Bruny Island Ferry Reference Group

Meeting #4

Date: 23 August 2018
Time: 8:30-10:30am
Venue: Board Room, Health Centre Alonnah

Attendees: Trevor Adams, Bernice Woolley, Siobhan Gaskell, Paul Davis, Richard Clarke, Mathew Fagan, Tony Ferrier, Paul Victory, Anne Dyson, Kim Evans, Peter Hubble, Alison Turner

Welcome and previous minutes

The Chair opened the meeting at 8:30, welcomed members, welcomed guests Anne Dyson from SeaLink and Peter Hubble from State Roads, and noted Lindon Haigh as an apology.

A motion was moved by Paul Victory that the minutes of Meeting 3 as circulated by DSG via email on 21 August 2018 be accepted as a true and accurate record of events. The motion was seconded by Siobhan Gaskell and carried unanimously.

The Group discussed the conduct of members in external settings, in light of events that transpired at a recent community association meeting held on the Island. It was agreed that it is appropriate for all Members to act in accordance with the following principles:

1. That no member reports publicly what another member or meeting participant has said, or is claimed to have said, in BIFRG meetings or related BIFRG briefings, unless they have the explicit consent of the other member of participant, or they are repeating a statement recorded in the BIFRG minutes.

2. That no member publicly criticises the contributions made in BIFRG meetings by non-member participants, including public servants or other BIFRG guests.

Members also agreed that any matter discussed with the Group in confidence would be treated as so until such time as the relevant information is finalised and ready for publication and dissemination.

Progress update – infrastructure

DSG representatives presented updated concept plans for infrastructure changes at the Kettering and Roberts Point terminals, which incorporate feedback received from members at the last meeting of the Reference Group.

With respect to the plans for Roberts Point, members discussed making provision for disabled parking in the plans as well as access to the kiosk and the possibility of creating some short term parking spaces. In relation to the Kettering terminal, members discussed options for the marshalling area, car parking and the location of the ticket booth.

The Group was advised that there are some processes to be navigated at both terminals in the next stage of planning, which will include costing the plans and determining timing and a work schedule. DSG representatives indicated that any roadworks components of the changes will likely occur at the tail end of or post the coming peak season in first half of 2019.

Community members on the Group welcomed the direction the plans are taking. It was observed that the proposed changes will improve access and safety at the terminals, and will be functional and are required irrespective of whether a booking system is operational.
Community members did, however, express some concern about the timing of infrastructure changes in the context of the booking system trials and the looming peak summer period. The Group discussed the risk of undertaking trials as previously contemplated, the logistical arrangements and operational options.

SeaLink acknowledged the concerns raised and proposed a solution to the Group involving a change to what was previously described as stage 2 and 3 of the implementation plan. Under the proposal discussed, booked spaces will be limited to tourist coaches and freight operators from November 1, with the booking system opened up to visitors and landowners in line with the completion of proposed infrastructure changes in early 2019. Under this proposal, changes to fares would continue to take effect from November 1, with visitor fares to vary according to the time of travel on any day.

Members welcomed the proposal and discussed the benefits to the community and all ferry users of booking trials being linked to infrastructure upgrades. The following motion was moved by Siobhan Gaskell, seconded by Bernice Woolley and carried unanimously:

“The proposed staged trial of the booking system be linked to progress of infrastructure changes at terminals, including to minimise impact for ferry users during the peak season.”

Members agreed that the meeting communique should reflect the intent of this motion and clearly articulate what is now contemplated and when over the coming 6 to 9 month period.

The Group noted that a change to fares would impact on the print runs for tourism association and southern trove brochures. SeaLink agreed to work with the respective organisations to ensure the relevant information is included.

Progress update – SeaLink implementation plan

SeaLink representatives provided an overview of a report that was provided to members as part of the meeting pack documents.

The SeaLink website is receiving strong engagement since being launched in early August and some 400 people have now registered on the EDM mail list. The Group discussed the promotion of joining this list and SeaLink representatives advised it would be part the next stage of its communications plans.

The Group was advised that the number of confrontational online interactions had decreased, however there was an incident of unacceptable communication with a SeaLink staff member at the Kettering terminal last week. Members supported SeaLink’s terms and conditions of travel including zero tolerance for abuse of the ferry staff.

SeaLink representatives advised the Group that it is on track for 23 September, supported by:

- The transition process and discussions progressing positively and in a cooperative manner;
- Local community consultation commencing at Adventure Bay and Alonnah on 30-31 August, with North Bruny and other locations to take place over following weeks;
- Ongoing review of boat building tenders, the design and capacity of the new vessels and consideration of the vessel arrangements/capacity requirements for the coming summer/peak period;
- Progress with recruitment, with interviews commencing on 27 August for all staff; and
- Consideration of office arrangements at Kettering.
The Group also discussed whether printed timetables would be distributed in advance of 23 September, additional sailings on the new timetable, the continuation of return fares (at least in the short term), and whether SeaLink is considering a “spare ship” if one of the other ferries breaks down.

Community feedback/issues

- **Priority concerns, analysis of impacts and strategic responses**
  The Group had an open discussion regarding the issue of “why didn’t the government just require larger ferries rather than managing flows through a booking system?” which is a commonly asked question in the community.

  The discussion covered financial and commercial considerations, and the complexities and economics of operating ferries. DSG agreed to prepare some information for distribution to the Group and for publication on the Transport website with other Q&As.

- **Specific queries regarding contract transition and service implementation issues**
  The Group discussed a request that had been received from a small tourist operator (who does not necessarily operate every day) and small accommodation providers (who take last minute Airbnb bookings for example) to be considered as part of the staged, trial process. SeaLink representatives confirmed these two groups of providers would certainly be considered in planning and operations.

  SeaLink representatives confirmed that farmers will be able to transport hay on the ferries going forward.

  Community members queried the status of fares and SeaLink representatives advised that those to apply from 23 September are on SeaLink’s website, with fares from November 1 to be released in the coming weeks.

Communication

DSG representatives advised members that an updated and simplified set of Q&As was included in the meeting pack documentation, noting that some further amendments would be required to reflect the outcomes of this meeting. Feedback and comments from members was sought by Monday 27 August 2018, after which the updated information would be uploaded to SeaLink’s website.

The Group discussed inserting an overarching statement at beginning of the Q&As to reflect the implementation plan arrangements.

It was agreed that the updated Q&As (and fares schedule/s) would be provided to Reference Group members as a standalone document for distribution amongst community networks as required.

Communique/Summary of Outcomes

The Group discussed key elements of the discussion at the meeting that ought to be reflected in the communique, including: the motion regarding booking system trials being linked to infrastructure changes and the consolidation of information to be collected through onboard research to inform future decisions.

Other Business

The Group discussed the arrangements underpinning accounts and who is eligible to be an account holder, with SeaLink representatives advising that it is determined by frequency of travel.
Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 6 September 2018 at Alonnah, commencing at 1:30pm.

The Chair closed the meeting at 10:35am.