

Bruny Island Ferry Reference Group

Communique

9 October 2018

The Bruny Island Ferry Reference Group met for the seventh time on Tuesday 9 October 2018 at the Health Centre at Alonnah.

SeaLink provided an update to the Reference Group on service commencement and its first two weeks of operations, and shared some preliminary data samples on usage. The SeaLink team has welcomed feedback provided by ferry users to date and encourages this to continue being provided to assist with continual improvement. Engagement with and the verification of information from account holders and resident and landowners is ongoing and will continue to be a priority for SeaLink over the coming weeks. Community representatives on the Reference Group noted that there has been quite a bit of positive commentary about SeaLink's provision of the ferry service so far.

The Reference Group discussed a number of issues related to operation of the service, based on feedback from community members, including SeaLink's new ferry timetable and the operation of 'peak' or 'on-demand' sailings, SeaLink's contractual requirement to not leave any cars behind (which only applies at the end of each day), and that the hours of operation for enquiries are Monday to Friday.

With respect to the timetable and on-demand sailings, SeaLink acknowledged that there has been some confusion regarding these sailings and advised that they have been removed from the timetable on the website and printed timetables will be reprinted, even though SeaLink has operated both the 1.30pm and 2.30pm ferries on various days in the first two weeks of operations. SeaLink confirmed that both the 1.30pm and 2.30pm departures will be offered during peak periods, such as over Christmas, public holidays and key event days. Decisions to run additional (peak) services will be made by SeaLink and where possible advance notice will be provided on the website and via social media sites.

Following the conversation at the previous meeting, the Reference Group again discussed the concept of a Bruny Island Resident/Landowners Club and possible inclusions for a package of benefits for residents and landowners. SeaLink representatives undertook to consider the suggestions put forward by community members of the Reference Group and confirmed the commitment to finalise and announce a program by the end of October. Likewise SeaLink confirmed there will be a transport/freight program for regular suppliers.

The Reference Group had a brief discussion regarding fares and SeaLink representatives confirmed that there are no plans for passenger fares to be introduced and charged. The Group noted that any proposed changes to the type and level of fares during the contract period have to be approved by the Transport Commission. Department of State Growth representatives advised that there is a reasonable expectation that community consultation would be factored into any such proposed changes.

The Department of State Growth provided an update on progress with planning for infrastructure changes at the terminals and advised that the changes will be undertaken in two stages, with initial changes to expand the marshalling area at Roberts Point and improve signage at both terminals planned to be completed prior to the busy summer/school holiday period. Additional and more specific details about timing and the extent of works will be available later this month. The overarching principle for the timing of all works will be to minimise disruption to the operation of the ferry service, particularly during the coming peak season.

The Reference Group also discussed the approach to traffic management and vehicle marshalling, particularly at Roberts Point. SeaLink and the Department of State Growth will be working constructively to ensure appropriate plans are in place in preparation for the busiest days and parts of the peak season.

The next meeting of the Reference Group will be held on Tuesday 30 October 2018.