

Public Transport - Price Book Guideline

Integrated Procurement Resource

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi

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DRAFT

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Introduction

Purpose

This guideline sets out how Public Transport Authorities (PTAs) can apply the Price Book Template, including tailoring it to their specific needs.

It also sets out expectations for PTAs in maintaining consistency – particularly in relation to indexation and transparency of costs associated with key cost drivers.

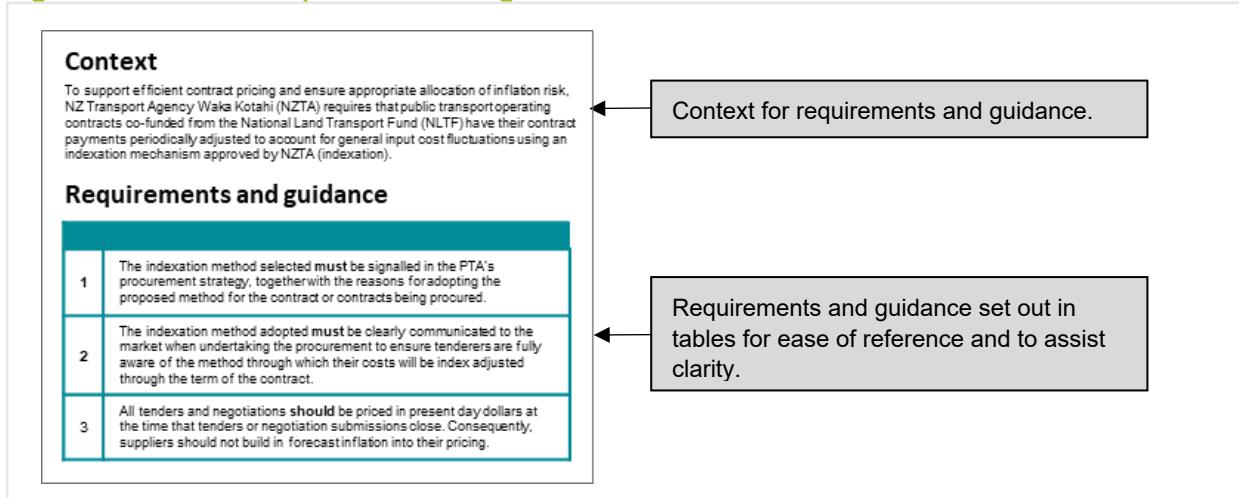
Audience

The intended audience includes people new to the subject of variations as well as experienced practitioners. Accordingly, this document covers both first principles, along with more detailed guidance and requirements.

Using this document

For ease of reference and to assist clarity, this document tabulates requirements and guidance as illustrated in Figure 1 where relevant.

Figure 1: Format for requirements and guidance.



The following terms are utilised to distinguish between requirements and guidance:

- “**Must**” denotes requirements. This term refers to content that PTAs must adhere to. These requirements can stem from either a statutory provision within the LTMA or statutory powers granted to NZTA under the LTMA, such as defining conditions of receiving funding from the NLTF or approving procurement procedures.
- “**Should**” and “**May**” denotes guidance. The term “should” indicates strong recommendations or best practices, while “may” suggests optional guidelines.

NZTA may update requirements and guidance from time to time.

Relevant Legislation

Under the Land Transport Management Act 2003 (LTMA):

- Activities funded from the NLTF must be procured in accordance with procedures approved by NZTA¹. Aligning with nationally consistent minimum requirements for pricing workbooks forms part of obtaining procurement procedure approval for public transport operating contracts.
- Planning, procuring, and operating public transport services must be carried out in an open and transparent manner, including with respect to operating costs². Pricing workbooks must therefore contribute to openness and transparency.

Purpose of pricing workbooks

The purpose of pricing workbooks is to:

- Enable PTAs to evaluate pricing proposals made by Public Transport Operators (PTOs).
- Provide pricing transparency, supporting financial sustainability and value for money of contracts.

PTAs may use pricing workbooks as the basis for ongoing financial monitoring and management of contracts, e.g. updating information for variations and indexation over time.

References

This guideline relates to the following MS Excel Price Book:

Filename	Price Book Template - draft for sector consultation - November 2025
Size	641KB
Date	November 2025

The Price Book Template has been developed in alignment with specific guidance on indexation mechanisms for Public Transport operating contracts. Refer [Requirements and guidance for indexation for public transport operating contracts - April 2025](#).

¹ Section 25 of the Land Transport Management Act.

² Section 116 of the Land Transport Management Act.

Note the indexation guidance includes the following NZTA indices and sources:

Category	Index
Bus driver labour	Labour (bus) - Road and rail drivers Base June 2014 - Series ref: 31240206
Diesel	Fuel - Commercial diesel (Bulk) Base December 1996 - NRGQ.SICZ7
Electricity	Electrical energy - Electricity: Commercial Consumers - SQUC51110
Road user charges	Road user charges (RUC) – a NZTA index which tracks movement in RUC rates for a representative sample of buses used in delivering public transport services
Other	Other costs (bus) - Road transport excluding fuel, road and water transport - Base December 2010 – Series ref: 31240165

References to indices in this document and the template use the **Category** descriptions in the table above.

Design Principles & Approach

The Price Book Template was developed according to the following principles:

- The Price Book is a template for data entry by Public Transport Operators (PTOs) and not a financial model.
- The template provides a level of transparency over PTO costs to support evaluation of tenders by PTAs.
- The Price Book requires PTOs to provide information on the basis that total costs plus margin equals the Annual Gross Price (AGP).
- Costs are grouped and mappable to common major cost drivers (e.g. Bus Kilometres).
- Costs are grouped and mappable to indexation categories from NZTA's elemental indexation mechanism (e.g. LCI).
- PTAs have the option of contracting for a single **average** annual price or specific (multi-year) annual values.

The design has sought to strike a balance between complexity / detail and usability. Some PTAs may choose to include a range of additional detail and features. For example, PTAs may choose to incorporate specification of capital recovery methodology and associated formulae.

The template includes a range of “spare” rows that may be used to ask for additional information.

The template is based on contract years and a total contract term of nine years. Refer also Updating Timeline on page 18 below.

The template assumes there is one workbook for each Unit / tender. If there are bundled as well as individual bids, or alternative bids, each of those would be expected to be a separate workbook.

Conventions

Cell colours

Cells are colour-coded as illustrated below.

- Inputs (for respondents / PTOs)
- Inputs (provided by PTA)
- Totals



PTAs are required to complete a range of information (green cells), and most inputs would be required from PTOs (light yellow cells). PTAs may customise the colour schemes as part of tailoring the template to their needs.

Number formats

All amounts need to be entered as positive numbers unless stated otherwise. All financial inputs must be expressed in real New Zealand Dollars (\$NZ) as at time of tender submission and exclusive of GST, unless stated otherwise.

The Price Book has a “Units” column in relevant worksheets that specifies the unit (e.g. “km”) for the value in the corresponding row.

Dollar amounts include no decimals, and percentage values and FTEs are rounded to 1dp.

Check total tolerance

There are several check totals in the Price Book that typically have a tolerance of <2 to allow for some rounding differences. PTAs may wish to add additional checks or use a different tolerance. A zero tolerance is not recommended.

Requirements and guidance

Guidance and requirements	
1	Price information date All contract prices set through a competitive process must be priced in present day dollars at the time the tender or negotiations close. Consequently, PTOs should not build forecast inflation into their pricing.
2	Indexation Where PTAs are using the elemental indexation mechanism (in line with NZTA guidance), the cost items in the Price Book must be mapped to specific indexation categories. This is set out in section 3.3 below. Note there may be certain costs that are not exposed to significant cost fluctuation risk and therefore may be excluded from indexation by PTAs. Where PTAs have NZTA approval to apply a custom indexation method, they will need to make their own changes to the template.
3	Cost driver transparency All costs should be allocated to specific cost drivers, as set out in section 3.2 below. This enables more consistent comparisons, potential benchmarking, and forecasting / analysis of potential future scenarios.
4	Specific pricing for Diesel and ZEBs Where the fleet consists of both Diesel and ZEBs, the PTA must seek specific direct cost information in line with the Price Book Template. This is important information for planning, monitoring and assessing the transition towards a zero-emissions fleet.
5	Other good practice PTAs should apply other good practice elements in the Price Book Template: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Cost breakdowns and allocations of cost and hours to sub-categories (refer Driver Labour and Vehicle Maintenance in section 3.1 below) • Capture key operating metrics and volumes, such as in-service distance and hours • Capture asset information (refer Asset Schedule in section 3.1 below)
6	Cost categories and structures PTAs should use the specific cost categorisations and structures in the Price Book template. This is important to maintain consistency and reduce PTO cost, effort and risk in responding to various tenders. Where PTAs have good reasons to change categories they may do so (refer below).
7	Enhancements, customisations and changes PTAs may make further enhancements, modify the template, or use elements of the template to develop their own specific Price Books. Where this involves significant change to cost categorisations and structure, PTAs should engage with the NZTA and market to explain the rationale. For example, a PTA tendering a relatively small Unit could determine all it requires is the “Costs” tab converted into an input sheet, and the “Variation Rate Card” tab, for a simpler version of the Price Book. While this would maintain consistent cost categories with the template, it would significantly reduce the level of detail and transparency of operational and labour assumptions.

Note that, over time, there may be advantages to adopting greater standardisation and incorporating lessons learned from applying the Price Book template in updated guidance.

Template Overview

Description of Sheets

Table 1 provides a short description of each worksheet contained within the Price Book Template. We note that the workbook is structured such that input sheets capture the core cost components (e.g. driver labour costs) and then these inputs are translated into outputs sheets based on calculation sheets that sum cost items and apply the appropriate mapping. The workbook is broken into sections.

Table 1: Worksheet Descriptions

Worksheet	Description
General information sheets	
Contents	List and brief description of worksheets contained within the Price Book, with hyperlinks to every sheet. Every sheet also has a hyperlink back to the contents sheet.
Instructions	Instructions to assist respondents in using the Price Book, conventions, schematic, etc. Note the points listed in this template provide a starting point for common instructions, but PTAs should review in detail and make additions in accordance with their tender requirements. PTAs should also ensure instructions are clear in the tender document(s).
Contract Information	Contains key information about the contract / tender that PTAs need to specify, such as the PTA name and information about the unit. Note the PTA name entered here will then show in the heading of each sheet. The sheet also includes a section for PTOs to complete.
Cost Indexation	Includes key costs items in the Price Book (e.g. driver labour costs) and their respective mapping to indexation categories from NZTA's elemental mechanism. The mapping for most cost items is pre-specified, and there is some flexibility to select and index for cost items (refer 3.3 below). The list of cost items is not exhaustive. "ALL OTHER COST ITEMS" includes the remaining cost items from the Price Book that are not explicitly included in this sheet.
Check List	Contains a number of completeness checks for PTOs to ensure they have added all required inputs.
Output sheets	
Outputs >>	Blank sheet, providing a section separation.
Summary (Yearly)	Output sheet containing Annual Gross Price (AGP) as a value per year throughout duration of contract. Other key operating metrics such as annual in-service hours and kilometres are included along with a breakdown of the AGP by each indexation category.
Summary (Average)	Output sheet containing AGP as an average (consistent annual payment) applied throughout duration of contract and the above operational metrics.
Consolidated Costs	Consolidation of all costs (including Margin) to sum to the AGP. This sets out AGP components for each elemental indexation category, as well as for each cost driver.
Input sheets	
Inputs >>	Blank sheet, providing a section separation.
Variation Rate Card	Table of variation rates to be included in the contract. This distinguishes between Diesels and ZEBs, with four different vehicle sizes available each. PTAs may add or remove columns to suit their fleet arrangements. Note each cost item includes a specific indexation category.
Depot Locations	Input sheet for PTOs to submit information on their depots such as the depot name and address. The Depot Names are then picked up as a dropdown list (see Lists below) that is available in the Asset Schedule . Up to six depots have been allowed for, and this is also reflected in the Depot Maintenance sheet. If PTAs require more depots for a contract, they will need to make changes to the Price Book Template.

Driver Labour	Input sheet for PTOs to submit total driver labour costs for each year. This includes further information requirements such as driver training costs and employee benefits (such as KiwiSaver). Note recruitment costs are requested on the Overheads input sheet. PTOs are also required to submit breakdowns for total FTEs and paid driver hours on an annual basis.
Vehicle Maintenance	Input sheet for PTOs to submit bus maintenance and bus vehicle cleaning for each year. Bus maintenance costs include all labour, parts, and consumables used in routine maintenance, reactive maintenance, and refurbishments/renewals. Bus cleaning costs include all the costs for fleet cleaning (including labour) activities and in-house and contracted cleaning costs.
Depot Maintenance	Input sheet for PTOs to submit depot maintenance for each year. Depot maintenance includes, but is not limited to, all labour, parts, and consumables. This includes parts and consumables used in routine maintenance, reactive maintenance, and refurbishments / renewals.
Other Operating Costs	Input sheet for PTOs to submit other operating costs such as fuel, oil and vehicle electricity costs for each year. PTOs are also required to submit information such as total fuel consumption.
Overheads	Input sheet for PTOs to submit overheads for each year. This includes performance bonds, transition costs and margin.
Asset Charges	Input sheet for PTOs to submit asset financing costs and depreciation for each year. These costs are separated depending on whether assets are provided by the PTO, PTA, or a third party.
Asset Schedule	Input sheet for PTOs to submit information on their fleet and other fixed assets. It is expected that information is requested at an individual asset level for diesel buses, ZEB (electric buses), depots, batteries, and chargers.
Calculation and aggregation sheets	
Calculations >>	Blank sheet, providing a section separation.
Costs	Calculation sheet that links to all cost items in the input sheets and sets out costs by cost driver and indexation category.
Fleet Details	Details of bus fleet, including number of diesel and ZEB buses, age of fleet and size of fleet. Includes calculations based on inputs provided in the Asset Schedule sheet.
Admin sheets	
Time	Calculation of Price Book timeline.
Lists	<p>Lists included in input cells. Includes lists for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZTA's indexation categories (using elemental mechanism) • Bus sizes • Whether a vehicle is part of the PVR or a spare • Depot locations • Ownership types for assets

Cost Drivers

Table 2 sets out the cost items contained in the Price Book Template and corresponding mapping to cost driver categories. Cost drivers are determinants of various variable and fixed costs, giving an indication of how costs would scale when cost driver quantities change. The breakdown by cost driver allows PTAs to perform additional analyses (e.g. as illustrated in section 5.4).

Table 2: Cost Drivers

Cost Driver	Cost Item	Worksheet
Bus Hour Costs	Driver Labour Costs	Driver Labour
Bus Kilometre Costs	Bus Vehicle Maintenance Costs	Vehicle Maintenance
	Bus Vehicle Cleaning Costs	Vehicle Maintenance

	Fuel and Oil Costs	Other Operating Costs
	Vehicle Electricity Costs	Other Operating Costs
	Road User Charges	Other Operating Costs
Other Vehicle Costs	Vehicle Licensing & Registration	Other Operating Costs
	Vehicle Insurance	Other Operating Costs
Depot Costs	Depot Maintenance Costs	Depot Maintenance
	Depot Utilities and Rates	Other Operating Costs
	Depot Rent	Other Operating Costs
	Other Depot Costs	Other Operating Costs
Overheads and Other Cost Items	Administration and Management Personnel Costs	Overheads
	Technology Costs (Hardware and Software)	Overheads
	Professional Services	Overheads
	Other Equipment and Consumables	Overheads
	Other Vehicle Maintenance and Operating Costs	Overheads
	Staff Training and Recruitment	Overheads
	Other Staff Related Costs	Overheads
	Other Insurance	Overheads
	Rates, Lease and Rentals - Head Office	Overheads
	Other Overheads	Overheads
	Performance and Other Bonds	Overheads
	Transition Costs	Overheads
	Margin	Overheads
	Financing Costs	Asset Charges
	Depreciation	Asset Charges

If PTAs add further cost items, these should similarly be allocated to one of the cost drivers.

Cost Indexation

Table 3 sets out the cost line items contained in the Price Book Template and corresponding mapping to NZTA's indexation categories. Refer to section 2.2 above for NZTA requirements.

In the table below, the cost item mappings for the following **must** be adhered to:

- Driver Labour Costs
- Fuel and Oil Costs
- Vehicle Electricity Costs
- Road User Charges

Table 3: Cost Indexation

NZTA Index	Cost Item	Worksheet
Bus driver labour	Driver Labour Costs	Driver Labour
Diesel	Fuel and Oil Costs	Other Operating Costs

Electricity	Vehicle Electricity Costs	Other Operating Costs
Road user charges (RUC)	Road User Charges	Other Operating Costs
Other (bus)	Bus Vehicle Maintenance Costs	Vehicle Maintenance
	Bus Vehicle Cleaning Costs	Vehicle Maintenance
	Depot Maintenance Costs	Depot Maintenance
	Vehicle Licensing & Registration	Other Operating Costs
	Vehicle Insurance	Other Operating Costs
	Depot Utilities and Rates	Other Operating Costs
	Depot Rent	Other Operating Costs
	Other Depot Costs	Other Operating Costs
	Administration and Management Personnel Costs	Overheads
	Technology Costs (Hardware and Software)	Overheads
	Professional Services	Overheads
	Other Equipment and Consumables	Overheads
	Other Vehicle Maintenance and Operating Costs	Overheads
	Staff Training and Recruitment	Overheads
	Other Staff Related Costs	Overheads
	Other Insurance	Overheads
	Rates, Lease and Rentals - Head Office	Overheads
	Other Overheads	Overheads
	Performance and Other Bonds	Overheads
	Transition Costs	Overheads
	Margin	Overheads
	Financing Costs	Asset Charges
	Depreciation	Asset Charges

As identified in section 2 above, there **may** be situations where a cost is not exposed to any significant fluctuation risk, and therefore the PTA may select that the cost item would have no indexation. Where there is no such cost item, PTAs must use the PPI indexation category for remaining cost items as per table 3 above.

The Cost Indexation tab provides mappings of cost items to indexation categories, and the base version of the Price Book Template allows selection of the index for Financing Costs and Depreciation (the green cells below).

[PTA Name] Bus Contract Tender Price Template

Cost Indexation

Contents

	Sheet	Row	NZTA Index
Costs (by NZTA cost component index)			
Driver Labour Costs	Driver Labour	17	Bus Driver Labour
Bus Vehicle Maintenance Costs	Vehicle Maintenance	37	Other
Bus Vehicle Cleaning Costs	Vehicle Maintenance	67	Other
Depot Maintenance Costs	Depot Maintenance	116	Other
Fuel and Oil Costs	Other Operating Costs	11	Diesel
Electricity Costs	Other Operating Costs	23	Electricity
Road User Charges	Other Operating Costs	34	Road User Charges
Financing Costs	Asset Charges	50	Other
Depreciation	Asset Charges	94	Not Indexed
[Spare]	<i>Various</i>		Other
ALL OTHER COST ITEMS			

End

PTAs may develop an alternative indexation approach. An alternative indexation approach **must** have NZTA approval, clear communication with the market, and modifications made to the Price Book Template.

Note the default indexation mapping on the Variation Rate Card tab includes “Not Indexed” for the PVR capital cost component. PTAs may choose an alternative indexation mapping, where that is warranted.

Asset Information

Asset Schedule

A detailed asset schedule is requested in the Price Book Template. It is expected that information is provided at an individual asset level for diesel buses, ZEB buses (electric buses), key depot assets, batteries, and chargers. Information includes:

- Owner
- Service start and end date
- Book value at start date
- Remaining useful life
- Residual value at end of useful life

Where appropriate, PTAs may request additional information, or information about additional relevant assets, or remove / hide sections for assets that are not in scope of the contract.

Fleet Details

The "Fleet Details" sheet of the Price Book use inputs from the Asset Schedule sheet to provide insights into fleet composition and performance metrics. It calculates the number of operational diesel and ZEB buses per year and each vehicle's age.

For example, each year, the worksheet determines if a bus is in-service if the current year falls between its service start and end dates. If a bus is operational during this period, it is counted in the annual count for its category (diesel or ZEB). The sum of the operational diesel and ZEB buses for each year are then transferred to the "Summary (Yearly)" and "Summary (Average)" sheets as an output labelled "Peak Vehicle Requirement."

Asset Charges

The Asset Charges sheet distinguishes between assets that are provided by the PTO, the PTA or a third party.

For PTO-provided assets, the Asset Charges sheet requests financing and depreciation costs. In this general context, depreciation refers to the annual costs (based on the PTO's accounting treatment) of these assets which would be included in the AGP. Note the Asset Charges sheet is **not** linked to the Asset Schedule. PTAs may establish a specific mechanism for asset charges, which could then explicitly link the two sheets. For example, the "initial cost", "useful life", and "residual value" could be used on the Asset Schedule in conjunction with a finance rate to calculate monthly payments for each asset.

For PTA and Third Party provided assets, the Asset Charges sheet requests an annual lease cost.

Setting up the Price Book for your needs

PTAs will need team members with experience in MS Excel and pricing templates to set up the Price Book appropriately for their needs. PTOs will also need similarly skilled team members to complete Price Books.

Average annual or specific annual values

PTAs may choose to contract for an AGP that is based on the average year over the term of the contract. In that case, PTAs should keep the Summary (Average) sheet but **remove** the Summary (Yearly) sheet.

Conversely, PTAs that choose to contract for specific annual pricing and should then retain the Summary (Yearly) sheet and remove the Summary (Average) sheet.

Where PTAs make changes to sheet names, remove, or add sheets, they should ensure this is reflected in Contents.

Adding or Removing Lines

There are several spare cost items available for PTAs to add additional detail. These are presented as input cells in the Price Book. We recommend using them instead of adding additional rows to ensure correct functionality is maintained. Similarly, it is recommended that PTAs hide rows they do not intend to use rather than deleting them. Of course, PTAs may choose to add and remove rows to reflect their preferences and specific requirements.

Updating Lists

The Price Book Template uses data validation to allow for dropdown lists in the Price Book. The values contained within each list can be updated in the “List” worksheet. It is recommended that PTAs do not add values to cells at the bottom of each list but instead insert cells above the last item to ensure the data validation captures the full range of cells.

Updating Timeline

The Price Book Template has a timeline that is based on the “Time” worksheet where a contract length of nine years is assumed. To change the contract term, PTAs would need to insert/delete columns that include values for start date and end date in this sheet and then copy the formula across the new selection. PTAs will then need to do this for all input, calculation and output sheets that are linking to the timeline. Formulae that sum across the timeline will need to be changed appropriately.

The nine annual periods assume that each year is a “contract year” rather than a financial year. Where a PTA wishes pricing to be provided for its financial years, it may add additional periods and columns (e.g. the first period may be a part-year corresponding to contract commencement until end of financial year, followed by eight full financial years, followed by a tenth period representing the last part-year).

Analysis

Based on information in the Price Book Template, a PTA can conduct a range of analysis to understand reasonableness and completeness of information provided, or highlight areas where clarification questions may be useful. For example, PTAs may compare and cross reference items within the price book or across responses to identify outliers.

PTAs are also expected to develop analysis tools for price evaluation, which take information from the Price Book. This could include estimating prices for different scenarios such as future service enhancements that increase in-service kms and in-service hours.

Any such analyses should be developed and carried out in separate workbooks, rather than in the Price Book itself.

Adding Functionality

PTAs may add further detail and functionality. An example in 4.3 above would be to incorporate a specified capital cost recovery mechanism. Depending on the extent of customisation, PTAs may prefer to develop their own workbook, while applying components from the Price Book Template and following NZTA guidance.

Before you Finalise

PTAs should ensure they

- Develop clear instructions for respondents and reflect these in the tender documentation and the Price Book.
- Complete all relevant PTA-specified information (e.g. about the unit).
- Hide or remove irrelevant / unused components.
- Thoroughly test the Price Book to ensure all information flows through and adds up as expected, including testing interfaces / processes with ancillary workbooks such as for price evaluations.
- Change any colour scheme preferences (e.g. green PTA-entered cells may no longer need to be shaded, and block colours may be set based on the PTA's branding guidelines).
- Save the Price Book files with an appropriate naming convention.
- Protect sheets and the Price Book.

Appendix A List of cost items with associated mappings

Worksheet	Cost Item	Cost Driver	NZTA Index (Elemental Mechanism)
Driver Labour	Driver Labour Costs	Bus Hour Costs	Bus Driver Labour
Vehicle Maintenance	Bus Vehicle Maintenance Costs	Bus Kilometre Costs	Other
Depot Maintenance	Bus Vehicle Cleaning Costs	Bus Kilometre Costs	Other
	Depot Maintenance Costs	Depot Costs	Other
Other Operating Costs	Fuel and Oil Costs	Bus Kilometre Costs	Diesel
	Vehicle Electricity Costs	Bus Kilometre Costs	Electricity
	Road User Charges	Bus Kilometre Costs	Road user charges
	Vehicle Licensing & Registration	Other Vehicle Costs	Other
	Vehicle Insurance	Other Vehicle Costs	Other
	Depot Maintenance Costs	Depot Costs	Other
	Depot Utilities and Rates	Depot Costs	Other
	Depot Rent	Depot Costs	Other
	Other Depot Costs	Depot Costs	Other
Overheads	Administration and Management Personnel Costs	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Technology Costs (Hardware and Software)	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Professional Services	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Other Equipment and Consumables	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Other Vehicle Maintenance and Operating Costs	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Staff Training and Recruitment	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Other Staff Related Costs	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Other Insurance	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Rates, Lease and Rentals - Head Office	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Other Overheads	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Performance and Other Bonds	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Transition Costs	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Margin	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
Asset Charges	Financing Costs	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Depreciation	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other
	Lease Costs	Overheads and Other Cost Items	Other

Appendix B Glossary

[Note the glossary will be developed on an as-needed basis]

Term	Meaning