



## **Changes to Metro network due to Commercial Contracts**

Due to the operating environment brought about by the February earthquake, Red Bus Ltd has made the difficult decision to cease its two commercial services, the 29 Airport and 10 Airport – Cashmere, from 4 February 2012.

Despite the decision Environment Canterbury and Red Bus have worked closely together to ensure the impact on Metro passengers is minimal.

The changes to be introduced on 4 February will mean that while the 10 Airport – Cashmere service will cease, coverage will be provided by changes made to existing Environment Canterbury contracted services. The 29 Airport service will become a contracted service and there will be slight changes to the route. The 3 Airport – Sumner via Avonhead service is unaffected by the changes.

As part of the changes the 16 Belfast service, which has suffered significant passenger loss due to the earthquakes, will cease operating. Coverage will again be provided by existing contracted services. There will also be route changes to the 12 Northwood – Murray Aynsley and 15 Bishopdale – Beckenham services in the south of the city to cover parts of the current route 10 Airport – Cashmere route.

Further details about all of these changes, including revised timetables, will be available from the Metroinfo website and call centre from Friday 20 January.

A commercial service is one that is operated by a bus company without any subsidy or funding from Environment Canterbury. Apart from the 10 Airport – Cashmere and 29 Airport services, all other Metro services in Christchurch are contracted by Environment Canterbury, and the operator receives public funding to assist with the cost of their operation.

The significant reduction in passenger numbers since the 2011 earthquakes has meant that the 10 Airport – Cashmere and 29 Airport services are no longer commercially viable despite the best endeavours of Red Bus to improve passenger numbers.

Red Bus Chief Executive Paul McNoe says that it is with real regret that Red Bus is ending its commercial services to Christchurch International Airport. It is a decision that has not been taken lightly.

“As a result of patronage losses after the earthquakes in 2011 the 29 Airport and 10 Airport – Cashmere services are no longer commercially viable. It has been a difficult decision to make considering Red Bus’s long standing commitment to our customers on these services.

“We are however pleased that our positive discussions with Environment Canterbury and the revised service arrangements will mean that our customers will not be adversely affected by the changes,” he says.

Environment Canterbury Director Operations Wayne Holton-Jeffreys says that the changes to be introduced will make sure that all passengers continue to have a convenient bus service at no additional cost to the community.

“2011 was an extremely difficult year for public transport in Christchurch and while more people are again travelling by Metro, it is unrealistic to expect that any operator can continue to operate non subsidised urban services in the current environment,” he says.