

6 December 2023

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Hon Matt Doocey
Minister of Tourism
Associate Minister of Transport
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Tēnā koe Minister

Briefing for Incoming Minister – Tourism infrastructure (ferry terminals); harbour and marine safety

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Transport. Greater Wellington shares your vision of resilient infrastructure that support tourism and creating a more productive and resilient transport network underpinning economic growth.

We would like to bring **five** issues to your attention:

1. **Invest in the Wellington Single-User Ferry Terminal development:** The Cook Strait ferries are a nationally critical link in the state highway network. However, the existing Interislander ferry terminal is unable to accept the new ferries that KiwiRail has already ordered, which are due to arrive from 2026.

A larger and more resilient new Single-User Ferry Terminal has been designed to rehome the Interislander ferry operations with some funding committed by Kiwirail and CentrePort. However, delivery costs have skyrocketed since funding was first agreed; we also understand that lower service standards are now planned. Government needs to be “eyes wide open” to what is being delivered, and to commit to the necessary funding. Cook Strait is effectively the marine section of State Highway 1 and a critical part of the New Zealand’s transport infrastructure and tourism experience.

2. **Partner with us to accelerate a multi-user facility:** The new Single-User Ferry Terminal development will enable expansion to a multi-user facility in the future – bringing Interislander and Bluebridge operations into one location. However, it is only a short-term transport solution that will reach capacity within a few years from completing construction, therefore impeding future opportunities for growth. The region has

agreed to a masterplan for expansion to a multi-user facility and we need Government support to implement this. To achieve the best outcome for NZ, this expansion should be accelerated and integrated as soon as possible.

3. **Need to support out-of-port vessels in the Cook Strait.** While support capability has been lacking for many years, the risk to vessels crossing Cook Strait and travelling elsewhere became obvious in 2023. Serious ferry failures in January and February, the MV Shiling incident in May and the domestic cargo freighter Rangitata power loss in November have highlighted the ongoing safety concerns for this route.
4. **Maritime NZ's need for more maritime inspection capability.** While most of the domestic and international shipping fleet working in New Zealand water is well-maintained and seaworthy, a sizeable number are of poor quality and entail real risk to life and the environment. Maritime NZ's inspection capability picks up these issues before accidents happen – but they are under-resourced for the job at hand.
5. **Consistent rules needed for small boat safety and wearing life jackets.** Most boating fatalities occur on small boats, and it is well accepted that wearing life jackets saves lives. Because there is no clear national framework, the rules vary from region to region and it's almost impossible to build a shared understanding of what to do to stay safe on the water.

Please find attached further information (**Appendix – Further information**) on our partnership with Government and our proposals for your consideration.

We would be pleased to meet with you to discuss Greater Wellington's ongoing partnership with Government and how we may work effectively with you and others for the benefit of New Zealand's tourism and maritime transport system.

Ngā mihi



Daran Ponter

Chair

CC:

Leaders and Deputy Leaders of Government Coalition Partners, Wellington Constituency Members of Parliament, Wellington Region Mayors, Wellington Region Mana Whenua Iwi Chairs, Local Government New Zealand