Welcome and previous minutes

The Chair opened the meeting at 10:00am, welcomed members and noted there were no apologies.

Mathew Fagan moved that the minutes as circulated on 26 July 2018 be accepted as a true and accurate record of events. The motion was seconded by Paul Victory and carried with unanimous support.

Terms of Reference

The Chair noted that two comments had been received in response to the draft Terms of Reference. In light of this, the Chair expressed a view that the initial draft (as amended) had majority support and could be adopted.

Mathew Fagan moved that the initial Terms of Reference as drafted by the Department of State Growth and amended be agreed. The motion was seconded by Bernice Woolley. Mathew noted that the amendment is consistent with the intent of the new contract to provide a service at least as good as is currently provided and would allow the Reference Group to deal with any issue relating to the transition to the SeaLink operated service. It was further noted that the amended Terms of Reference is also consistent with key matters agreed by the Reference Group at its first meeting on 13 July 2018, including membership, and ratified through the accepted minutes.

There was discussion regarding the alternate Terms of Reference (V.07) circulated by Lindon Haigh on 26 July 2018, including the role of members in representing the community rather than specific organisations/associations. A number of members of the Group supported the view that whilst it was initially appropriate for members to have been nominated by a group, members should represent the community more generally particularly given a number of large associations, such as the Boat Club for example, do not have a representative on the Reference Group.

In addition, there were split views among members of the Reference Group who represent the community regarding the process for development of the alternate Terms of Reference and the extent to which they were supported.

The motion to agree the initial Terms of Reference as amended was moved and passed with majority. The motion was not supported by Lindon Haigh, Siobhan Gaskell and Paul Davis.

Progress update – infrastructure

Kim Evans advised that the General Manager of State Roads and his team has commenced investigations regarding infrastructure requirements at the terminal. He noted considerations include signage, capacity of the marshalling areas, car parking, queuing lanes, standby lanes and associated facilities (such as toilets). Paul Victory noted that initial discussions were very positive.
Kim further noted that works will be staged, with the initial focus to be on concepts for changes related to full introduction of booking system. He advised that some survey work will need to be done at Roberts Point, which will likely occur over the coming weeks.

Kim made a commitment to the Group that further information, including design concepts, will be shared with the Reference Group at upcoming meetings.

Members queried the extent of the scope for infrastructure improvements, including widening of road at Roberts Point, relocation of ticket booth at Kettering, and the future of the kiosk/toilet building at Roberts Point.

There was also discussion regarding:

- the status of development applications at Roberts Point – Tony Ferrier agreed to provide further information about this matter at future meetings as information becomes available;
- the long term future of the gantry at each terminal; and
- the need to consider arrangements for pedestrian movement at Kettering.

Mathew Fagan queried whether the concept for a pullover area at Roberts Point which was raised during the Bruny Life survey could be part of the infrastructure considerations. There was general support for this concept, including from Paul Victory who suggested Council and State Government progress this in partnership.

**Progress update – SeaLink implementation plan**

Paul Victory provided an update on SeaLink activities including the development of a revised implementation plan which recognises continued feedback from the community, including via the Reference Group, and that a seamless commencement on day one is critical. The revised plan contemplates business-as-usual operations on day one, providing SeaLink an opportunity to bed down systems, processes and staff and continue consultation with the community and Government.

SeaLink will have a Project Manager – Anne Dyson – commencing on Monday 30 July 2018. A primary part of Anne’s role will be to observe, engage and commence the process of transferring and gathering information for operational aspects of the service, for example R and BI stickers. Paul noted that there will likely be a 3 month transition period where existing stickers “honoured” as the current operator is not able to provide customer information due to privacy laws.

Paul advised that Corporate Communications in Hobart has been engaged to assist with developing marketing and communications plans and materials, with an opportunity for the Reference Group to sight materials during upcoming meetings. A draft community consultation schedule was provided to the Group as an indication of forward activities, including timing.

Paul Davis queried the provision of information to property owners who may not be captured by local on-island sessions. There was discussion in relation to Kingborough Council’s mailing list which was similarly used for the Bruny Life survey. Tony Ferrier advised that it could be made available for SeaLink, following a request to Council, to communicate directly with property owners.

The proposed new peak season schedule was discussed including ‘on-demand’ services and how they will work in practice. Some members of the Group suggested caution be exercised with publication of on-demand services that might not operate as it may create confusion for ferry users. Paul also spoke about SeaLink’s consideration of an earlier sailing from the Island first thing in the morning, noting that it will be dependent on securing appropriate crewing arrangements.

Paul indicated that an announcement on the new ferry builders is imminent and advised that it may be announced ahead of the next Reference Group meeting. The Group discussed the design of the
vessels and Paul confirmed, consistent with previous communication, that the first will have a capacity of 36-40 vehicles but the final design and specification of the second will be reviewed.

Paul introduced Stage 2 of the revised plan, noting that it will be backed by strong communications and marketing plans. Richard Clarke indicated that to bring the community along members will need to share detail about exactly which services are proposed for trial, how it will work, and who will be affected for example. The Group also discussed the percentage of bookable and non-bookable spaces, during which Paul advised that SeaLink will be aiming for 80:20 initially but remain open-minded and will continue to engage with the Reference Group.

Paul clearly indicated that this will be a process of trial, ongoing review, and change as necessary. Mathew Fagan consequently indicated that the Reference Group can genuinely say to the community that this is a process of analysis.

The Reference Group discussed the on-board research that will commence under Stage 2. Paul indicated that SeaLink is aiming to partner with UTAS and the local community and that it is intended to be “attribute research” and the research outcomes will be shared with the Reference Group. Members indicated that the concept of engaging local people to collect data is sound and would be well received. With respect to the design of questionnaires, James Cook University has previously completed this work for SeaLink for use on other services. Paul indicated that the research is designed to segment the market (including visiting friends and family for example) with the outcomes to also include regional data that can be provided to regional tourism bodies. Bernice Woolley noted the benefit of this given the Island has had some difficulty in the past in obtaining grants etc due to lack of data.

The Group discussed the application of the resident discount during Stage 2 and Paul confirmed it would apply from the point where any resident/property owner is able to and does make a booking. There was also discussion regarding operational issues associated with one-way/return fares particularly during the Stage 2 trial. Paul took the feedback on notice for further consideration.

With respect to Stage 3 Paul noted it would also be a process of trial, review, assess, and amend as required, and it will be informed by Stage 2. He further noted that informed judgments will be made as we collectively move through the stages of transition. The Group discussed the need for the infrastructure to move with the trials. It was agreed that the monument at the Roberts Point terminal would remain under any infrastructure changes.

For Stage 4 of the revised plan, Paul noted that it would also be a process of monitoring, assessing take-up of bookings, and reviewing demand modelling and operational issues. The date is currently set for 1 April 2019 but this may change depending on other factors such as the timing of infrastructure improvements.

Paul briefly spoke to a short term concept for the loading lanes at Kettering, noting that it will be dependent on locating alternate car parking for walk-ons.

In general discussion of the revised plan a number of members spoke positively about it being generally in line with the early July community meeting resolution and as such it is something that members will be able to communicate to the community.

Mathew Fagan provided general support for the implementation plan and noted that there are still some important issues for residents that need to be resolved, for example a 20 minute pre-departure arrival and the ability to amend bookings within an hour of a booked ferry. Mathew suggested that some communication regarding these issues are on the table for discussion through the Reference Group.

Outcomes/Communication
It was agreed that a communique clearly setting out those elements of the discussion during the meeting to be communicated to the community, including the revised plan, would be prepared for distribution as soon as possible post the meeting.

The Group discussed the wording of the resident Q&As distributed at the previous meeting and agreed that they be reviewed and refined to ensure clear and consistent information is provided to the community. Further, the Group discussed this updated information being made available on SeaLink’s website.

Paul indicated SeaLink’s website could include information on the staged implementation plan as well as terms and conditions of travel etc, with the timing for updates to the website to be confirmed. It was agreed that the Transport website, Council’s website and other relevant sites should link through to SeaLink’s updated site.

The Group agreed that it would be useful to communicate information on fares soon and that communication of the revised plan should be clear about the genuine nature of the trials, process of review, on-board research, and the outcomes of each stage informing the next.

There was discussion about there being benefit in SeaLink being added to the closed Bruny Notices Facebook group and the Bruny Island Community Notice Board. Some members noted concern about using the Facebook forum as a means of communication. Paul advised that SeaLink had appointed a digital marketing representative who may be able to engage through these groups.

Other Business

The Chair queried whether SeaLink would consider passes for residents’ family members visiting the Island. Paul indicated SeaLink are considering a range of resident ferry service benefits that could include these sorts of ideas, and that he would like to work with the Group further on this idea.

Bernice Woolley noted that the tourism association brochure is currently sponsored by ferry company and requested agreement, which was provided by Paul Victory, to discuss continuation of this arrangement with SeaLink.

Paul Davis proposed a motion for the Reference Group, including SeaLink and State Government, to support the motion agreed at community meeting on 9 July 2018. It was suggested, with broad agreement, that the implementation plan meets the intent of the community motion and this should be reflected in the communique.

Next meeting

The Group discussed moving meetings away from Fridays in order to allow additional time. With this in mind, the date, timing and location of next meeting will be confirmed out of session.