



# King Island Council

## Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### King Island Shipping – Change is on the Way

We are rapidly approaching the end of service to King Island SeaRoad and the ship (Mersey).

Following a long and extensive process to secure a replacement ship, a consortium, led by Port and Coastal Marine Services, and then joined by Searoad, appeared ready to introduce a new ship into service. Unfortunately, this consortium failed at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and the State Government negotiated an urgent alternative (back-up) service to ensure some continuity for the island.

TasPorts have now entered this space, and through their new business entity “Bass Island Line” have an interim ship ready and available to commence service immediately following the last sailing of the Mersey.

Clearly there has been some concern expressed from some sections of our community about the vessel that will be used.

Mayor of King Island, Duncan McFie, said that whilst he understood the sentiments behind the concerns, he was keen to ensure that the island community also understood that proposals currently being looked at recognize many of the challenges and shortfalls in providing a service on short notice. It is our understanding, said Mayor McFie, that the proposed service using the “Investigator” is intended to only operate for a period of up to six months while negotiations to secure a larger vessel can be made. These negotiations are complex and require some time to complete, whereas the Investigator was available for immediate charter.

It is also understood, said Mayor McFie, that while the Investigator is on the run there are plans for this vessel to provide at least three, and possibly four (depending on demand) sailings a week. One of these sailings would be solely livestock from Grassy to Stanley. The remaining two sailings would be to Devonport.

During the next few months, Mayor McFie indicated that he would be keen to see this interim service operate, and that we review any challenges that emerge. He was also keen to see how negotiations were progressing on the acquisition of a larger vessel that would provide secure services to King Island for the next decade.

We have a ship. We have a service, and we have an undertaking that TasPorts are doing everything possible to build this into a solid business prospect, and this includes looking to secure a bigger and better vessel for the future. I commend the work done in this area, and I encourage the island community to be positive and to support this venture said the Mayor.

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