

## COMMUNIQUE

# Bruny Island Ferry Reference Group

Meeting held 13 August and 26 August 2019

The Bruny Island Ferry Reference Group (BIFRG) held its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting over two dates, being the 13 and 26 August 2019. A summary of the major items discussed is included below. This Communique has been compiled by the Department of State Growth, and approved for publication by BIFRG members.

### SeaLink services

SeaLink provided the BIFRG with an update on service delivery matters. SeaLink noted that demand for travel was currently at its lowest to date with vehicle numbers in the last quarter falling to 36,000.

The initial uptake and sale of pre-purchased tickets has been encouraging. Pre-purchased tickets can be processed much quicker compared to cash or EFTPOS transactions resulting in faster processing at the ticket booth. Tickets can be pre-purchased from SeaLink's website and can be used on any voyage. Tickets can be pre-purchased for a one return ferry trip (valid for 30 days) or a pack of ten return ferry trips (valid for 365 days). Presently only tickets for vehicles less than 6 metres can be pre-purchased.

The MV Mirambeena returned to service on 19 August 2019 after being slipped for six weeks for planned repairs and maintenance. While slipped, the MV Moongalba acted as the primary vessel and the MV Bowen as the back-up vessel to ensure that service demand continued to be met. The Mirambeena has now returned to being the primary vessel, with the MV Moongalba as back-up vessel. An updated winter timetable began on 19 August to account for the Mirambeena's return.

### State Growth infrastructure works

State Growth provided the BIFRG with an update on infrastructure works, advising that works at Kettering and Roberts Point are largely complete. Upgrades completed include the extension and sealing of the gravel all-day parking area, construction of a queuing overflow area and vehicle turning circle, and applying a final pavement seal with new line-markings.

State Growth also provided an update on the Bruny Island Main Road upgrades. Planned works include removal of trees along the road corridor, sealing works, installation of wildlife warning signage, improved road design and revised speed limits. A public meeting would be held on 24 August 2019 and further information is available at <https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/road/projects/brunyislandmainroadupgrade>.

## Booking system

The BIFRG discussed the booking system. It is a requirement of the contract between SeaLink and the Transport Commission that SeaLink implements a booking system for the Bruny Island ferry service. The booking system will help manage access to the ferry service and will enable passengers to pre-book planned travel and minimise the need to turn up very early at peak times to guarantee travel on a particular ferry.

BIFRG members asked a number of questions about how the booking system will operate and when it will be implemented. State Growth advised that plans for the booking system have not been finalised and no specific dates have been set.

SeaLink and State Growth explained that planning for the booking system is still in its early stages and that they are committed to working through community concerns prior to its commencement. State Growth and SeaLink also explained how it was important it is to ensure that the infrastructure surrounding the ferry terminal is capable of supporting both booked and unbooked passengers to ensure the implementation of the booking system is successful. Further information will be provided when it is known.

## Community morning tea

On 13 August 2019, the BIFRG hosted a community morning tea at the CWA Hall on North Bruny Island. The purpose of the morning tea was to allow community members to ask questions of the BIFRG, SeaLink or State Growth regarding the ferry service. Eight community members were in attendance.

Community members primarily asked about when the booking system would be implemented and whether live streaming of the ferry queues could be provided by SeaLink to assist passengers with making travel decisions at peak times.

The BIFRG considered the community morning to be a success and agreed that it should host future question and answer sessions before each meeting. The next session will be held on Tuesday 8 October 2019, between 9.00 and 9.30am at the Adventure Bay Hall. All community members are invited to attend.

## Live stream of ferry queues

SeaLink is investigating the possibility of setting up a live camera stream at Roberts Point and Kettering to provide passengers with access to real-time information on the ferry queues. State Growth advised that there may be privacy issues to consider before a live stream could be implemented. More information will be provided when it is known.

## Community meeting and resolutions

On 14 July 2019, the Bruny Island Community Association (BICA) coordinated a public meeting chaired by the Hon Andrew Wilkie MP. The purpose of the meeting was to allow the community to raise issues and concerns about the ferry service.

Four motions were passed at the community meeting. The BIFRG held an in-depth discussion about each motion. A summary of each of the community meeting motions passed and the points discussed is provided below.

1. BIFRG meetings must provide an effective means of communication between the community, SeaLink and the government, and must be open to community observers, and individuals must be given opportunity to present issues and concerns directly.

The BIFRG noted that it occasionally needs to discuss confidential matters such as SeaLink business or specific Bruny Island residents and for this reason meetings will remain closed. However, further

community question and answer sessions are planned to allow individuals to present issues and concerns directly to SeaLink and the Reference Group.

2. The Ferry Service is part of the State Road Network and policy decisions such as the introduction of a booking system, and operational changes must remain the responsibility of the State Government.

State Growth explained that the ferry service is not considered a part of the state road network. However, State Growth explained that under the Contract with SeaLink, the Transport Commission retains significant oversight of the service. The Transport Commission must approve major operational changes (such as timetables and the implementation of a booking system) before their commencement.

3. The community meeting attendees oppose a booking system.

The BIFRG noted the resolution. SeaLink and State Growth explained that a booking system would not be implemented until sufficient infrastructure is in place to support a booking system. SeaLink explained that they would work with the community to address concerns.

4. Through the BIFRG, SeaLink be invited to revisit the question of family members of aged pension residents being adequately supported to visit Bruny Island to assist their needy resident families.

A discussion was held about benefits available to people in need through programs, providers and groups associated with the Bruny Island Community Health Centre. It was proposed that these programs should be the appropriate avenue to seek this type of support.

SeaLink explained that as part of its Bruny Island Residents Club, they had issued two passes to each resident that could be provided to family and friends to travel at a discounted rate. The family and friends passes were very well received and 80 per cent of passes had already been redeemed. State Growth advised that the passes issued by SeaLink were not subsidised by the government.

## **BIFRG Terms of Reference review**

The BIFRG reviewed the Terms of Reference which were established approximately twelve months ago. Reference Group members were able to reach consensus on the purpose and objective of the Reference Group as well as many other matters. Matters relating to membership were not resolved.

State Growth is drafting the revised Terms of Reference for circulation to BIFRG members. These will be published when it is appropriate to do so.

## **BIFRG communications**

Following feedback from the community meeting, the BIFRG has committed to review its communications processes.

It was agreed that State Growth will take ownership of the preparation of minutes and communiques for a period of time. Minutes and the Communique will be approved by the BIFRG out of session so that they may be published sooner.

## **Next Meeting**

The next BIFRG meeting will be held on Tuesday 8 October 2019 at the Adventure Bay Hall, commencing at 9:30 am. Community members are invited to attend a question and answer session to be held prior to the meeting, between 9.00 and 9.30am.

