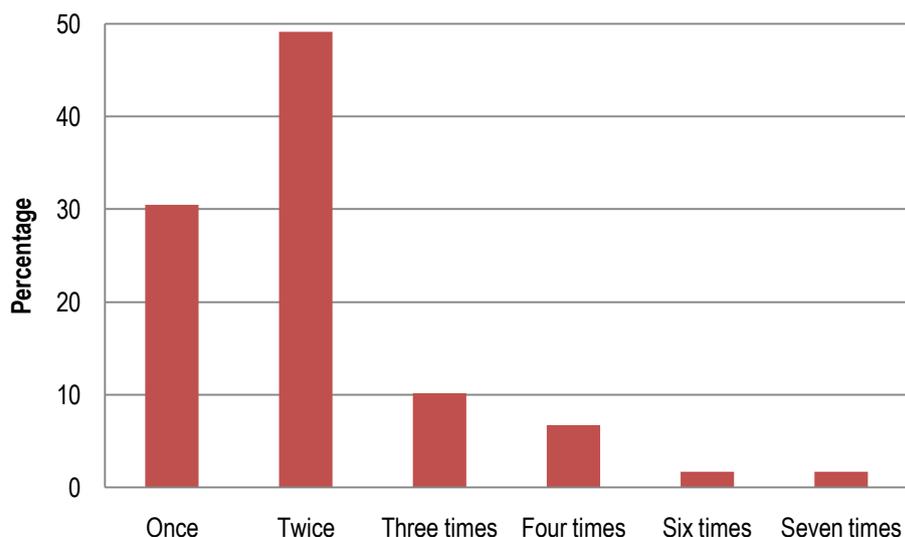
### 5.1 Current Use of Taieri Gorge Railway Service

Train respondents were asked if this was their first train trip. The majority of respondents (n=437, 88%) stated that this was their first trip.



**Figure 22: First Train Trip on Taieri Gorge Railway**

Train respondents that had travelled on the Taieri Gorge Railway prior to the current trip (12%) were asked the number of times they had used the train. The majority of respondents (n=29, 49.2%) had used the train twice followed by 30.5% (n=18) one time, 10.2% (n=6) three times, 6.8% (n=4) four times, 1.7% six times and 1.7% (n=1) seven times.



**Figure 23: Number of Times on Taieri Gorge Train**

Train respondents were asked for what purposes they have used the Taieri Gorge Railway. The majority of train users (80.3%) used the service for sightseeing, followed by 26% using the service as a transport to/from Otago Central Rail Trail, 15.4% for an organised group excursion, 8.8% to/from Middlemarch, 4% host visitors in Dunedin, and 4% stated other purposes. Other purposes included for the experience, family trip, photography, enjoy local scenery, referrals in tourism, love/enjoy trains, and transport from Queenstown.

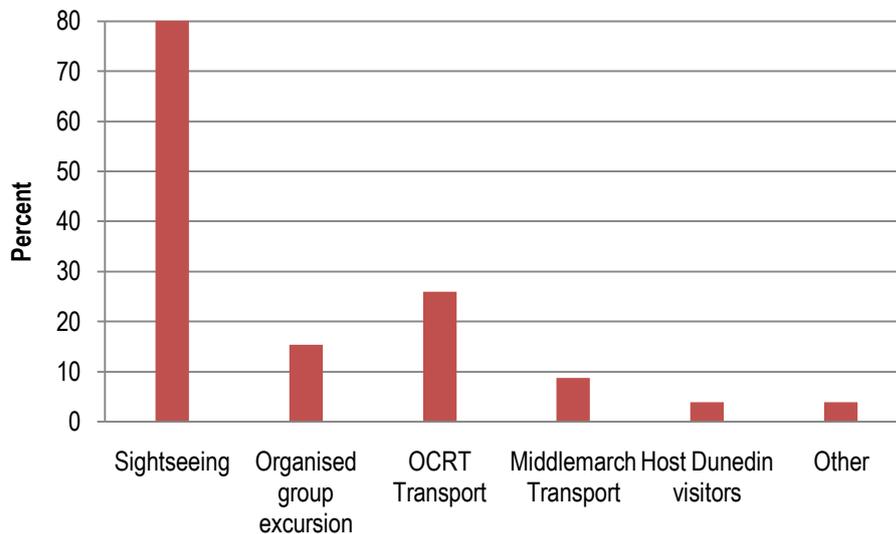


Figure 24: Purpose for Current Use of the Taieri Gorge Railway

## 5.2 Future Use of Taieri Gorge Railway Service

Train respondents were asked if they planned to use the Taieri Gorge Railway in the future. The majority of respondents (n=257, 56%) indicated they were not planning to use the railway again, 42% (n=193) do plan to use the railway again, and one respondent indicated 'maybe' and another respondent indicated 'I don't know'.

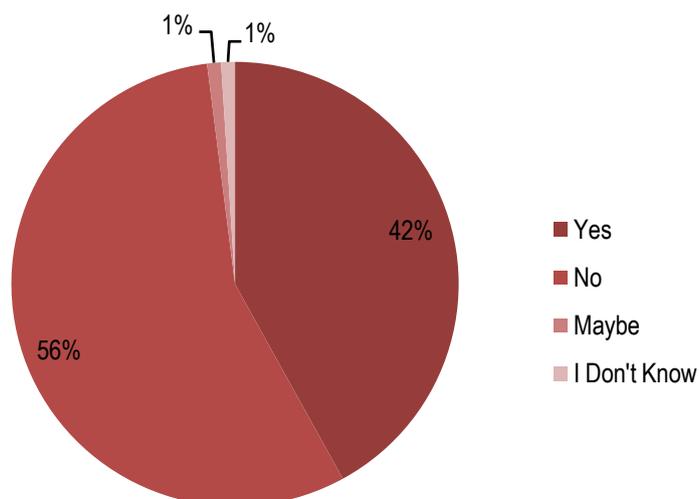


Figure 25: Future Plan to Travel with Taieri Gorge Railway

Train users were asked for what purposes they would use the Taieri Gorge Railway in the future. 42% (n=209) of the total respondents answered this question. The majority of train travellers who plan to travel on the Taieri Gorge Railway train would for sightseeing (69.4%) followed by 31.1% plan to use the train for transport to and from Otago Central Rail Trail, 14.8% to host visitors in Dunedin, 12.9% for transport to/from Middlemarch, and 11.5% with an organised group and 7.7% stated other purposes. Other reasons provided for future train use included combine with cycle/walking further in Otago, for Oceanic Gold Mine Loop trip, and several 'unsure' responses.

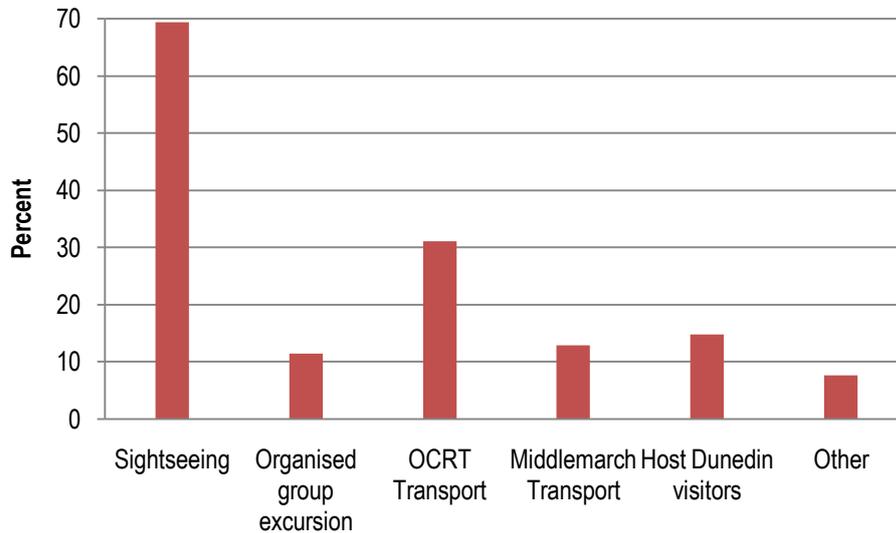


Figure 26: Purpose for Future Use of Taieri Gorge Railway

### 5.3 Preferred Service and Destination for the Taieri Gorge Railway

Respondents were asked their preferred service destination if they were to use the Railway again. Options included Middlemarch and Pukerangi destinations. The vast majority of train respondents (n=216, 89%) preferred using a service to Middlemarch, 10% (n=24) preferred Pukerangi and one respondent stated 'either'.

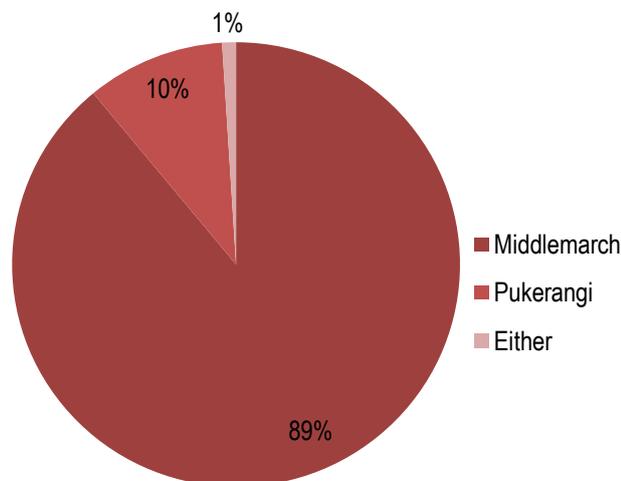


Figure 27: Preferred Train Service and Destination for Taieri Gorge Railway

All train respondents were asked which service they were currently using and provided six options including:

- Dunedin → Pukerangi RETURN      Dunedin → Middlemarch RETURN
- Dunedin → Pukerangi (ONE WAY)      Dunedin → Middlemarch (ONE WAY)
- Pukerangi → Dunedin (ONE WAY)      Middlemarch → Dunedin (ONE WAY)

The majority of respondents (n=157, 32.1%) were currently using the Dunedin to Middlemarch return service followed closely by Dunedin to Pukerangi return service (n=155, 31.7%). The majority of responses to one-way service routes were from Middlemarch to Dunedin (m=79, 16.2%).

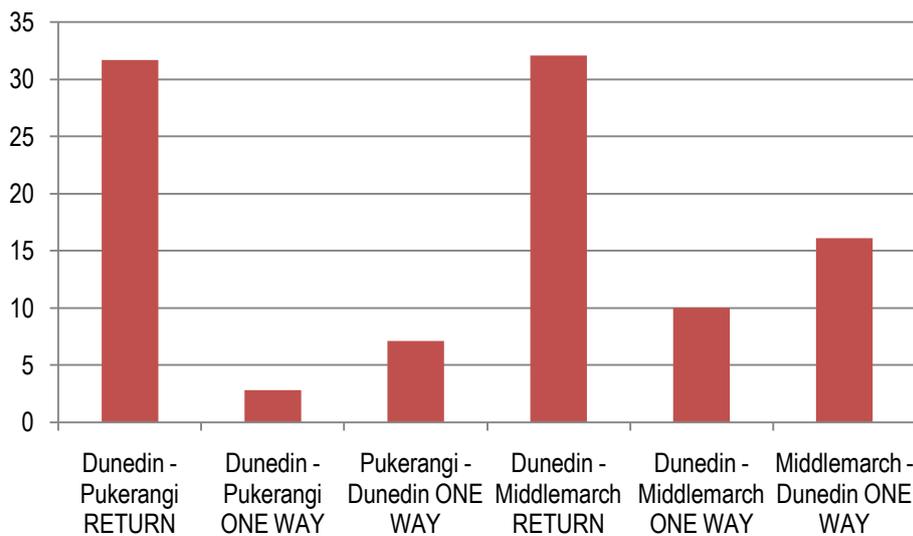


Figure 28: Current Service Used by Train Respondents

## 5.4 Motivations for Train Service Selection

Train respondents were asked why they selected a particular train service. Eighteen options were provided. The majority of train respondents (n=139, 28.3%) selected the option 'because this was the most convenient day/time for me', followed by 'because I wanted a longer trip' (n=110, 22.3%) and 'because this was the only option on the day that I was available for this trip' (n=103, 20.9%). The least selected options included 'to stay overnight in Middlemarch' with seven respondents (1.4%), 'To add an extra cycling/walking leg to the Otago Central Rail Trail by finishing at Pukerangi' with six respondents (1.2%) and 'to visit friends and/or family in Middlemarch' with only three respondents (0.6%) selecting this option. Table 1 illustrates the responses for each motivation. And Appendix 8 lists other motivations indicated by participants.

**Table 1: Motivations for Selecting a Particular Train Service**

Motivation	Total Number (n = 492)	Percent
Because this was the most convenient day/time for me	139	28.3%
Because I wanted a longer trip (Dunedin-Middlemarch-Dunedin)	110	22.3%
Because this was the only option on the day that I was available for this trip	103	20.9%
Because the Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin section of the Railway is the most scenic one	88	17.9%
Someone else was responsible for choosing my itinerary	80	16.2%
To have direct access to the Otago Central Rail Trail from Middlemarch	66	13.4%
To have direct access to the Taieri Gorge Railway from Middlemarch	55	11.2%
Other (please specify):	50	10.2%
To have lunch in Middlemarch	42	8.5%
Because I wanted a shorter trip (Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin)	35	7.1%
To catch transportation to another destination	25	5%
The Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin is a cheaper/more affordable service	18	3.7%
To participate in other tourism activity(ies) in the area (e.g. explore Rock & Pillar Range)	18	3.7%
To look for souvenirs in Middlemarch	11	2.2%
To add an extra cycling/walking leg to the Otago Central Rail Trail by starting at Pukerangi	9	1.8%
To stay overnight in Middlemarch	7	1.4%
To add an extra cycling/walking leg to the Otago Central Rail Trail by finishing at Pukerangi	6	1.2%
To visit friends and/or family in Middlemarch	3	0.6%

## 5.5 Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin Service Extended to Middlemarch?

Train respondents who were using the Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin service were asked if their schedule allowed, would they prefer to take the train to Middlemarch, and if yes, to explain why. Most train users (n=131, 61%) indicated that they would prefer to take the train to Middlemarch. The main comments from users who indicated preference for the Middlemarch service can be summarised by the following extracts:

*“because it will be easier to cyclist... we were not sure about the shuttle or the train because we had no train yesterday but we decided to cycle until Pukerangi.”*

*“because that's where rail trail finishes so obvious choice.”*

*“better place to wait around than Pukerangi.”*

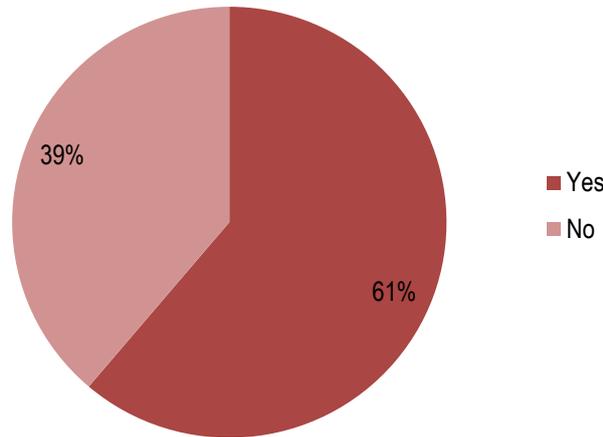
*“it feels like stopping in the middle of nowhere in Pukerangi when Middlemarch would be like going to a destination and back as its more as a town/village.”*

Respondents who expressed disinterest for the Middlemarch service indicated time as the main factor.

*“journey of 4 hours return was enough with children.”*

*“just looking for a half day trip.”*

*“just wanted the scenic route.”*

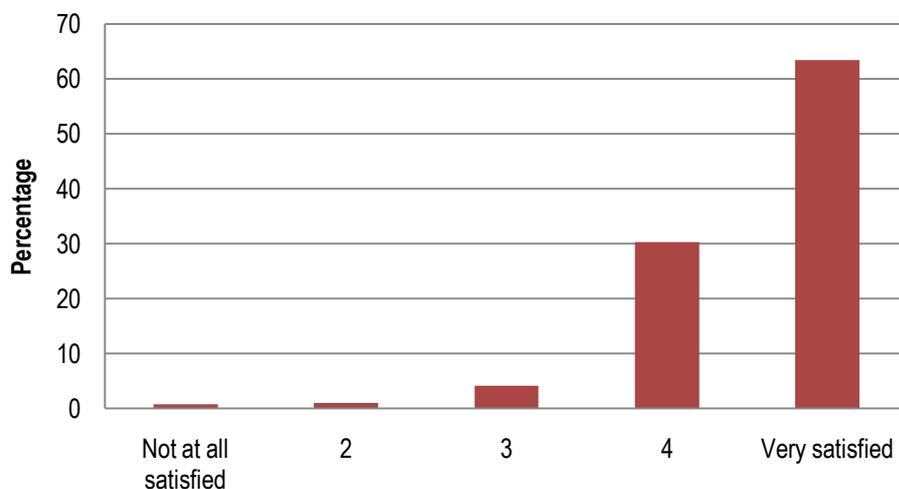


**Figure 29: Preference for Middlemarch Train Service**

Please see Appendix 9 for comments on why train travellers would/would not prefer a service from Dunedin-Middlemarch-Dunedin.

## 5.6 Satisfaction with Taieri Gorge Railway

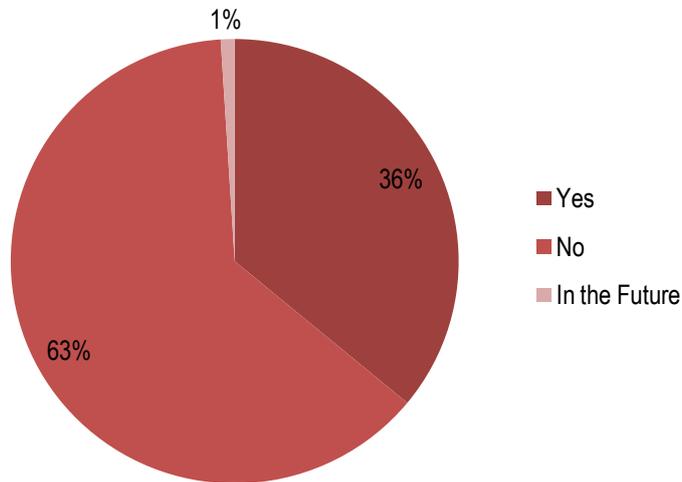
Train respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their Taieri Gorge Railway experience, and were provided a five-point scale from 'Not at all satisfied' to 'Very satisfied' to record their answers. Most train travellers (n=301, 63.5%) were very satisfied with their experience, while only 0.8% (n=4) of respondents were not at all satisfied.



**Figure 30: Satisfaction with the Taieri Gorge Railway Experience**

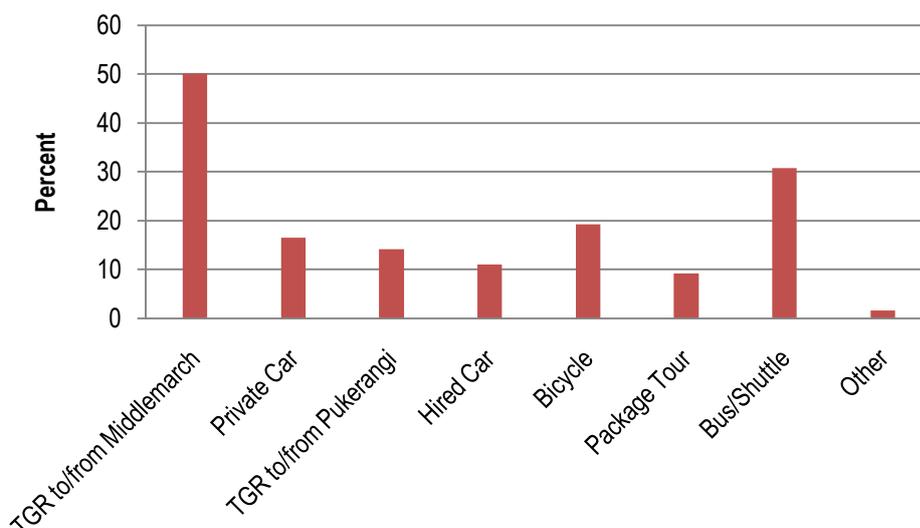
## 5.7 Train Traveller's Use of Otago Central Rail Trail

Train respondents were asked if they had ever walked/cycled the Otago Central Rail Trail or if they planned to do so during their current trip. The majority (n=306, 63%) of train users have not walked or cycled the OCRT, but over one third of the respondents (n=176, 36%) indicated they have used the rail trail before.



**Figure 31: Train Traveller's Past Use of the Otago Central Rail Trail.**

Train respondents who had cycled or walked the Otago Central Rail Trail in the past, or were planning to do so in their current trip, were asked what mode of travel did/will they use to access and/or exit the Otago Central Rail Trail. The options included Taieri Gorge Railway from Middlemarch, private car, Taieri Gorge Railway from Pukerangi, hired car, bicycle, package tour, bus/shuttle and other. The majority of respondents (50.2%) used the Taieri Gorge Railway from Middlemarch. Bus/shuttle (30.9%) was the next most common mode of transport followed by bicycle (19.3%), private car (16.6%), Taieri Gorge Railway from Pukerangi (14.3%), hired car (11.1%), package tour (9.3%), and other (1.7%). Other modes of travel included motorhome, plane to Queenstown and walking.



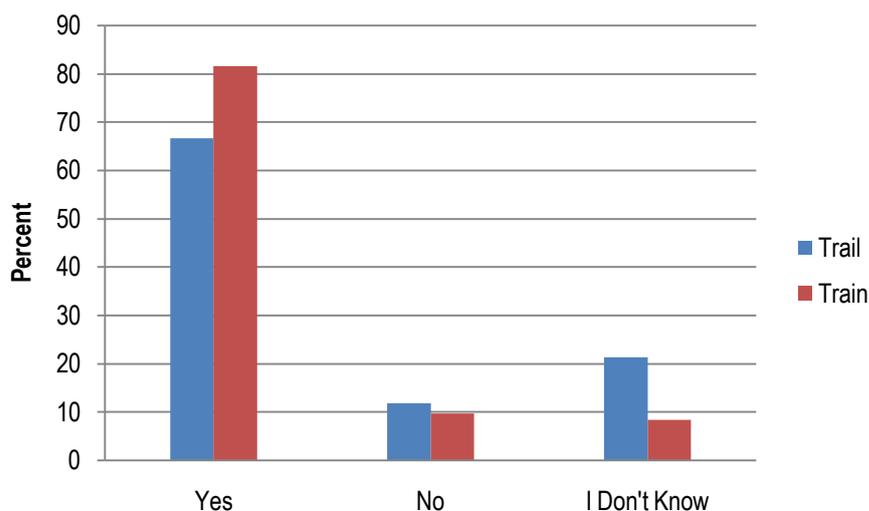
**Figure 32: Modes of Travel to Access/Exit the Otago Central Rail Trail**

## SECTION 6: OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH TRAIN OPTIONS

The following sections compare train and trail respondent's answers to questions about satisfaction of services.

### 6.1 Satisfaction with Taieri Gorge Railway Schedule

All respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the Taieri Gorge Train schedule options (e.g. time, days, destinations). The majority of both trail (66.7%) and train users (81.7%) were satisfied. Only 11.9% of trail users and 9.8% of train users were not satisfied with the train schedule.



**Figure 33: Satisfaction with Train Schedule Options**

Comments from trail users who were not satisfied with the train schedule included:

*“during summer high season months the train should be servicing Middlemarch and the rail trail daily!”*

*“frequency is the problem”*

*“It would have been good to have had the experience from Middlemarch”*

*“The Pukerangi option is too far away from Middlemarch. it is not useful at all for the rail trail”*

Train users expressed similar concerns:

*“need to provide more access to Middlemarch for tourists and cyclists.”*

*“perhaps adding a extra 1/2 hour to actually see more of Middlemarch especially during summer months.”*

*“there wasn't many train transportation from Middlemarch so we had to fit our holiday around the schedule.”*

*“we had to reschedule holiday in order to get a day the train went to Middlemarch and would prefer more choice.”*

See Appendices 10 and 11 for comments provided by both trail and train users regarding satisfaction with the Taieri Gorge Railway schedule.

## 6.2 Satisfaction with Pukerangi Service Option and OCRT

All respondents were asked if they had used the Pukerangi service of the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the Otago Central Rail Trail, how satisfied they were with the option. A five-point scale was provided ranging from 'Not at all satisfied' to 'Very satisfied'. The majority of both trail (n=15, 55.6%) and train (n=26, 39.4%) users were very satisfied with the Pukerangi train service option and access to the OCRT, however, trail users had a higher incidence of satisfaction levels than train users.

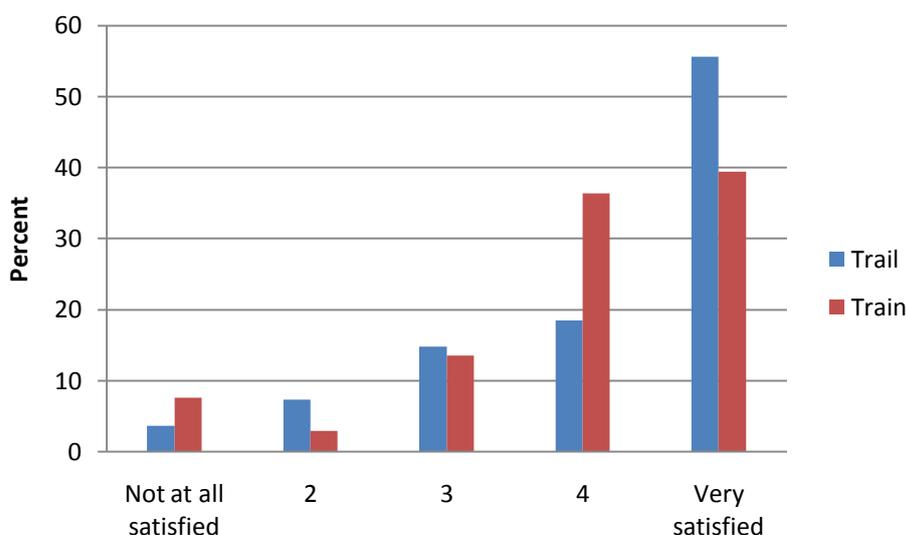


Figure 34: Satisfaction with Pukerangi Train Access to the OCRT

## 6.3 Satisfaction with Pukerangi Service Option and OCRT

If respondents had used, or intend to use, the Pukerangi service of the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the Otago Central Rail Train, they were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with several items, including schedule, information, convenience, cost and opportunities (see Tables 2 and 3). A 5-point scale was provided, ranging from 'very satisfied' to 'not at all satisfied'. Most respondents were very satisfied with the service. Train respondents were slightly less satisfied than trail respondents, the former presenting higher response rates in the less satisfied categories.

For rail trail users, the 'convenience of transportation linkages' and the 'train schedule - day of the week' were the two only variables that had more than 40% of respondents selecting the 'very satisfied' option, respectively receiving 45.5% and 42.5% of responses. 'Information about bike transport on the train' and the 'opportunity to stay in Middlemarch' were the two variables with highest rate of dissatisfaction (5.9% and 5.4% respectively).

Train users, on the other hand, indicated that they were 'very satisfied' with the 'train trip to/from Dunedin' and the 'train schedule/options'. Conversely, the 'cost of train to Pukerangi from Dunedin' and the 'train schedule - time of the day' received the lower ratings of satisfaction.

**Table 2: Summary of Rail Trail Users' Satisfaction Levels with Taieri Gorge Railway Train Service**

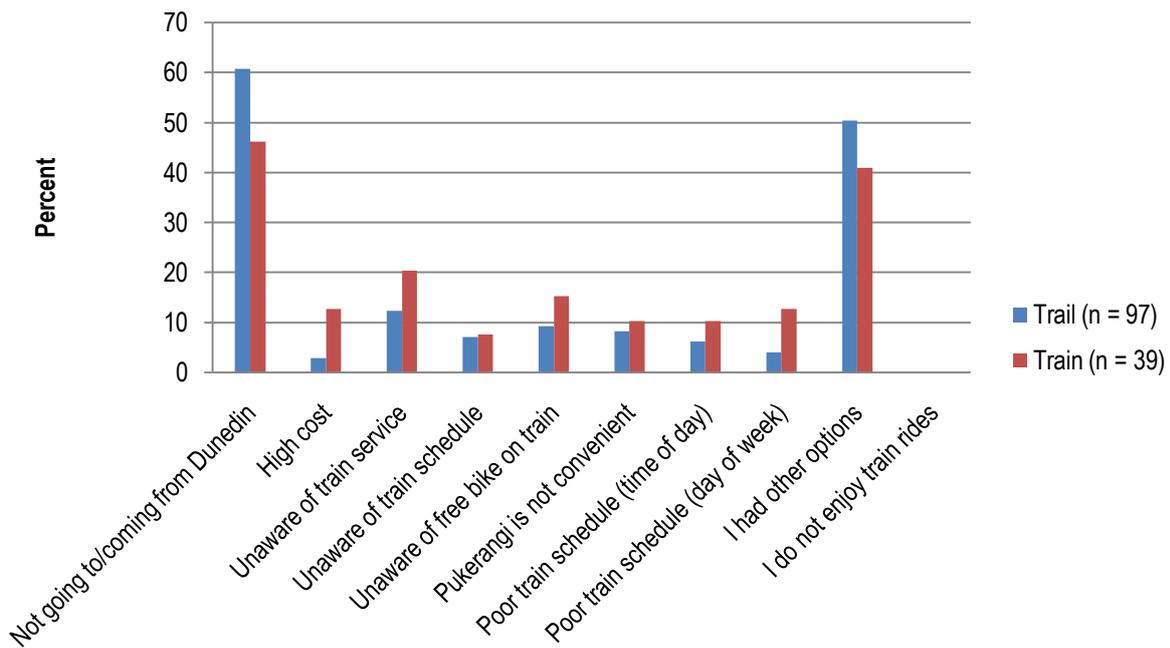
Satisfaction	Very Satisfied	2	3	4	Not at all Satisfied	n/a
TRAIL RESPONDENTS						
Train schedule/options (n = 47)	38.3%	27.7%	23.4%	6.4%	4.3%	-----
Information about bike transport on train (n = 34)	26.5%	29.4%	29.4%	8.8%	5.9%	-----
Train trip to/from Dunedin (n = 41)	39.0%	29.3%	17.1%	9.8%	4.9%	-----
Train schedule – DAY of the week (n = 40)	42.5%	27.5%	20.0%	5.0%	5.0%	-----
Train schedule – TIME of day (n = 39)	38.5%	38.5%	10.3%	7.7%	5.1%	-----
Convenience of transportation linkages (n = 33)	45.5%	30.3%	15.2%	6.1%	3.0%	-----
Cost of train to Pukerangi from Dunedin (n = 38)	34.2%	42.1%	15.8%	5.3%	2.6%	-----
Cost of getting to Pukerangi from OCRT (n = 39)	28.2%	28.2%	10.3%	5.1%	2.6%	25.6%
Opportunity to stay in Middlemarch (n = 37)	24.3%	24.3%	18.9%	2.7%	5.4%	24.3%

**Table 3: Summary of Train Users' Satisfaction Levels with Taieri Gorge Railway Train Service**

Satisfaction	Very Satisfied	2	3	4	Not at all Satisfied	n/a
TRAIN RESPONDENTS						
Train schedule/options (n = 86)	44.2%	22.1%	10.5%	16.3%	7.0%	-----
Information about bike transport on train (n = 74)	37.8%	13.5%	29.7%	10.8%	8.1%	-----
Train trip to/from Dunedin (n = 77)	50.6%	23.4%	9.1%	9.1%	7.8%	-----
Train schedule – DAY of the week (n = 81)	32.1%	18.5%	21.0%	19.8%	8.6%	-----
Train schedule – TIME of day (n = 77)	36.4%	27.3%	16.9%	13.0%	6.5%	-----
Convenience of transportation linkages (n = 67)	28.4%	23.9%	23.9%	14.9%	9.0%	-----
Cost of train to Pukerangi from Dunedin (n = 78)	24.4%	24.4%	23.1%	23.1%	5.1%	-----
Cost of getting to Pukerangi from OCRT (n = 66)	22.7%	21.2%	16.7%	16.7%	9.1%	13.6%
Opportunity to stay in Middlemarch (n = 70)	28.6%	17.1%	22.9%	10.0%	8.6%	12.9%

## 6.4 Reasons for Not Using the Taieri Gorge Railway to Access/Exit OCRT

Respondents who did not use the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the Otago Central Rail Trail during any of their visits were asked to indicate why. Ten potential reasons for not using the TGR as an access/exit route were provided. The main reason for trail (n=59, 60.8%) and train (n=18, 46.2%) users for not using the TGR was 'not going to/coming from Dunedin'. This was closely followed by 50.5% of trail users and 41% of train users indicating they had other, more convenient transport options.



**Figure 35: Reasons for Not Using the Taieri Gorge Railway to Access OCRT**

Other reasons for not using the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the Otago Central Rail Trail were indicated by some participants and are all listed in Appendix 12. For additional comments about the Taieri Gorge Railway and the connection to/from the Otago Central Rail Trail, please see Appendix 13.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note that comments were transcribed verbatim and were not proofed for grammatical errors. There were also a few comments that were not written clearly and therefore present question marks to indicate that the researchers were not able to identify the content.

## SECTION 7: SUMMARY DISCUSSION OF SURVEY RESULTS

The survey data (Train n=501; Rail Trail n=190) revealed that the majority of rail trail visitors cycle the trail west to east, spending four to three nights along the Otago Central Rail Trail. Most visitors access and exit the rail trail using a private car (40.7% of rail trail respondents and 37.9% of train respondents), but a significant proportion of rail trail respondents indicated they had accessed the trail by bus/shuttle (33.3%) and were exiting it using the Taieri Gorge Railway (23.7%). A significant proportion of rail trail users answered, however, that they were not aware of the Taieri Gorge Railway prior to visiting to the OCRT (21%), a result which indicates the current lack of emphasis on information about the combination of the two rail products.

The vast majority of rail trail respondents who had previously been on the Taieri Gorge Railway used the train service for sightseeing purposes (78.8%). Similarly, the main motivation of train users was to do sightseeing (80.3%). However, it is interesting to note that 15.3% of rail trail visitors had previously used the train as a transport to/from the OCRT, and 26% of current train users were either using or had used the train in the past to access/exit the OCRT. More importantly, when asked about a potential future use of the Taieri Gorge Railway, 21.5% of rail trail respondents and 31.3% of train users indicated they would use the train as a transport to/from the OCRT, suggesting a latent demand for such a combined product.

Similarly, although 50% of rail trail respondents expressed that it was not at all likely that they would use the Taieri Gorge Railway train service to Middlemarch in the future, 25.5% indicated that it was either likely or very likely that they would use this particular train service in the future. When asked what would be the expected motivation for such use, more than 40% indicated that it would be for using the train as a transport option to the OCRT.

Results from the survey conducted with train passengers revealed that the vast majority (89%) of users prefer the Middlemarch service. Results also showed that almost half (44.9%) of the train passengers surveyed using the Middlemarch service were using it as a one-way trip, instead of the common round trip offered. Such a result suggests again that there is a significant demand for an expanded service to Middlemarch, either for the sake of the train experience, as some of the survey comments indicated, or for combining the rail trail with the train trip.

Train passengers also indicated that their choice for the service they were currently using was based on day/time convenience and availability, and not on preference. Only 3.7% of respondents indicated that they chose the Pukerangi service because it was the cheaper option, 17.9% because it was the most scenic section of the railway and 7.1% because it was a shorter trip. The latter result contradicts current arguments that tourists to Dunedin are more likely to choose half-day activities rather than longer experiences, such as the 6 hour return trip to Middlemarch. In fact, 22.3% of respondents indicated they had chosen the Middlemarch train due to the longer duration of the trip. In addition, train respondents who were using the Pukerangi service were asked if their schedule allowed, would they prefer to take the train to Middlemarch. 61% of passengers indicated that yes, they would prefer to take the train to Middlemarch.

More than one third of train respondents had either cycled/walked or planned to cycle/walk the OCRT. Of those, 50.2% used/were going to use the Taieri Gorge Railway service to Middlemarch to access or exit the trail. Another 14.3% used/were going to use the Pukerangi service, a result that again confirms the strength of the combined product.

Even though results imply the user preference for the Middlemarch train service, the vast majority of both train and rail trail participants indicated they were satisfied with the train schedule options, although train users presented higher levels of satisfaction. Similarly, when asked about their satisfaction with the Pukerangi service, respondents indicated high levels of contentment with 55.6% of rail trail visitors and 39.4% of train passengers indicating they were very satisfied. Interestingly, here rail trail visitors were more satisfied with this option than were train passengers, again suggesting that visitors to Dunedin are ready for longer train experiences. This result also confirms interview findings, in particular findings from interviews with tour operators. According to this group, package tour clients are highly satisfied with the rail trail/train experience, even if that includes a shuttle service to Pukerangi to meet the Taieri Gorge Railway. As all details of the trip are taken care of by service providers, the tourist does not feel that his/her experience has been diminished by not having direct access to the train.

Lastly, when asked about the reasons for not using the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the OCRT, train and rail trail respondents indicated that not going/coming from Dunedin and having other options were the main rationale for choosing not to use the train service. It is interesting to note here, however, that more than 20% of train passengers who had previously used the rail trail did not use the Taieri Gorge Railway services because they were unaware of the train service. Again, it does not seem that tourists are being well informed about the combination of both railway products.

## **SECTION 8: INTERVIEWS**

### **8.1 Methods**

This section presents results of the qualitative data gathered through interviews with key stakeholders of the Taieri Gorge Railway and Otago Central Rail Trail. Ten formal interviews (digitally recorded) and three informal interviews (not digitally recorded) were conducted in the first semester of 2010 (May and June), and a total of sixteen businesses/community groups were represented. Different types of businesses were sampled, including accommodation, bike hire, rail trail tours providers, and restaurants, as well as community boards/trusts, tourism boards and information centres. Participants were based in Dunedin, Middlemarch, Hyde, Ranfurly, Cromwell and Alexandra. Interviews were semi-structured and participants were selected due to their significant involvement with the Otago Central Rail Trail, the Taieri Gorge Railway and/or the Strath Taieri community.

Interviews were conducted individually or in small groups with representatives of the same interest group (fifteen people in total were interviewed). All interview participants were informed of the nature of the research and where interviews were digitally recorded participants signed a consent form as per University of Otago ethics requirements. Length of interviews varied from 15 minutes through to 65 minutes. Questions related to their involvement with the Otago Central Rail Trail, the Taieri Gorge Railway and/or the Strath Taieri community; their views on the potential to increase the train service to Middlemarch; the level of satisfaction with the current service; and risks and opportunities for their businesses, for tourists and for their communities.

In addition to interviews, one of the researchers attended an Otago Central Rail Trail product update meeting in Cromwell, where four rail trail service providers (one of which had been previously interviewed) presented an update of their products to i-SITE staff from the Central Otago region. Seven i-SITE were represented (Wanaka, Queenstown, Dunedin, Oamaru, Ranfurly, Alexandra and Cromwell) by a total of twenty seven staff. Tourism Central Otago and the Central Otago Visitor Centre also were represented at the meeting. The meeting structure was based on each service provider, all based in Central Otago (no Middlemarch or Dunedin-based operators), presenting their major products to i-SITE staff, who then followed up with questions. The aim was to better inform i-SITE 'front counter' staff of the services provided on the rail trail to better inform tourists who want to visit the OCRT. At the end of the meeting, the researcher was invited to the front and introduced the present study to all meeting participants. A debate followed where the various stakeholders presented their views and perspectives on the positive and negative impacts of an extended train service to Middlemarch on the rail trail, its businesses and communities, and on the visitors' experience. During tea breaks and after the meeting was finished, the researcher was also able to informally discuss with participants their personal views on the matter, and important information was registered also at this stage. In summary, this meeting was extremely valuable as we were able to hear from package tour providers as well as from those who deal more with independent travellers their views on the benefits and constraints to a regular train service to Middlemarch.

### **8.2 Analysis**

Different issues emerged from the interviews and to facilitate the analysis of the material they will be grouped into the main interview themes: 1) General views on the potential to increase the train service to Middlemarch; 2) Level of satisfaction with the current service; and 3) Risks and opportunities for businesses, for tourists and for communities. Also, within each theme, the perspectives of the four key

stakeholder groups consulted (rail trail service providers, Middlemarch community, independent travellers advisers – i.e. i-SITE staff – and Taieri Gorge Railway) may be presented separately, as similarities were often found within groups.

### **8.2.1 General views on the potential to increase the train service to Middlemarch**

All interview participants agreed that there was an increasing demand for an expanded train service to Middlemarch. The popularity of the Otago Central Rail Trail in the last few years has meant that visitors to the rail trail have increasingly combined their rail trail experience with a trip on the Taieri Gorge Railway. Such a combined tourist product has proved successful, particularly with guided tour groups, who are encouraged by tour providers to start or finish their rail trail journey with a train trip. On the other hand, independent rail trail travellers are not always aware of the train service, and when they are it seems that there is some disappointment over the fact that the train only goes twice a week to Middlemarch. So far, the shuttle service between Pukerangi and Middlemarch has not been sufficiently advertised and some tourists are unsure of their options and timetables in regards to the trip to and from Pukerangi.

*The number of people who get very confused which shuttle they're meant to be on, they get confused why they can't get a train every day, frustrated and annoyed. (Participant 7)*

Although there was general agreement that there is demand for the extended train service, some participants questioned the logistical feasibility of the service, and its impacts on the Middlemarch community. Some service providers, in particular, were concerned with the readiness of the Middlemarch community to cater for such an increase in visitors and argued that the lack of infrastructure to support such a demand can actually negatively impact the tourist experience. The train schedule and number of cars to take passengers, together with cruise ship demands and other Taieri Gorge Train services, are significant logistical impediments from a train operations point of view.

*I do think there's a potential problem the train going up to Middlemarch and back daily, from Dunedin to Middlemarch daily, because that extends that train service substantially and doesn't, and therefore could conflict with a half day that it is at the moment, therefore you can't do the train trip and say the albatross colony in one day. (Participant 7)*

Another important issue to be factored in is the impact on tourism in the greater Dunedin region. The expanded service could provide visitors with more holiday options and flexibility, as tourists could choose to overnight in Middlemarch (rail trail participants or not), knowing that a return train would be available on the next day; tourists coming from the rail trail could choose to be dropped off at Wingatui and transferred to the Dunedin airport, bringing more volume to the airport that has been recently losing passengers to Queenstown airport; and tourists coming out of the rail trail, at any day of the week, could still opt to stay for a rest night (and day) in Dunedin before departure to their next destination.

*if people are only on the rail trail travelling from Hyde to Middlemarch it's only 30km, it's only 2h, so most of them are there around lunch time anyway, alright, if they're doing that section of the trail, and so they're going to be there in plenty of time to actually catch that earlier train, which obviously gives them the opportunity, when they get to Dunedin, to actually either do some other tourist activity or to actually fly, if they are flying out, they can fly out that day. (Participant 8)*

A negative view on the issue predicts visitors bypassing Middlemarch, starting the rail trail right after their arrival from Dunedin and staying overnight in Hyde, instead of Middlemarch.

*We find that people who come out straight in Middlemarch, they will get the bikes, leave their bags, get changed, and then they'll go. Really, as far as we can see all their bringing to Middlemarch is perhaps buying lunch in Middlemarch and then they're leaving. Whereas the people that come in the afternoon they come too late to start cycling the rail trail because they're not getting to Middlemarch until 5 o'clock. So Middlemarch somehow benefits, whether it's us with our business or some of the other accommodation providers with a night's accommodation, with dinner for the group, and also often there's breakfast. So they're actually staying in Middlemarch for longer, they're putting more revenue into the community as opposed to just coming, getting on their bikes and going. (Participant 6)*

Such a view, however, was only espoused by few participants, with the majority perceiving it as an opportunity for Middlemarch businesses to expand their tourist products and services, and for both the Otago Central Rail Trail and the Taieri Gorge Railway, through the establishment of a stronger, interconnected product.

It is interesting to note here that the businesses that are not based in Middlemarch and/or do not provide a service in this district did not express any concerns regarding an extended train service, and were very supportive of more frequent trains coming to Middlemarch. This group agreed that the experience for their clients would be enhanced if the tourists were able to catch the train daily from the Middlemarch station.

*...having the train go right through Middlemarch, obviously makes it, I suppose, just a wee bit easier for our customers to access the train as opposed to taking a 20km drive on a gravel road or anything like that to get there. (Participant 8)*

### **8.2.2 Level of satisfaction with the current service**

In general, most interview participants were satisfied with the current Taieri Gorge Railway services. As businesses have been pro-active in organising the transfer between Pukerangi and Middlemarch, and as visitors to the train are mostly very satisfied with their train experience (as our survey findings confirmed), rail trail service providers and i-SITE staff were contented with the train schedule and the experiences being provided for tourists. i-SITE staff, in particular, affirmed that visitors who come to see them for rail trail bookings will do what is available without expressing any type of concern. Apparently, they have not yet received many complaints about the linkages between the Taieri Gorge Railway and the Otago Central Rail Trail. Nevertheless, it is important to note that i-SITE staff may not receive feedback from many tourists after their visits/experiences.

*If that's the service that is available, that's what they have to do. (Participant 9)*

At the same time, however, i-SITE staff affirmed that there is not a clear (formal or informal) policy that suggests that the combined product be promoted, and therefore often they will sell Otago Central Rail Trail tours that do not necessarily involve the Taieri Gorge Railway train, and vice-versa. This is particularly true in the case of visitor centres located towards the western end of the trail.

Notably, service providers based in Middlemarch have stronger opinions in regards to the issue, either being extremely satisfied with the current schedule or extremely discontented. Those who are happy with the schedule currently provided by the train argue that Middlemarch businesses have found ways of leveraging from the service and are now well positioned to accommodate the increasing demand for rail trail services without compromising the tourist experience in any way. Moreover, it is argued that the Middlemarch community cannot sustainably cope with a daily train service that would bring hundreds of train passengers who would not be going on to the rail trail and would be staying in this rural community

for less than 1 hour per day. These passengers would require services that are currently not available and/or that are provided twice a week by volunteers only (making reference to the arts & crafts stalls and the museum).

On the other side of the fence, supporters of an extended train service suggest that the community will greatly benefit from a more regular train schedule to Middlemarch. Such a change would open new businesses opportunities for community members and would therefore bring more income and economic development to the district. They argue that beyond the rail trail this service would open possibilities for other forms of tourism, potentially bringing more day-visitors and over-night stays. According to this group of advocates, Middlemarch has the untapped potential to become a destination in its own right but it lacks a major pull, which could be provided by the Taieri Gorge Railway.

*It also means that you're developing a product that instead of having shuttles run down to Pukerangi you may have the train service to Middlemarch and people having 4h or 3h to do an experience in Middlemarch, whether it'll be just a bit of the rail trail, going down to Salt Lake, or other experiences in Middlemarch and then getting the train back down to meet the other train, so those who want to spend more time in Middlemarch can have it without loading on those who want to have only a half day experience (Participant 7)*

The Taieri Gorge Railway position in this issue is equally complex. On the one hand, staff are mindful of contemporary tourists' tight holiday schedules and believe that a half-day trip on the train is what most visitors are prepared to take (the Pukerangi service takes 4 hours, as opposed to the Middlemarch service, which takes 6 hours). In addition, cruise ship demands put high pressure on carriages and railway schedules, making changes to accommodate a longer service and a quality trip to cruise ships passengers extremely complex and, therefore, time-consuming (they note it would take several months or even years to completely and successfully adjust to a new schedule and high investments would need to be made). On the other hand, staff are also aware of the increased demand for one-way trips coming from rail trail participants. The popularity of the trail and the notable increase in passenger numbers linking their trip with their rail trail experience is an indicator of the potential to provide more regular services for Middlemarch. The challenge is to find a profitable and sustainable balance between rail trail, cruise ships and regular tourist demands while taking into consideration the amount of investment necessary to put the service into practice.

Other participants presented similar feelings to most of the Middlemarch community members, and were highly supportive of the increased provision of Middlemarch train services. According to them, the train schedule is outdated and does not reflect the contemporary tourism demands. Although they acknowledge the success of the Taieri Gorge Railway in its current format, there is a belief that a summer schedule with daily services to Middlemarch would be beneficial to all involved.

*If it's focused on the tourist having the best possible experience, [...] because I want the people to say 'wow, this has got a whole lot of things that no other rail trail will have' and they'll want to continue saying that this is the number one, then that train is really part pivotal of it (Participant 7)*

In general, however, most interview participants agreed that, from a tourist perspective, a regular service between Middlemarch and Dunedin would be the ideal scenario.

*the ideal situation, I guess, for the customers is to have that link into Middlemarch, which does, I suppose, eliminate that need to be sitting on a bus for 20 minutes. (Participant 10)*

### 8.2.3 Risks and opportunities for businesses, for tourists and for communities

Findings from the interviews indicated that participants perceive more opportunities than risks for businesses, for tourists and for communities. There is a general positive view permeating all informants' points, although different levels of commitment were noted. Not surprisingly, interviewees based in Middlemarch were the most passionate about the subject and had clear, strong opinions.

Most participants agreed that the main opportunities lie on the development of a stronger, more unique product. Few rail trail tracks around the world still have a heritage train in operation and tourism providers in the region should make the most of this unique character. The experience, according to our informants, is more authentic and distinctive due to the historical character of the 'full' railway experience.

*[the link with the train] gives the clients the opportunity to do, to basically do the whole trail, you might say from first initiated, oh well, it didn't actually, it initiated in Cromwell, but basically to go the whole length of the trail to give them an idea of, I suppose, what would've been like travelling on the train when the line was open all the way, so they do that, it just completes the experience should I say, and it's good, because people, otherwise won't have the opportunity, or don't have the opportunity to do that train or don't make the opportunity to do that rail trip, and you know, it's quite spectacular through that gorge [...] so I think it's an asset for our business to have that, that's just something we've got here, which is quite unique as well, along with the rail trail, it's got the uniqueness of having that finishing off on the railway line, on the train, through a gorge section which is quite spectacular. So definitely it's an asset as far as we're concerned. (Participant 8)*

Current marketing efforts have not focused on the uniqueness of the Taieri Gorge Railway/Otago Central Rail Trail connection, apart from isolated efforts, coming particularly from tour providers. The independent traveller is not well informed of such a link and it seems that the rail trail is not making use of a significant marketing advantage.

Similarly, participants suggested that the Taieri Gorge Railway could benefit from a stronger link between their services and the Otago Central Rail Trail, particularly as the latter is attracting more visitors every year and has been selected as one of New Zealand's 'must-do's' for domestic and international tourists. This could be used as a way of rejuvenating their product, which has not had any major changes in the last few years. Again, the idea of having a 'full' experience of the heritage trail is appealing and could be profited from. Moreover, the independent, rail trail visitor will be provided with a cheaper option to connect the rail trail experience with the Taieri Gorge Railway. Currently, the shuttle service from Middlemarch to Pukerangi costs \$20.00, whereas the difference in price for the two train services is \$7.00.

*...going from Middlemarch, I don't know, I guess to go on the train from Middlemarch costs an extra 10 dollars as opposed to Pukerangi, or something I think, somewhere around there, if you do the bus trip it costs you 20 bucks, ok so there's an extra cost involved in actually doing the bus trip, so a lot of independent, do-it-yourselfers reject that as a poor option, because 10 dollars is 10 dollars if you're a backpacker, or whatever [...] There's definitely probably a percentage of the market out there will be looking at it saying oh that's gonna cost me 20 dollars to do that so therefore there's a cost factor to be factored in I guess. (Participant 8)*

Another opportunity signalled by some participants is the idea of a more environment-friendly experience, adding a new 'twist' to the combined product. Tourists will be buying a 'guilt-free' experience, where they will be using no motorised transport for the duration of their trail experience.

Although support cars may be included in the package, the tourists themselves are not directly engaged with any motorised road transport and the independent traveller may enjoy the whole trail without the need of a car. Such a characteristic may appeal to an emerging, eco-conscious tourist market.

*It's moreover than this, [...] it's the real confusion and a real backlog, you're getting half empty shuttles all competing with each other to go down there adding to the cost of the city ratepayers to maintain a road that is awful, and there's no cheap way of resolving, I mean, a subsidise train could minimise a whole lot of those costs. And make the resources be used a heck of a lot better. And we're talking about sustainable economies and driving, those sort of things, there's a real fit having a train doing that. (Participant 7)*

Participants identified also opportunities for other products to be created in the region, particularly in Middlemarch and surrounds, that would enhance the experience of tourists going to the Otago Central Rail Trail or of others who will have other motivations. The natural landscape of the area, including scenic areas such as the Rock and Pillar Range and the Sutton Salt Lake, can be used to develop new products for the tourist who will continue their experience on the rail trail, for the ones who have just arrived from several days on a bike, for visitors who are coming for a one-day rural experience, or for those who want to have a relaxing weekend in Middlemarch. Tours, accommodation, cafes, museums, shops, galleries and others could be created to attend the tourist demand and enhance their experience onsite.

Local community groups that, at present, are involved with the train station and its passengers twice a week only, see this move as an opportunity to increase engagement and therefore expand their efforts and revenue, which is entirely transferred to community welfare projects. Such an outcome would benefit the community as whole, improving social development and the community's quality of living. Other catering opportunities would certainly be taken up by locals, according to interview participants, and most community members did not express concerns with the potential lack of infra-structure in the district to cope with a sudden surge in day-visitors numbers.

*Most of [the community] want it. Initially, right back to 93 when they were starting, there was a couple who set up a mini golf, that was to have things you could do in that hour, another guy who set up a pond, or just short walks, all within the village, so to entertain the people, and another lady had this, it's not croquet, but it's something like croquet, another game, opposite to the hotel, so yes, there's been lots of those little schemes, but to get them rolling [we need the support and the tourists]. (Participant 5)*

Local tourism and interchange between Middlemarch and Dunedin was also noted as an important opportunity arising from an expanded train schedule covering the route. Daily services would encourage Dunedin residents to spend, for example, a weekend holiday with the family in Middlemarch exploring the scenic and culturally significant surroundings. As the return trip can be slightly long for families with children (as some of the survey comments indicated), in particular, the option of staying overnight in Middlemarch to engage in other activities, active or passive, would add appeal to the local market, giving the Middlemarch local community another source of tourism income and providing Dunedin residents with another leisure option.

The main risk identified by participants was the lack of infra-structure to provide a quality experience to visitors who come to Middlemarch on the train but are not necessarily going on the rail trail. For these respondents, the infra-structure necessary to cater for the 1-hour visitors is not present and the investment required to build it is higher than the benefits that can be accrued by their short visits.

*I think at Middlemarch itself very little actually happens at the moment when they finish the trail ok, people come to Middlemarch and they'll come in and say well we wanna go and have a look at Middlemarch, and they are back in 5 minutes, 'well, I've seen around Middlemarch' because there's no activities for them to carry on so there's an opportunity there I guess [...] to offer an opportunity to show people around the district, there's a few sightseeing things, you know. So there's that gap if they arrive at 12 o'clock and they are not catching the bus until 4 o'clock in the afternoon to go through to that late train they've got basically 4h that they've got fill in in Middlemarch, now they can go and have lunch, well that takes up an hour, so they've still got 3h they've got nothing really to do and so I guess if you're gonna have a 10'clock train that will just eliminate that and they can go right through to Dunedin. But I think there's, what it does it throws out opportunities for other businesses in the town to actually latch on into that so ok I've got all these people hanging around waiting for a bus to go through to the train at 4 o'clock there's an opportunity there for me to put a bus on and take people on a sightseeing trip around there and give them a bit of a history stuff or there's an opportunity to put on some sort of activity that they can do while they're there, some sort of passive activity or whatever. (Participant 8)*

At the same time, as the quote above indicates, the current schedule, with a later train leaving from Pukerangi, provides an opportunity for Middlemarch businesses that has not been taken advantage of, leading to the question of the readiness and volition of Middlemarch community members to actually further develop tourism operations in the district.

More significantly, participants who were not totally in favour of a change in the train schedule argued that rail trail visitors would bypass Middlemarch, arriving there early with the train and following onto the trail, spending their first night in Hyde instead. For them, with the current schedule, rail trail tourists are more likely to stay for the night in Middlemarch before they begin their rail trail experience. More significantly, with the train stopping at Pukerangi, an extra service is needed for those who are linking their train experience with the rail trail; a service that has been identified by a few operators that now profit from the shuttle service between the two localities.

*What it offers, to our business I guess, the Pukerangi transport is another opportunity to I suppose tap into... tap into an opportunity for us to run vehicles through there so therefore it's another business opportunity for us. [...] so, as I say, it's a business opportunity for us to put services on there to meet the train. From that perspective, yes, I think it's ideal for us the way it is at the moment, obviously it takes more of our resources to actually do that. (Participant 6)*

From a tourist perspective, some service providers indicated that the tourists enjoy the drive between Pukerangi and Middlemarch, as it is usually guided by a local driver who presents the scenery and points of historical/cultural interest. According to these informants, such landmarks are not easily visible from the train and provide an added element to tourists' rail trail experience. An increased train service to Middlemarch would jeopardize such a venture putting in risk part of the product that is being currently provided.

*the drive in there is quite interesting for the customers too, there are some quite unique landscapes as you drive into Pukerangi, we see customers always refer to, there is a whole other things on the side of the road, fences made out of rock and there's a whole lot of other I guess local things that they don't actually see on the trail when they drive in there and they wouldn't see if they were in the train from Middlemarch through to Pukerangi, that's quite, pretty ordinary sort of the railway line. (Participant 8)*

On the other hand, some participants argued that some tourists are choosing to return to the western end of the trail at the end of their rail trail experience in Middlemarch as they are discouraged to proceed with the train, since there is no clear, smooth and evident connection between the two. Such a situation does not aid tourism development in Dunedin and the use of Dunedin's airport instead of Queenstown airport, for example.

Another significant risk identified by some respondents is the inability of the Taieri Gorge Railway to effectively cater for the cruise ship industry while at the same time providing daily services to Middlemarch. During the last summer season, at least one train scheduled to Middlemarch had to be cancelled due to cruise ship demands. There is a fear, therefore, that the Taieri Gorge Railway does not have the capacity to supply both markets. In that case, some argue, the cruise ship industry should be prioritised as it is one of the most important sources of tourism revenue to the city and the railway company.

Moreover, coach tours also are a significant market for the TGR and their current operation is based on a consistent schedule throughout the week. Any changes would need to be negotiated and could impact considerably on the train market. In summary, with the Taieri Gorge Railway existing fleet, it is virtually impossible to cater for the varied markets currently targeted by the railway, and a significant investment needs to be made in order for the train to operate constantly between Dunedin and Middlemarch without jeopardizing the economic feasibility of the Taieri Gorge Railway services.

### **8.3 Recommendations**

Some interview participants presented recommendations for the better sustainable development of train and rail trail tourism in the region. The following is a summary of the main suggestions collated by the authors.

One of the respondents indicated that a strong and definite move to link the Taieri Gorge Railway and the Otago Central Rail Trail would be better achieved by an important change in the current marketing campaign for the rail trail: Middlemarch should not be 'sold' as the finishing/starting point of the trail, but Dunedin. In this way, the train becomes an effective and indispensable part of the rail trail experience and visitors are encouraged to explore Middlemarch as a significant rural community that developed with the historic railway line. Visitors would therefore be encouraged to 'discover' other sites of historical/cultural/environmental significance in the surroundings and would stay for at least one night in the township.

A recommendation that most participants agreed with was the gradual increase in Middlemarch services, as a way to prepare the Middlemarch community and as a way to test the feasibility and profitability of a regular service to Middlemarch. All participants who suggested such a course of action suggested a Wednesday train servicing Middlemarch during one summer season before further analysis or action is taken. From a tourist perspective, it is argued that one other option during the week will spread visitation across the week and reduce pressure on accommodation providers during the summer season. According to participants, with the current schedule, most guided tourists and independent travellers who are taking the train are doing it on the same days, stopping at the same locations and using mostly the same accommodation providers, in order to catch the Friday or Sunday train. Such a situation only highlights the significance and success of the combined product. This suggestion, however, makes the establishment of the above mentioned recommendation unfeasible. Therefore, if Dunedin is to become an integral part of the Otago Central Rail Trail, and the Taieri Gorge

Railway a crucial component of the experience, then it is imperative that a daily service is operated between Middlemarch and Dunedin. In addition, according to some participants, the coach tour market needs a consistent schedule employed throughout the week and having a day in the middle of the week with a different schedule will not suit this TGR significant market.

With such a view in mind, a few participants suggested that a 'feeder train', in the form of a rail car for example, could be subsidised to operate daily between Pukerangi and Middlemarch, making the connection economically feasible and operationally simple. In this way, the tourist experience would not be compromised, the short stop at Pukerangi could be followed by a quick change of carriers for passengers continuing through to Middlemarch, whereas other passengers, who want only a half-day trip, can be back on board and to Dunedin by just after lunch time. Such a solution would not impact on current arrangements with coach tours, cruise ships, and independent travellers who are on a tight schedule and have time only for a 4 hour journey. On the other hand, tourists who wish to continue on to the rail trail will have a seamless railway experience, and day and overnight visitors to Middlemarch will have an easy option of transport that facilitates and encourages their choosing of this recreation opportunity.

## SECTION 9: CONCLUSION

This study provides information about the level of satisfaction with the current service provided by the Taieri Gorge Railway, particularly in relation to providing a connection with the Otago Central Rail Trail. The study comprised two survey questionnaires administered to rail trail visitors and train travellers that compared their current use and satisfaction levels with the service provided by the Taieri Gorge Railway, and interviews with key stakeholders that investigated the impacts of an expanded train service on the community and on tourism ventures in the region.

The survey data revealed that the Taieri Gorge Railway is currently used by a significant number of rail trail visitors as part of their 'complete' rail experience. This is particularly true for tourists who purchase packaged tours for their holiday trip. However, a large number of visitors, especially independent travellers, are still not aware of the connection between the TGR and the Otago Central Rail Trail, a result which indicates the current lack of emphasis on information about the combination of the two rail products. Interview results presented similar findings.

One of the main findings of the quantitative phase of the research was that an overwhelming majority of train passengers would prefer to use the Middlemarch service (or had made the conscious decision to take this particular train), and that their choice for the train service used was based on day/time convenience and availability, and not on preference. Such a result goes against current views that favour half-day activities for Dunedin tourists, with the argument that tourists look for short, instant experiences, and that Dunedin tourists are not prepared to stay in town for more than just a couple of days, and therefore longer activities would not be prioritised. However, results indicated that, in fact, a significant proportion of train passengers had chosen the Middlemarch train due to the longer duration of the trip.

The interview material provided important insights into the context of the OCRT/TGR tourism product. In general, all individuals and groups directly involved with either the OCRT or the TGR agree that there is enough demand for an expanded train service to Middlemarch. All participants agree also that the association between the Otago Central Rail Trail and the Taieri Gorge Railway is greatly beneficial for all those involved with tourism in the region and should be fostered and further strengthened to increase the benefits of such a powerful product. However, there are a few stakeholders who are hesitant to the possibility of a daily service to Middlemarch, particularly because of a potential negative impact on the Middlemarch community if they are not able to cope with the demand for goods and services that such a service would create. In order to address that concern, several interview participants recommended that a service on Wednesdays during the summer season should be trialled to assess the economic and social feasibility of extended services to Middlemarch. If the trial proves successful, daily services should be implemented. On the other hand, if such a trial is not possible and daily services are implemented without a testing season, it is recommended that this is done with a clear marketing campaign that highlights the historical and practical connection between the Taieri Gorge Railway and the Otago Central Rail Trail. Under that scenario Dunedin should be identified as the starting/finishing point of the rail trail and Middlemarch should promote itself as one significant and scenic rural destination along the 150 kilometres of the rail trail.

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: Cover Letter**

Summer 2009/2010

To the Participant

## **TAIERI GORGE RAILWAY SURVEY**

The Centre for Recreation Research, University of Otago, is undertaking a study to assess visitor satisfaction with the schedule options currently provided by the Taieri Gorge Railway, which provides a link between the Otago Central Rail Trail and a major city centre, Dunedin. Your responses to this survey will help guide potential improvements to your rail trail and/or train experience.

It would be greatly appreciated, if you could spend 5 - 10 minutes of your time completing this questionnaire, which you can either post back in the pre-paid envelope provided or return it to one of our researchers on the rail trail.

The questionnaire is anonymous – you will not be identified when these results are analysed. All the questionnaires will be analysed together, and the results treated confidentially.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire or our research, please do not hesitate to contact us – our details are below.

Many thanks for your help!

*The Team*

Centre for Recreation Research  
University of Otago

## APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire (Trail Version)

# Taieri Gorge Railway Survey

### SECTION ONE – About You and Your Travel Party

1. Gender (*Tick (✓) ONE only*)                      Male <sub>1</sub>      Female <sub>2</sub>
2. Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Country of Permanent Residence (if in New Zealand, please specify city/town): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Age: 18 – 24 <sub>1</sub> 25 – 34 <sub>2</sub>    35 – 44 <sub>3</sub>    45 – 54 <sub>4</sub>    55 – 64 <sub>5</sub>    65 – 74 <sub>6</sub>    75 + <sub>7</sub>
5. Highest level of education (*Tick (✓) ONE only*)
- Primary school <sub>1</sub>      Secondary school <sub>2</sub>      Trade Certificate <sub>3</sub>      Tertiary degree <sub>4</sub>      Postgraduate degree <sub>5</sub>      Other (specify): <sub>6</sub> \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which of the following best describes your travel party? (*Tick (✓) ALL that apply*)
- Solo <sub>1</sub>      With partner <sub>3</sub>      With children <sub>5</sub>      With friends <sub>7</sub>
- Recreational club <sub>2</sub>      Commercial guided group <sub>4</sub>      Educational group <sub>6</sub>      Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_ <sub>8</sub>
7. How many people are in your group today? (including you and any guides) \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION TWO – Your Visit

8. Is this your first visit to the Otago Central Rail Trail?    Yes <sub>1</sub>                      No <sub>2</sub>
9. What is your main activity on this trip to the Otago Central Rail Trail? (*Tick (✓) ONE only*)
- Cycling <sub>1</sub>      Walking <sub>2</sub>      Other (specify): <sub>3</sub> \_\_\_\_\_
10. Where did you start cycling/walking the Otago Central Rail Trail from? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Where are you planning to finish your cycling/walking of this trail? \_\_\_\_\_
12. How long will your visit be during this trip to the Otago Central Rail Trail? (*Tick (✓) ONE only*)
- 1 day <sub>1</sub>      Overnight <sub>2</sub>      More than one night <sub>5</sub>      Please specify: <sub>6</sub> \_\_\_\_\_
13. What mode of travel did you use to ACCESS the Otago Central Rail Trail? (*Tick (✓) ALL that apply*)
- Taieri Gorge Railway from Middlemarch <sub>1</sub>      Taieri Gorge Railway from Pukerangi <sub>3</sub>      Bicycle <sub>5</sub>      Bus/Schuttle <sub>7</sub>
- Private Car <sub>2</sub>      Hired Car <sub>4</sub>      Package Tours <sub>6</sub>      Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_ <sub>8</sub>
14. What mode of travel will you use to AFTER YOU FINISH the Otago Central Rail Trail? (*Tick (✓) ALL that apply*)
- Taieri Gorge Railway from Middlemarch <sub>1</sub>      Taieri Gorge Railway from Pukerangi <sub>3</sub>      Bicycle <sub>5</sub>      Bus/Schuttle <sub>7</sub>
- Private Car <sub>2</sub>      Hired Car <sub>4</sub>      Package Tours <sub>6</sub>      Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_ <sub>8</sub>

15. If you used the PUKERANGI service of the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the Otago Central Rail Trail, how satisfied were you with this option? **(Please circle (●) ONE only)**

	Not at all Satisfied				Very Satisfied
	①	②	③	④	⑤

16. If you used, or intend to use in your current trip, the PUKERANGI service of the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the Otago Central Rail Trail, how satisfied were you with the following:

**(Please circle (●) ONE for each option):**

	Very Satisfied				Not at all Satisfied	
	①	②	③	④	⑤	
a) Information about train schedule/options	①	②	③	④	⑤	
b) Information about bike transportation in the train	①	②	③	④	⑤	
c) The train trip to/from Dunedin	①	②	③	④	⑤	
d) The train schedule (DAY of the week)	①	②	③	④	⑤	
e) The train schedule (TIME of the day)	①	②	③	④	⑤	
f) The convenience of transportation linkages from the end of the rail trail to Pukerangi	①	②	③	④	⑤	
g) The cost of the train to Pukerangi from Dunedin	①	②	③	④	⑤	
h) The cost of getting to Pukerangi from the Otago Central Rail Trail	①	②	③	④	⑤	N/A
i) The opportunity to stay in Middlemarch for some hours/a day	①	②	③	④	⑤	N/A

17. If you DID NOT use the Taieri Gorge Railway to ACCESS or EXIT the Otago Central Rail Trail during this visit, please tell us why. **(Tick (☑) ALL that apply)**

- a) I am not going to or coming from Dunedin <sub>1</sub>
- b) the cost was too high <sub>2</sub>
- c) I was unaware of the train service <sub>3</sub>
- d) I was unaware of the train schedule <sub>4</sub>
- e) I was unaware I could take my bike on board of the train without charge <sub>5</sub>
- f) the option of stopping in Pukerangi was not convenient <sub>6</sub>
- g) the train schedule (TIME of the day) did not fit my plans for the trip <sub>7</sub>
- h) the train schedule (DAY of the week) did not fit my plans for the trip <sub>8</sub>
- i) I had other options that were more convenient to this trip <sub>9</sub>
- j) I do not enjoy train rides <sub>10</sub>

Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION THREE – Your Awareness of the Taieri Gorge Railway

18. Were you aware of the Taieri Gorge Railway service before visiting the Otago Central Rail Trail?  
 Yes <sub>1</sub>                      No <sub>2</sub>

19. Are you aware of the Taieri Gorge Railway train schedule options? Yes <sub>1</sub>                      No <sub>2</sub>

20. If YES, are you satisfied with the options provided? Yes <sub>1</sub>                      No <sub>2</sub>                      Don't Know <sub>3</sub>

Please provide us with any comments you may have on this matter:

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21. Have you ever used the Taieri Gorge Railway service before? Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub>

If so, how many times? \_\_\_\_\_ (number of visits including this trip)

And for what purposes? **(Tick (✓) ALL that apply)**

a) sightseeing <sub>1</sub>

b) with an organised group/excursion <sub>2</sub>

c) as transport to and/or from the Otago Central Rail Trail <sub>3</sub>

d) as transport to and/or from Middlemarch <sub>4</sub>

e) to host visitors that come to Dunedin <sub>5</sub>

f) Other <sub>6</sub> Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

22. Do you plan to use the Taieri Gorge Railway in the future? Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub>

If YES, for what purposes? **(Tick (✓) ALL that apply)**

a) sightseeing <sub>1</sub>

b) with an organised group/excursion <sub>2</sub>

c) as transport to and/or from the Otago Central Rail Trail <sub>3</sub>

d) as transport to and/or from Middlemarch <sub>4</sub>

e) to host visitors that come to Dunedin <sub>5</sub>

f) Other <sub>6</sub> Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

23. If the Taieri Gorge Railway provided a daily service to and from Middlemarch, what is the likelihood you would use this service? **(Please circle (●) ONE only)**

Not at all Likely	①	②	③	④	⑤	Very Likely
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For what purpose would that most likely be? **(Tick (✓) ALL that apply)**

a) sightseeing <sub>1</sub>

b) with an organised group/excursion <sub>2</sub>

c) as transport to and/or from the Otago Central Rail Trail <sub>3</sub>

d) as transport to and/or from Middlemarch <sub>4</sub>

e) to host visitors that come to Dunedin <sub>5</sub>

f) Other <sub>6</sub> Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your time!**

**FURTHER COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3: Questionnaire (Train Version)

# Taieri Gorge Railway Survey

### SECTION ONE – About You and Your Travel Party

1. Gender (**Tick (✓) ONE only**) Male <sub>1</sub> Female <sub>2</sub>
2. Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Country of Permanent Residence (if in New Zealand, please specify city/town): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Age: 18 – 24 <sub>1</sub> 25 – 34 <sub>2</sub> 35 – 44 <sub>3</sub> 45 – 54 <sub>4</sub> 55 – 64 <sub>5</sub> 65 – 74 <sub>6</sub> 75 + <sub>7</sub>
5. Highest level of education (**Tick (✓) ONE only**)  
Primary school <sub>1</sub> Secondary school <sub>2</sub> Trade Certificate <sub>3</sub> Tertiary degree <sub>4</sub> Postgraduate degree <sub>5</sub> Other (specify): <sub>6</sub> \_\_\_\_\_
6. Which of the following best describes your travel party? (**Tick (✓) ALL that apply**)  
Solo <sub>1</sub> With partner <sub>3</sub> With children <sub>5</sub> With friends <sub>7</sub>  
Recreational club <sub>2</sub> Commercial guided group <sub>4</sub> Educational group <sub>6</sub> Other (specify): <sub>8</sub> \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many people are in your group today? (including you and any guides) \_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION TWO – Your Use of the Taieri Gorge Railway Service

8. Is this your first train trip with the Taieri Gorge Railway? Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub>
9. If NOT, how many times have you used the train? \_\_\_\_\_ times.  
And for what purposes? (**Tick (✓) ALL that apply**)  
a) sightseeing <sub>1</sub>  
b) with an organised group/excursion <sub>2</sub>  
c) as transport to and/or from the Otago Central Rail Trail <sub>3</sub>  
d) as transport to and/or from Middlemarch <sub>4</sub>  
e) to host visitors that come to Dunedin <sub>5</sub>  
f) Other <sub>6</sub> Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you plan to use the Taieri Gorge Railway again? Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub>
11. If YES, for what purposes? (**Tick (✓) ALL that apply**)  
a) sightseeing <sub>1</sub>  
b) with an organised group/excursion <sub>2</sub>  
c) as transport to and/or from the Otago Central Rail Trail <sub>3</sub>  
d) as transport to and/or from Middlemarch <sub>4</sub>  
e) to host visitors that come to Dunedin <sub>5</sub>  
f) Other <sub>6</sub> Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
12. If you plan to use the Taieri Gorge Railway again, which service would you prefer to use?  
Middlemarch <sub>1</sub> Pukerangi <sub>2</sub>

**13. What service are you using today? (Tick (☑) ONE only)**

- |                               |                          |                                 |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Dunedin → Pukerangi RETURN    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dunedin → Middlemarch RETURN    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dunedin → Pukerangi (ONE WAY) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dunedin → Middlemarch (ONE WAY) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pukerangi → Dunedin (ONE WAY) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Middlemarch → Dunedin (ONE WAY) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**14. Why did you select this particular train service? (Tick (☑) ALL that apply)**

- a) Because I wanted a shorter trip (Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin)
- b) Because I wanted a longer trip (Dunedin-Middlemarch-Dunedin)
- c) Because the Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin section of the Railway is the most scenic one
- d) The Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin is a cheaper/more affordable service
- e) To add an extra cycling/walking leg to the Otago Central Rail Trail by starting at Pukerangi
- f) To add an extra cycling/walking leg to the Otago Central Rail Trail by finishing at Pukerangi
- g) To have direct access to the Taieri Gorge Railway from Middlemarch
- h) To have direct access to the Otago Central Rail Trail from Middlemarch
- i) Because this was the most convenient day/time for me
- j) Because this was the only option on the day that I was available for this trip
- k) To visit friends and/or family in Middlemarch
- l) To have lunch in Middlemarch
- m) To catch transportation to another destination
- n) To participate in other tourism activity(ies) in the area (e.g. explore the Rock & Pillar Range)
- o) To stay overnight in Middlemarch
- p) To look for souvenirs in Middlemarch
- q) Someone else was responsible for choosing my itinerary
- r) Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Are you satisfied with the Taieri Gorge Railway train schedule options provided (e.g., time, days, destinations)?** Yes  No  Don't know

Please provide us with any comments you may have on this matter:

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**16. If you are using the Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin service and your schedule allowed, would you prefer to take the train to Middlemarch?** Yes  No

Please explain why:

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**17. Overall, how satisfied are you with your Taieri Gorge Railway experience? (Please circle (●) ONE only)**

Not at all Satisfied				Very Satisfied
①	②	③	④	⑤

## SECTION THREE – Past and Current Use of The Otago Central Rail Trail

18. Have you ever cycled/walked the Otago Central Rail Trail, or plan to do so in your current trip?

Yes <sub>1</sub> No <sub>2</sub> *(If NO please move on to the 'Comments' section at the end of the survey)*

19. If YES, what mode of travel did/will you use to ACCESS and/or EXIT the Otago Central Rail Trail? *(Tick (✓) ALL that apply)*

Taieri Gorge Railway from Middlemarch <sub>1</sub>

Taieri Gorge Railway from Pukerangi <sub>3</sub>

Bicycle <sub>5</sub>

Bus/Shuttle <sub>7</sub>

Private Car <sub>2</sub>

Hired Car <sub>4</sub>

Package Tours <sub>6</sub>

Other <sub>8</sub>  
(specify): \_\_\_\_\_

20. If you used the PUKERANGI service of the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the Otago Central Rail Trail, how satisfied were you with this option? *(Please circle (●) ONE only)*

Not at all Satisfied
Very Satisfied  
①
②
③
④
⑤

21. If you used, or intend to use in your current trip, the PUKERANGI service of the Taieri Gorge Railway to access or exit the Otago Central Rail Trail, how satisfied were you with the following

*(Please circle (●) ONE for each option):*

	Very Satisfied	②	③	④	Not at all Satisfied	
a) Information about train schedule/options	①	②	③	④	⑤	
b) Information about bike transportation in the train	①	②	③	④	⑤	
c) The train trip to Dunedin	①	②	③	④	⑤	
d) The train schedule (DAY of the week)	①	②	③	④	⑤	
e) The train schedule (TIME of the day)	①	②	③	④	⑤	
f) The convenience of transportation linkages from the end of the rail trail to Pukerangi	①	②	③	④	⑤	
g) The cost of the train from Pukerangi to Dunedin	①	②	③	④	⑤	
h) The cost of getting to Pukerangi from the Otago Central Rail Trail	①	②	③	④	⑤	N/A
i) The opportunity to stay in Middlemarch for some hours/a day	①	②	③	④	⑤	N/A

22. If you previously cycled/walked the Otago Central Rail Trail, and you DID NOT use the Taieri Gorge Railway please tell us why. *(Tick (✓) ALL that apply)*

a) I was not going to or coming from Dunedin <sub>1</sub>

b) the cost was too high <sub>2</sub>

c) I was unaware of the train service <sub>3</sub>

d) I was unaware of the train schedule <sub>4</sub>

e) I was unaware I could take my bike on board of the train without charge <sub>5</sub>

f) the option of stopping in Pukerangi was not convenient <sub>6</sub>

g) the train schedule (TIME of the day) did not fit my plans for the trip <sub>7</sub>

h) the train schedule (DAY of the week) did not fit my plans for the trip <sub>8</sub>

i) I had other options that were more convenient to this trip <sub>9</sub>

Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time!

FURTHER COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4: Nationality

RAIL TRAIL PARTICIPANTS		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	New Zealander	152	81.7
	Australian	15	8.1
	British	7	3.7
	European	5	2.6
	American	4	2.2
	Other	3	1.7
	Total	186	100.0

TRAIN PARTICIPANTS		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	New Zealander	231	47.6
	Australian	89	18.4
	British	69	14.2
	American	17	3.5
	Canadian	11	2.3
	German	11	2.3
	Dutch	10	2.1
	Omani	5	1.0
	Israeli	4	.8
	Japanese	4	.8
	Swiss	3	.6
	Taiwanese	3	.6
	Malaysian	3	.6
	Indian	3	.6
	Singapore	2	.4
	South African	2	.4
	Danish	2	.4
	French	2	.4
	Belgium	2	.4
	Other	12	2.1
	Total	485	100.0

## APPENDIX 5: Place of Residence

RAIL TRAIL PARTICIPANTS		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Auckland	33	21.4
	Australia	11	7.2
	Wellington	11	7.2
	Dunedin	10	6.5
	Christchurch	10	6.5
	Hamilton	7	4.5
	UK	4	2.6
	USA	4	2.6
	Other North Island	43	27.9
	Other South Island	16	10.4
	Other International	5	3.2
	Total	154	100.0

TRAIN PARTICIPANTS		Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Australia	83	21.2
	Auckland	63	16.1
	UK	46	11.8
	Dunedin	22	5.6
	Christchurch	16	4.1
	USA	14	3.6
	Wellington	13	3.3
	Canada	11	2.8
	Hamilton	11	2.8
	Germany	10	2.6
	The Netherlands	5	1.3
	France	3	.8
	North Island Other	52	13.3
	South Island Other	22	5.6
	International Other	20	5.2
	Total	391	100.0

## APPENDIX 6: Motivations for Using Taieri Gorge Railway Service

– a scenic route to Queenstown	– return trip - leave car in Dunedin
– an option with Kirra tours	– scenery
– back to Dunedin at end of rail trail	– selected to see the outstanding scenery overall
– because if fitted in with finishing the rail trail at Middlemarch	– Sightseeing (2x)
– because the Dunedin-Middlemarch section of the railway is the most scenic one	– spectacular train trip
– because we are starting the rail trail	– suggested by travel agent
– brochure inspired us	– Taieri Gorge experience
– did not think about	– to get from end of rail trail to Dunedin
– enjoyment	– to get from Middlemarch to Dunedin
– exit rail trail at Middlemarch going to Dunedin	– to get to Dunedin
– family excursion, at a gentle pace	– to get to Dunedin after completing rail trail
– finished OCRT at Middlemarch	– to observe the land forms
– following the whole rail service right up to Auckland	– to see our lovely countryside
– for the train experience	– travel director recommended
– have ridden the rail trail 4 years ago. pictures of the Taieri Gorge train route appealing	– Uncle Arthur was a founding member
– holiday trip	– wanted a rest day with beautiful scenery
– I heard it was a good trip	– was given complimentary tickets to Middlemarch (return)
– it looked the most scenic for the area	– was recommended by several people as something that shouldn't be missed
– just to experience this trip	– we enjoy railway journeys
– no choice not train from Middlemarch today	– we got invitation
– old world nostalgic charm	– we wanted to see Taieri Gorge
– on a senior citizen trip	– when booking by phone no other was advised
– on tour - sounded like a good trip	– Christmas present
– only day trip available while I'm here for 24hrs	– recommended
– part of organised tour	

## APPENDIX 7: Comments about Dunedin-Middlemarch-Dunedin Train Service

– 2 hours is enough	– interested in seeing the area but time didn't permit
– 3 services from Middlemarch to Dunedin per week would be better for rail trail riders	– it feels like stopping in the middle of nowhere in Pukerangi when Middlemarch would be like going to a destination and back as its more as a town/village
– 4 hour return journey is long enough	– it is obvious! the cafes aren't as good - there is nothing and the drive to Pukerangi is unnecessary
– 6 hours is too long	– it would seem appropriate to go to the end of the line
– a wonderful way to see inaccessible and beautiful scenery	– it's a bit longer to travel
– as above	– it's a one time thing, so would not like to repeat it
– because I like train trip	– it's great to do whole trip and meet the people at Middlemarch
– because it will be easier to cyclist... we were not sure about the shuttle or the train because we had no train yesterday but we decided to cycle until Pukerangi	– it's longer and would only do it once anyway
– because that's where rail trail finishes so obvious choice	– journey of 4 hours return was enough with children
– because the cycle finished in Middlemarch	– just looking for a half day trip
– because we can	– just wanna try again, that's pretty cool
– because we enjoy this trip so much	– just wanted the experience of the train journey and going across the gorge
– better place to wait around than Pukerangi	– just wanted the scenic route
– bike hire at mm	– less hassle
– closer to final destination at Ranfurly	– long enough with 2 small children
– convenience	– Longer (2x)
– Convenience. No road signs, got lost looking for Pukerangi	– longer journey
– don't know	– longer train ride experience
– down the trail and straight on the train	– longer trip and more to see
– end of rail trail	– love train journeys
– enjoy being in trains	– make it a full day trip and have lunch there
– enjoy the train ride with friends	– maximum journey by rail and lunch in Middlemarch
– far enough on train for young kids	– ma be it is more convenient to travel by train as well as more scenic
– for a greater experience Middlemarch ball sounds fun!!	– more flexibility for rail trail timing
– for further sightseeing	– more scenery
– friends there	– more time onboard
– greater opportunity to see more of this beautiful countryside	– more to see (2x)
– have transport organised from Pukerangi	– never been there before

– I am a tourist	– no reason why
– i like mm	– not a 'huge' train fan
– I like to do the full circuit in things	– not sure. This is my first time taking this tour. I just wanted to see what's available and whether it is worth me to come back for a longer period of holiday. Will plan to stay longer in Dunedin next time if we wish to.
– I would have took the Dunedin-Pukerangi-Dunedin instead of Dunedin-Middlemarch (because it's a half day instead of whole da)	– interested in seeing the area but time didn't permit
– one less leg of journey	– to link with rail trail
– only had one day in Dunedin	– to Pukerangi was long enough
– rail trail	– to see further in
– rail trail starts for us in mm	– to see more of the area
– save a van trip	– to see more of the fantastic scenery and to enjoy a longer ride
– scenery between Pukerangi and Middlemarch. see exquisite	– to view historic railway through gorge
– see more (2x)	– too long (2x)
– seen enough	– too long in confined space with children
– short on time	– trail ends there
– stayed night in Middlemarch. had to organise transport to get to Pukerangi	– travel from Middlemarch to Pukerangi waiting facilities at Middlemarch
– the gorge was the main attraction for my friends	– we enjoy these sorts of trips out; and would have gone on the longer trip if available
– the opportunity for a brief look at the unique town and surroundings of Middlemarch	– we go only once to Middlemarch
– the scenery wasn't as scenic or varied enough to engage my curiosity for more	– we start railtrail at Middlemarch tomorrow
– this is a lovely trip out for people	– we would like to see what else NZ has to offer
– this is a pleasant length of trip	– when doing a trip use the whole day it's an experience worth enjoying
– this was more than long enough	– would like to have done another if of the rail trail. I did a 63 km section at the beg of the rail earlier in my vacation
– time	– would like to see it
– time limit on tour	– would need more time in Dunedin to do this
– to connect to the bike trail	– to link with rail trail
– to enjoy a longer train journey	– to Pukerangi was long enough
– to experience some further different countryside	– to see further in
– to explore the scenery	– to see more of the area
– to get to the rail trail	– to see more of the fantastic scenery and to enjoy a longer ride
– to have completed the journey	– to view historic railway through gorge

## APPENDIX 8: Trail User's Comments about Satisfaction of Train Schedule Option

– a tourist must do	– need Saturday Middlemarch to Dunedin service departing around 3pm
– a very helpful man on train who organised us taxis from train to airport (excellent)	– no taxis from Dunedin railway station arrived in at approx 6-45pm
– all arranged. No idea of cost or schedule. over all happy as a tired biker could be	– not appropriate for this trip
– booked through trail journeys, but checked out train timetable via internet, before booking flights from Dunedin	– not enough daylight trains from Middlemarch - should be daily
– departure time from Dunedin convenient at 2.30pm. allowed plenty of time to fly from Wellington and also allowed enough time to look around city centre	– not needed this trip - personal timetable tight. will be back to enjoy the Taieri Gorge Railway at a later date when, I am sure, we will find a schedule to suit us
– didn't have time to fit this in sadly	– organisation done by Pure trails - no worries
– do wish to travel on the train one day but haven't checked out schedules as yet	– rail journey was included as part of our otago rail trail package
– during summer high season months the train should be servicing Middlemarch and the rail trail daily!	– schedules seem fine
– frequency is the problem	– suited us as return 'tourists' trip from Dunedin - Middlemarch
– great for tourism	– The current timetable restricts starting/finishing times on the rail trail
– hoped to travel from Middlemarch to Dunedin (? one of our party ?? to Dunedin)	– The Pukerangi option is too far away from Middlemarch. it is not useful at all for the rail trail
– I avoided Dunedin and hence finding out more detail about Taieri Gorge Railway due to concerns of security for own bikes ie. parking overnight in city	– the time worked out well for us as we wanted to return to Dunedin on a Sunday and the 1pm departure allowed for us to cycle @ 25km prior in a reasonably relaxed time frame
– I looked up timetable online and later discovered it was different from the actual. our group was booked via railtrail but needed to know to advise Dunedin accommodation	– very tight if you are coming from Kojonga to get to Middlemarch & get train & connecting flights. no time for us to enjoy that leg of the trip as we were just booked on 1pm train unaware of how little time we would have to get to connection
– I love the Taieri Railway trip! would consider it if rail-trailing ex-Dunedin	– we were unable to do the train trip as we had a rental car
– internet	– we have done the train trip about 2 years ago. and thoroughly enjoyed it. will do again in the future
– it would have been good to have had the experience from Middlemarch	– we planned our trip to meet the Middlemarch service
– would have loved to have taken the trip but had to be in Dunedin for a 6pm flight on Monday	– we think over summer season train should do Dunedin-Middlemarch every day, not twice a week. we would have come another day if we could have
– to/from Middlemarch - more days	

## APPENDIX 9: Train User's Comments about Satisfaction of Train Schedule Option

– I would prefer more choice when scheduling the rail trail and would like to see the train run to and from Middlemarch daily	– it would be nice if you could go to Middlemarch everyday to be able to make the most of a nice weather day
– a good selection of trips	– it would have been nice to travel from Middlemarch but no biggy
– a more regular service would be good	– judging by the number travelling further journey would be easily sold out
– a more regular service would be useful during summer	– just one option for our tour group
– a well-organised, well-run operation, with excellent narration and stellar scenery	– limited options for short stay visitors
– an extra day to Middlemarch would be good	– maybe more Dunedin to Middlemarch services
– beauty and relaxation	– maybe one extra day to Middlemarch would give cyclists more options on travelling to and from the trail
– better to split the week up more equally. ie 3/4 day gap or run more frequently, say, every 2 days	– Middlemarch terminus schedule was central to my planning of ORT trip
– can't understand why we didn't go thru Middlemarch	– more days for cyclists to use as a finishing/starting point
– Can't hear commentary while in tunnels	– more frequent service to Middlemarch might suit visitors in Otago for a short time
– cheerful experience	– more options would have been better (eg days)
– convenient departing time (9.30 Sunday)	– more rides with steam engine
– could be more scheduled services	– more service from Middlemarch
– daily to Middlemarch during rail trail season	– more train options. we waited 3hrs from rail trail
– departed at exactly 1pm	– need more scheduled services from Middlemarch to Dunedin on more days
– delightful	– need to provide more access to Middlemarch for tourists and cyclists
– except Wingatui station was not easy to find from Mosgiel	– no beer close to my seat
– expecting steam train but understood fire risk	– no option on Sunday to only go to Pukerangi
– for the time of my stay in Dunedin this trip (Sunday) was the only option I could choose. I may have picked another service if it was available	– there wasn't many train transportation from Middlemarch so we had to fit our holiday around the schedule
– good for connection with OCRT	– offer Dunedin-Pukerangi every morning, even the days when you also offer Dunedin-Middlemarch
– good morning time; good Sunday entertainment; good probability to see the landscape	– offering more food/meals eg. all day breakfast
– only short stay in Dunedin thus limited to which trip we could take	– one extra day/week would give more options/freedom
– good timetable 9.30 am start	– good options
– great commentary and views and scenery	– organised by a friend
– hard to get info. Wanted to get train at Middlemarch, poor signage at ??? and aft.	– overall a good experience
– I quite like the commentary	– it limited the times and days we could travel
– I wasn't given any info on a shorter/cheaper trip. 150\$ is a lot!	– Pukerangi not available Sunday morning

– a couple of stops for photos would be good	– satisfied - need food/beverage on train
– if you are wanting the option to travel to Middlemarch there are only 2 days available	– would have preferred 4-hour trip (not available Sundays) because of time schedule
– perhaps adding a extra 1/2 hour to actually see more of Middlemarch especially during summer months	– should be everyday to provide more start/finish times for rail trail - to/from Middlemarch
– It will be better to catch the train from Middlemarch but it was the only option. we wait one full day to catch the train	– should go from Middlemarch everyday as it seems quite silly not to. who made that decision
– we choose to do the shorter trip	– should have more days to end of the line
– would prefer to join train at Middlemarch	– sounds awesome
– the half day tour has been most convenient - I would not like to have taken longer to do the trip	– we only have 1 day in Dunedin & this leaves us time to look around this afternoon
– not enough leg room and too crowded	– we organised train trip and rail trail to suit schedule
– this is a beautiful trip. I bring visitors on it in the hope they will be impressed and want to come back. the trip onto Middlemarch and the bike trail would be good.	– we wanted to go to Middlemarch to see the beginning of the bike trail and were lucky that train went there on the day we could go
– this is a lovely trip out for people who views and history	– we thought we were going to Middlemarch but this was the only one on today
– this is a wonderful trip not to be missed	– why not run on full available rail thru season?
– this is fine - we can start biking by lunch time	– wonderful trip and nice clear commentary
– this was a great journey with fantastic views - need 1 1/2 in Middlemarch	– would be better if it left from Middlemarch
– train needs to stay longer in Middlemarch and Palmerston on the seashore	– would be great to have a second service
– two days a week for rail trail people is too restrictive	– would be nice to have more service to Middlemarch
– very well managed. we could board the train in spite of being late due to flat tyre of bus - we are all very happy	– would have been great to be able to board at mm
– very well organised and on time	– would have been great to get on at Middlemarch
– want more services to Middlemarch	– would have liked more choices of days
– wanted to do the trip and had heard it was great and totally agree - been excellent	– would prefer from Middlemarch arrive Dunedin earlier 5-6pm
– we came down from Christchurch for a long weekend (fri-sun) and would have preferred Middlemarch option on a Saturday as we now have to drive back to Christchurch today at the end of the rail trip and work tomorrow	– seat allocation with choice of price (i.e. ticket) is the same with others. for example, lost people has 4 seats with only 2 people. others missed out. other carriages are ok but smelly (i.e. air is not fresh)
– it would be more beneficial to have Middlemarch a destination more often for rail trail transfers	– would have preferred a shorter trip due to time constraints
– we decided we wanted to go to Middlemarch and only Fri/Sun were available. fortunately we had a week in the Otago area and could work around it	– would have preferred to catch it at Middlemarch at around 4.30
– we had to juggle our trip to make it fit. as we preferred to go to Middlemarch and it runs infrequently	– would have preferred to exit at Middlemarch
– we had to reschedule holiday in order to get a day the train went to Middlemarch and would prefer more choice	– would like to be able to bike short part of trail but timetable does not make it possible. pm train would help
– would probably be better to have more days as options going to mm	– would prefer a destination each day to Middlemarch - for access to rail trail
– would sooner have left from Middlemarch	– you could provide more trips for more options
–	– would have liked to travel to Middlemarch

## APPENDIX 10: Comments about Not Using Taieri Gorge Railway

### COMMENTS FROM TRAIL USERS

- bike
- brother's car to run shuttle
- campervan
- campervan so we're touring
- Car (2x)
- car and caravan
- cars
- flight to Queenstown from Christchurch
- flying from Queenstown
- From Charles' Junction we were cycling the Old Dunstan rd and ?? to Poolburn Rd
- lack of time so drove by car
- motorcaravan trip in a group
- Motorhome (4x)
- no accommodation around Easter
- not enough time and need to get back to Queenstown to fly home
- not on our itinerary - campervaning
- private car (5x)
- private car family commitments
- shuttle to Clyde
- staying in Naseby week prior
- staying with friends at start and finish of trail
- transfers inc in tour
- travel by campervan
- travel with friends
- travelling in group of motorhomes

### COMMENTS FROM TRAIN USERS

- 4 couples took 4 cars for transferring 8 bikes
- don't live in Dunedin, started at Clyde end, private car Middlemarch to Lawrence
- flying air
- had to return to Alexandra to pick up vehicle
- needed support vehicles - cyclists wither elderly or young (grand-daughters)
- private car with other family
- staying in Alexandra

## APPENDIX 11: Additional Comments

### COMMENTS FROM TRAIL USERS

- a great experience
- a wonderful asset. walked from Wedderburn both ways
- a wonderful bicycling experience. loved the train
- an amazing trip right from when the train left the station in Dunedin. very informative with the gentleman telling all the history and tales of the area. I have recommended this trip to all my friends
- arrival at Dunedin station on Sun 18/4/10 was disappointing. cafe closed on arrival, there was nowhere to leave bags while we had a look around Dunedin so we ended up going directly to the airport. Shuttle service was good but we were worried we might not connect with plane we were on. Booking in advance was not anticipated.
- as a walker I would have found a shelter and toilet at Daisybank an advantage. But regardless of this I found the walk wonderful. walked from Wedderburn both ways
- as visitors to SI can't be relevant to extra train usage
- availability of transport once you get into Dunedin - not readily available and also IF Centre not open
- because we wanted to go on the daylight train from Middlemarch all our time on the trail revolved around that. lack of accommodation at Hyde was a problem for us as well
- been to Dunedin many times to visit daughter in past when she was a student not aware then of train service as an excursion we could have taken.
- coastal trip great, our travel arrangements needed to fit in with our friends - but other times we try to use the train services
- Does Middlemarch-Dunedin train connect with Dunedin northbound flights?
- Enjoyed the entire experience even the weather, nice accommodation and meals, very friendly folk. well done.
- enjoyed our time on rail trail
- fantastic to do
- from NI – don't know of the Taieri Gorge Railway
- great experience and fun end to the 'rail trail'. thank you.
- great idea. well executed
- great rail trail with fabulous info sites
- have enjoyed the experience/service - would recommend it to others. Taieri Gorge train trip excellent
- Have enjoyed the Taieri Gorge service on a previous trip to Dunedin
- have found the Taieri Gorge Railway was an excellent sightseeing experience
- I very much appreciated and maintained trip excellent information boards along the way. lack of phone/train information Christchurch
- I was impressed with the courtesy, helpfulness and professional of the train director (Saturday 17/4/10 evening trip)
- I was part of a group of naturists gathered from all over NZ. we planned it in conjunction with our annual rally which this year was in Christchurch. our reception from fellow cyclists and tour
- I went with Taieri Gorge Railway in the beginning of April 2010. would have liked to continue to rail trail biking but no accommodation available. at the end of the school holiday, I made the rail trail, biking, because it was possible with accommodation. went from Wanaka to Clyde to Middlemarch
- I would love to travel on it next time I am down this way
- I would support any rail travel - enjoyed the 1/2 day trip north of Dunedin.
- internet info is most useful. perhaps easier 'searching' or better use of key 'google words' to find it. links with NZ equivalent of UKs Sustrans helpful
- love the rail trail – it's awesome
- more frequent during summer. and student discounts (ie. tertiary students). most trips in Dunedin have student

discount and it would be good if it extended to this. we have some in our group

- OCRT is magnificent - great cycling/walking experience for all ages set in this fascinating part of our country it is a unique drawcard for overseas visitors - in which case the railway
- on arrival at Dunedin train station no i-site was open and taxi service was non existent
- love the rail trail, but sometimes we were not quite sure if we had reached our destination
- people with own transport and or mobile living accommodation have trouble travelling between points to pick up their transport
- Q.15 - havent got there yet.
- Q.16 - organised thru Ecotreck
- Q.15 - not yet (on way out)
- Q.16 - done thru agency so no comment
- Q.16 - all done through Rail Journeys. just got a choice of two times
- Q.19 - I think so - a early and late train
- Q.16 - all done through rail journeys
- Q.16 - organised for us, all fine
- Q.16 unanswered - package tour had this info for me
- Q16-Trail Journeys have [made the booking] - so unaware of these details
- Q16 - don't know what this [Pukerangi] refers to?;
- Q17 - We used the train from Middlemarch to Dunedin and it was great!
- Q17 - highly possible that train schedule (day and time) did not fit plans for the trip, and the option of stopping in Pukerangi is not convenient
- Q19 & 20 whatever. as soon as ? and friends get to Dunedin we will make the return journey. In spite of the weather we had a great time, but it certainly limited our sightseeing. However we are looking forward to the train trip
- sounds like a good service but unfortunately not relevant to me as I live in Palmerston North. would definitely consider using it if future visits allow
- Taieri Gorge Railway trip was a highlight of a previous trip to Dunedin.
- Q.17 - previously ridden the Taieri Gorge railway
- Taieri Gorge Railway good for rail trail people. need every day service. Good trail. keep as is!
- thanks for perfect weather!! :)
- the information on the trail so far has been very informative. for more what is happened in the past to how future ways to keep this for next generation. such a wonderful way to see areas that would have
- the train trip was a great way to start the rail trail
- this is at our second day shaping up as a great experience with a phenomenal infrastructure. the local people assist travellers in a first class fashion and the railway trust does something very special!
- this survey is more about the Taieri Gorge Railway which was not used on our visit. we were campervanning with a group of 30 naturists on the trail. all in the group either had campervans or tents
- totally unaware of schedule etc - only heard of railway through our bike hire but no details
- very friendly service of train trip. informative commentary
- very good. is only going to get more popular
- very nice connection to rail trail from Dunedin. Perhaps more scheduled service to allow more riding options
- we had a wonderful experience. friend on trip organised railway trip

## COMMENTS FROM TRAIN USERS

- a fantastic service. really the icing on the cake of a great trip
- a few more choices of wine and beer would be good. otherwise perfect.
- a great experience - hope to do it again. Thanks
- a great experience, would definitely use service again - especially if we could arrive or depart at or from Middlemarch
- a great experience. we would recommend to friends who travel to Dunedin
- a great trip and service
- a great trip for railway enthusiasts. loved the experience of riding in the carriages of days gone by
- a most interesting and enjoyable trip keep it going forever!! will always remember it!
- a pleasant trip; hope the train survives
- a steam train would be great. we expected a better trip and are a bit disappointed. 'one of the world greatest train trips' is really exaggerated!!! alone in Switzerland there are heaps of more scenic and unique train trips, with more engineering skills. we expected much more!!!
- a very enjoyable experience and fascinating to do it in spring this time rather than autumn
- a very informative and beautiful journey. some spectacular views
- a very pleasant journey - in some sense back to the past
- a very well informed trip that I would certainly recommend to others. enjoyed it very much
- a wonderful journey. would recommend to my friends if visiting NZ
- a wonderful trip, and excellent value for money. thank you very much for the opportunity
- absolutely fantastic
- added interest to our NZ experience
- all good. proper coffee and breakfast service would be superb. good to sit on toilet and have view, put in blind if required
- all staff were very friendly and informative. we will certainly be recommending this rail journey to others
- always my intention to use the train from the rail trail but only 2 days that the train travels to Middlemarch was a little restrictive. thanks! would be nice to have open carriage to take photos from
- an awesome experience to enjoy a wonderful part of our country full of history. better coffee!! espresso maybe?
- an enjoyable and interesting experience
- an excellent experience. well run. comfortable. ? staff and commentary
- as we lease part of the historic Helensville Railway station for an antique shop - we are always advising tourists to come to Dunedin (if they have time) and ride on the Taieri Gorge trip - now we can say we have previously been there too!
- awesome
- awesome experience
- be good if the train was cleaned of trash before leaving Middlemarch
- be good to add extra Middlemarch services when cycle trail is busier summer time
- better coffee available
- bit expensive
- car trip South Island 1 day walk on trail
- commentary excellent, train ride great and country side lovely to see. would do another different trip if we had time. thanks.
- commentary is very good and easy to listen to. seating is a bit cramped
- commentary very informative - spectacular views. thoroughly enjoyed the trip and service
- Congratulations - having the foresight to purchase and maintain this line
- departure from Middlemarch should be great

- didn't know at the time we did it
- didn't like having to travel backwards. commentary excellent. food tasty. service attentive. seats comfortable. prefer not having to face people I don't know. ?? talk so I can't turn and watch view
- difficult to write whilst moving but a truly great experience, one which we will always remember!
- discount for seniors and those with rail pass - British
- enjoyable and informative
- enjoyable day out good, informative and easy to hear commentary. some extra viewing platforms would be helpful or a request to passengers to limit their time at vantage points
- enjoyed the Palmerston trip also
- exceeded expectations - seeing another part of NZ in relaxed comfortable environ. amazing scenery excellent commentary - thank you
- excellent service and friendly atmosphere
- excellent service, lovely trip!
- excellent service. we are inspired to come back to NZ to bike the rail trail but campervan this holiday so not really practical. wonderful staff train and station
- extend to Clyde - longer ride and people not doing the rail trail may enjoy taking train instead
- fantastic - mind blowing!!!
- fantastic
- for touring - the train fee is very high
- friendly enthusiastic staff, excellent trip, ??? from Auckland
- Friendly, helpful staff
- fun trip
- Given a shocking carriage 'c' when we paid for first class seats. I would not recommend this trip to anyone unless they got good seats. booking clerks should know the difference from first and economy
- good commentary, informative, friendly staff. a coffee machine on board would be great! also I think tickets are way overpriced.
- good effort but journey was a letdown as compared to other areas around Dunedin
- good experience. thank you
- good luck
- good luck with the continuation of this service
- good student discount! but you should think about reducing the prices for car parking! all together it is getting quite expensive for students!
- Gorge and viaducts spectacular, historical elements added to experience. weather could have been more in our favour. loved the schist formations
- great commentary, nice trip, bus was very cold, a good afternoon out
- great commentary. thank you
- great day out
- great enjoyable trip. very good commentary. would do again and recommend to others. ps: Could have a knowledgeable and friendly retired 'guard' person or good-hearing to host in passengers. the x factor. ie. 'a southern man', 'meet people from my home town'
- great experience
- great experience, especially after doing the rail trail (comfort wise!!!). good visibility - able to soak up the scenery. awesome!
- great friendly service and info. thanks for the pen! :)
- great ride, would love to repeat, will recommend to friends
- Great service - "Leave the car at home and catch the train". plan to cycle the rail trail in the future
- great time! not as fast as English trains but the scenery made up for it
- great tourist trip - commentary inaudible, however

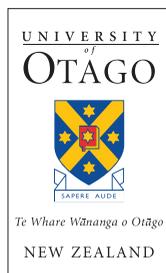
- great trip - excellent scenery
- great trip - misty and damp a little, but still very enjoyable. we chose this trip from UK in preference to chch - Greymouth - glad we did!
- great trip!
- great trip. better than expected. scenery as good as any i've seen
- great trip. lovely scenery. will recommend the trip to friends
- great trip. thank you
- great trip. well worth doing
- great trip. would liked my ticket clipped!!
- how about having one carriage that is open for people taking photos, I found everyone crowded the platforms and people missed getting the great photos they wanted
- I'm a little sad because it's heavy rain today. but I want to come again
- I am so impressed that school age children are free. thank you!
- I can watch excellent view but the cost was slightly expensive
- I do have one comment. I think food is a little expensive some can't afford it
- I had to ask for the survey. should have been asked. commentary very good.
- I have no opinion about section 3
- I intend to participate in the cycle rail track at another time I hope
- I really enjoyed the trip
- I want to come back to Taieri for cycle or walk the rail trail
- I was not aware that a seat booking was necessary before embarking on the train journey. it is so popular!!!
- I was very impressed with the train journey and the commentary provided. the scenery was most impressive. another member of the tour group has been to NZ 3 times and done the trip. 3 times in last 3 years
- I work at a info centre and a lot of people want to go to Middlemarch during the week, so one extra day would be good
- I would use the railway again if I visited the area again [but it's not likely]
- if elderly it's too difficult to walk to the buffet car. would have bought souvenirs and food if a trolley came around
- If I come back to Dunedin I will be please to use the Taieri Gorge Railway
- if there were more trains in NZ tourists would use them. eg. Christchurch
- In summer it would be too hot in the train
- it's not as spectacular as a lot of others places in the South Island
- it seemed a bit strange buying the tickets 15 mins before the train left. it would be better if you could buy them earlier
- it was a very scenic and comfortable journey
- it was nice to be able to stop at Middlemarch to purchase lunch and walk around
- it was too cold on the train. on cloudy days the air conditioning should be turned off
- it was very entertaining, relaxing and informative
- it was very nice but too expensive
- It would be nice to see more trains around NZ!
- it would be nicer if there are more entertainment facilities in the train...
- itinerary and arrangements were made through us travel agent who suggested train excursion
- keep it going
- keep on running
- keep up the good work
- lack of info/signage at Middlemarch esp re ticketing etc for first time visitors
- love the train travel and rugged scenery
- loved trip, staff, food. wonderful trip

- lovely ride through fantastic countryside
- lovely to travel by train and bike
- lovely trip
- lovely warm carriage. fantastic scones with jam and cream
- lovely way to spend a relaxing day. excellent commentary
- magnificent scenery friendly staff thank you
- more shelter needed at Pukerangi station. run train from Middlemarch!!! why not??
- more stops to enjoy the nature (eg. at former stations with short description of history of the place eg information panels); viewing platforms on the way eg. viaduct; the explanation on the train is difficult to understand, thus better written description would be appreciated
- more viewing platforms would be appreciated
- most enjoyable - scenery spectacular. a little more time at stops would be good - just a couple of minutes.
- most enjoyable trip, very informative. Coaches warm and spacious, light with the high windows
- most informative. enjoyed the trip
- most interesting trip
- my partner is an engineer - Heaven
- need an outdoor platform to take pictures from
- need better speakers on trains
- need panoramic windows and more viewing platforms
- no more time for making this because the end of the journey is near!
- no. but plan to do this in the future as my brother and his wife thoroughly enjoyed the biking experience
- not enough leg room for tall people like me. velvet seat coverings make sliding difficult. excellent commentary. wonderful.
- old fashioned but fine
- on the guide handed out on the trip, the viaduct photo of Wingatui is incorrectly named 'Wingatui'
- one of the good, beautiful train I have traveled in my life time
- outstanding views!
- overall, a very satisfying experience, well worth the cost thereof. an illustrated book on the Taieri Gorge railway would be a best-seller
- Personalize the commentary re: the buildings of the railway, stories about the families and hardships triumphs, etc.
- please, please let us go from Middlemarch everyday! it just makes sense
- purely railway enthusiasts travelling for the experience and scenery
- Q.20 - why not Middlemarch?
- Q.21 - these questions not very relevant as Taieri Gorge Railway came as part of Adventure South Otago Rail Trail cycle tour package
- Q20 - \$20 + 10 for the bike is far too expensive, still good service
- really enjoyed the wonderful views! staff very friendly. thanks
- really enjoyed, highly recommended
- seat pitch 13 rather narrow. kept on knocking at stranger knees. discount for seniors. advertise overseas
- seating could be improved by being reversible. helpful if drinks could be delivered to seated passengers
- seating need more room. lights off in tunnels please
- seats could be issued for opposite sides of the train for each journey (to and from Dunedin) at initial purchase as on the TransAlpine rail trip
- some Q's a bit confusing - but definitely prefer Middlemarch option - we designed our trip around the Fri & Sun train trip
- speakers should be put at least at both extremity of each wagon instead of only one in the center because it's difficult to understand the great comments of the driver. put a sign on the doors to ask people to close it each

- time they open it
- splendid experience
  - staff helpful at time of payment free bike and luggage transport awesome
  - such a great view! I love the rock formations, so lovely
  - terrific old carriages. spectacular scenery and wonderful people. many thanks!
  - thank goodness you saved this train. beautiful trip
  - thank you
  - thank you so much
  - thank you very much
  - thank you. lovely trip
  - thanks for the wonderful trip
  - thanks too
  - the carriage needed to be warmer. good espresso coffee would go down well with train passengers
  - the commentary is very informative and the scenery great. i would not change anything
  - the commentary was hard to hear
  - the commentary was intensive. prefer to be able to access thru individual headphones
  - the commentator was enthusiastic and informative and considering how often he has probably made this trip, it is commendable how entertaining he can still make his commentary sound. thank you!
  - the journey was lovely but the carriage freezing a really spoilt the trip you must do something about the temperature to allow for weather conditions
  - The old carriages give an added aesthetic to the entire journey. being stuffed into tiny seats facing a blue wall of nothing in the noisy buffet car was certainly not worthy of the money paid!
  - the person in the buffet need to know how to heat the food, the meals were over cooked the staff where rude to me and the state of the buffet was chity and you stell food in that duty buffet!!!
  - the Tannoy System needs to be louder as its very hard to hear when other people are talking and with the noise of the train
  - the train and the trail were outstandingly good and I would do both again
  - the train journey is truly unique and I intend to do the rail trail sometime in the future. perhaps surveying rail trail visitors would provide better insight into the need for expanded services.
  - the weather today has made this trip most enjoyable. I will recommend the trip to others
  - there is lots of rubbish on the rails at Dunedin station. this looks awful
  - think it should be a bit cheaper then I would feel better about recommending it to others to do also
  - think the train needs to visit Middlemarch more often to link with the rail trail
  - this is a great trip for tourists and locals for the scenery, history and interesting commentary. I was given to us as a gift but we will recommend it to others and hopefully come again to Middlemarch
  - this is a must do trip from Dunedin
  - this is the perfect way to finish the rail trail so we should make it as accessible or possible and encourage more people to witness the stunning scenery. more brief commentary could add interest and educate locals and tourists
  - This made a pleasant trip and gave our family a break from driving and nice to have the commentary to explain and point out information of interest
  - this service should be continued to offer spectacular scenery of NZ
  - too much waffle in the commentary. views of the gorge became rather monotonous. one way would be sufficient
  - train superb as is ORT. I believe Middlemarch connection of train best suits me and my family when doing trail
  - used train when we booked thru a tour company and lived in North Island. now moved to Dunedin and use car to do rail trail
  - very beautiful, excellent service. would have liked to stop longer at Hindon. It's hard to write with train moving (sorry)
  - very enjoyable trip

- very enjoyable. perhaps have a certain trip every now and then suitable for younger children ie activities to do. also had trouble hearing announcer due to noise in carriage. needed to be louder
- very fun and exciting but very bumpy
- very good and a ??? beautiful
- very helpful staff
- very interesting experience, awesome, commentary very clear. wonderful experience.
- very interesting trip into nz outback, ? and the history of the railway and the area
- very little leg room on the train. can't really hear much of the commentary; and please make commentary 'heights' and lengths' in metres, not feet; it's been over 40 years since we went metric!
- very nice service. hard to hear commentary in our car. Dunedin station very beautiful and well maintained
- very nice trip. please take open-air wagons on to the train
- very worthwhile trip as part of a long tour of NZ
- views stupendous. commentary excellent. so informative. one of the highlights of our holiday
- what a lovely old train. a very scenic train trip on our way to Queenstown
- Was ??? cup of tea without top so it slopped all over this form and all over me
- was very enjoyable and worthwhile. commentator is fantastic. better range of food could improve service. survey ladies are a 'hoot'
- we don't stay enough time in Dunedin and we are not sportswomen
- we expected to enjoy the cycling. we had no idea it was going to be so much more, even - spending time getting to know people in the area was great fun; we had a ball!
- we intend to do rail trail on another occasion (cycle/walk) but will probably not use train to get access to it. observation decks on train are far too small unlike tranzalpine) and many passengers spend whole journey there so hard to get a space on it
- we love the train trip to mm! it is a must for access to the rail trail
- we plan to come back next April to do the Cycle Rail Trail. Because we could not get into that when we tried to book it in Aug 2009. Accommodation was fully booked. Therefore we do this short trip and come back and book for next year April
- we think Taieri Gorge railway is the most beautiful trip, just love it
- we were holidaying, in Central and chose to do the train as a day out on the way home. if the kids were older and we were to do the rail trail we would probably drive due to living in Southland, if we lived in Dunedin then I would use it as transport to the trail
- we would like to know about the lovely yellow flowers all along the track (we know what they are) tourists need to know. disappointed there was no scones
- Well organised, a real pleasure to me but again more frequent service better, it was different planning accommodation not knowing how long to take for the trail. i had to be inflexible to ?? the service. Ridiculous that I cannot eat on ??? in buffet car. so I have to walk full length of train with hot coffee, ?? to a seat with no table
- what a great trip! very scenic and the staff very friendly and helpful. we would do it again and recommend it to our friends
- what a lovely ride
- will be back
- will cycle rail trail at a later date and different time of the year
- wonderful but commentary not loud enough
- would be nice to have more room to stretch our legs when seated
- would have welcomed option to sit on other side of train on return journey even though we booked early our set allocation was on least favourable side of train. ps: found out later option provided to swap sides. v. good idea.
- would like to (use the train and then cycle the trail) but train timetable does not make it possible for me. make it possible to arrive AM experience the trail and return late pm e.g. PM train to Middlesmarch
- you could expand service by operating dining car or possible dinner experience!! Great to be able to go outside to experience the real feel of the train trip
- your dining car was well presented but choice and standard of coffee was disappointing





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