

Deputy Premier
Treasurer
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Minister for Planning



Level 10, Executive Building, 15 Murray Street, Hobart
Public Buildings, 53 St John Street, Launceston
GPO Box 123, Hobart TAS 7001
Phone: (03) 6165 7701; Email: Michael.Ferguson@dpac.tas.gov.au

Mr Duncan Spender
CEO
Oysters Tasmania
By email: ceo@oysterstasmania.org

24 OCT 2023

Dear Mr Spender *Duncan*

Thank you for your letter of 28 September 2023, regarding changes to the Bruny Island Ferry timetable and the boarding process.

The Transport Commission oversees SeaLink's contract, which includes a timetable, framework to determine priority boarding, and a requirement to cater to periods of expected high demand.

The new timetable has been approved to operate on a trial basis until the end of the 2024 financial year, subject to an interim review scheduled for November 2023. I am pleased to hear about your productive discussion with SeaLink's General Manager to date and note SeaLink remains open to feedback and committed to continuously assess the impact of the change.

The new timetable guarantees 65 services per day, with additional services operating during peak periods, which I understand SeaLink is already planning for the 2023-24 summer. While fewer than anticipated once the second vessel was delivered, this is significantly more guaranteed services than originally contracted (48 guaranteed and 29 on demand services per day).

As you will appreciate, the ferry timetable needs to strike a balance between safety, operational efficiency, and user needs. A review was necessary to help SeaLink manage maximum crew shift lengths in line with Australian Maritime Safety Authority recommendations published in 2020. SeaLink has not indicated any issues with staffing and rostering warranting consideration of supplementary funding.

While no further changes to the timetable are currently planned, future changes may be warranted to meet evolving user needs, ease vehicle queueing, or otherwise optimise the service, including by implementing a booking system.

SeaLink will begin planning for the introduction of a booking system after the dual ramp infrastructure upgrade project is completed later this year. Like you, I acknowledge a booking system can improve customer experience, streamline ferry operations, and increase service reliability. Understanding how the ability to book planned travel will support primary producers' operations will be critical to designing a booking system solution. Accordingly, I have asked that SeaLink include primary producers on Bruny Island, including oyster farmers in its community consultation when it starts in 2024.

Finally, priority boarding is provided for emergency services and urgent medical matters, and at designated times, the school bus services to Woodbridge School. In addition, at the discretion of the ferry master, priority can be given for time-critical goods and produce. I understand that many businesses and workers desire priority boarding, however this must be balanced with the needs of other passengers. If oyster farmers regularly encounter difficulties boarding their preferred crossing, I encourage them to provide feedback directly to SeaLink on 1300 127 869 or brunyisland@sealink.com.au

Thank you again for sharing your perspective. I trust this information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely



Michael Ferguson MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport

*Feel free to stay in touch
on this or any other matter*