



## Wellington Harbour Ferry Service Review

### 1. Purpose

To set out the results of a review of the Wellington Harbour Ferry Service.

### 2. Background

The Council currently contracts East by West Ltd to provide a ferry service between Days Bay in Eastbourne and Queens Wharf in Wellington City. This contract will end in November 2007. In order to establish the service specifications for the next contract, a review of the ferry service was completed in May 2007. This report presents the results of the review.

#### 2.1 History of the Wellington Harbour Ferry Service

A ferry service between Days Bay and Queens Wharf in Wellington City has been operating since March 1989. This service has been run since that time by East by West Ltd – initially with the WestpacTrust ferry, which in 1990 was replaced with the current “City Cat” catamaran. The original service sailed between Days Bay and Queens Wharf, and in 1995 the route was expanded to include Matiu Somes Island, after the island was opened to the public as a Department of Conservation reserve.

In 2002 a review of bus services in Eastbourne, Wainuiomata and Hutt Valley indicated potential for the ferry service to be expanded. Market research conducted in 2003 confirmed this, and concluded that reducing fares on the ferry, providing more frequent and later sailings, and providing more direct buses to the city were the most preferred options to improve public transport in Eastbourne. The option identified as being the most likely to bring new users to passenger transport was providing more frequent and later sailings. However, no changes were made until 2005 when additional services were added.

In 2004 East by West proposed a new service from Queens Wharf to Petone and the Passenger Transport Committee agreed to trial this. This service began in December 2005 consisting of two peak sailings from Petone in the morning at 8.00am and 8.45am, two inter-peak sailings at 10.00am and 3.00pm, and two evening sailings from Queens Wharf at 4.35pm and 5.25pm. However, the service did not meet patronage expectations and was cancelled in June 2006.

To make possible the extra runs to Petone, East by West purchased a new ferry – the “Cobar Cat”. This ferry was also used to improve capacity on the Days Bay service. At the same time as the trips to Petone commenced, an additional trip from Days Bay to Queens Wharf in the morning and evening peak periods was added. This allowed four morning peak trips (6.50am, 7.15am, 7.45am, and 8.35am) three inter-peak trips departing Queens Wharf at 10.00am, 12.00pm, and 2.15pm, and four evening peak trips departing Queens Wharf at 4.30pm, 5.30pm, 6.20pm, and 7.00pm.

After the cancellation of the Petone service, the new ferry was used to provide four further trips in the peak timetable between Days Bay and Queens Wharf (forming the current timetable at the time of this review). At the same time, the weekend timetable was expanded to include visits to Petone and Seatoun on commercial runs. In total this meant a 45% increase in the number of trips on weekdays, and a 60% increase on the single ferry service.

The current contract became effective on 1 May 2003, though several variations to the original have been agreed. It is due to expire in November this year.

## **2.2 Current Service**

The ferry service at the date of this review consists of six trips to Days Bay in the morning peak on weekdays (departing Days Bay at 6.50am, 7.15am, 7.45am, 8.10am, 8.35am, and 9.00am), three trips during the middle of the day that stop at Matiu Somes Island on request (departing Queens Wharf at 10.00am, 12.00pm, and 2.15pm), and another six trips direct to Days Bay in the evening peak (departing Queens Wharf at 4.30pm, 5.00pm, 5.30pm, 6.00pm, 6.30pm, and 7.00pm).

On weekends East by West runs five trips between Queens Wharf and Days Bay via Matiu Somes Island return, contracted by Greater Wellington, and three commercial trips that include additional stops at Petone and Seatoun.

At peak times the service runs at a frequency of approximately 25 minutes and takes 20 minutes to complete the trip from QW to DB. The current contract price is approximately \$240,000 per annum.

Over the Christmas period the service runs a special timetable. Saturdays, Sundays, Boxing Day, and January 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> are run to the standard weekend timetable. There are no services on Christmas Day. The working days between Christmas and New Years Day are scheduled to a special weekend timetable (based on the standard weekend with an additional morning and evening service at a time suitable for commuters). The first incomplete working week of January is also scheduled to a special timetable (the standard weekend timetable with three commuter trips in the morning and three in the evening). The first full working week of January returns to the standard timetable.

During bad weather when the ride would be too rough for passengers the operator runs substitute bus services around the harbour for ferry passengers during the commuter period. No replacement transport is offered for the inter-peak sailings. The ferry has to cancel due to bad weather approximately 10-12 days per year.

Scheduled maintenance on each vessel is carried out over one week in the year – usually in winter. Shuttles are also provided for the commuter periods during this time when the ferry is out of the water.

## 2.3 Capacity

The maximum loading of the City Cat is 91 people (55 seats), and 99 (65 seats) on the Cobar Cat. This maximum number can be accommodated on the lower level, under cover, with the additional people standing. Hand grips are attached to the ceiling in places to allow greater comfort and safety.

Prior to the introduction of the additional sailings in 2006, there were some capacity problems on the morning sailings. However, since then there have been no further issues with capacity.

## 2.4 Fares

Fares were increased on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006. These fares are significantly higher than the equivalent journey by bus. The table below sets out the current fares for both ferry and bus.

	Current	Bus
<b>Adult One Way</b>	8.50	6.00
<b>Student Senior One Way</b>	7.00	3.00
<b>Child One Way</b>	4.50	3.00
<b>Ten Trip - Adult</b>	70.00	48.00
<b>Ten Trip Student Senior</b>	46.50	24.00
<b>Ten Trip Child</b>	29.00	24.00
<b>Monthly pass Adult</b>	222.00	n/a
<b>Monthly Pass Student Senior</b>	152.00	n/a

In September 2006 the new region-wide zone based fare system came into effect. At this time, the ferry service was considered to be outside the system and was recognised as a premium service, and so retained its existing fare structure.

Child tickets are available to anyone 15 years of age or under, and to those who are over 15 but wearing school uniform. A student ticket is valid for tertiary students upon presentation of an ID card from their institution. The Senior ticket is valid only for New Zealand seniors over 65.

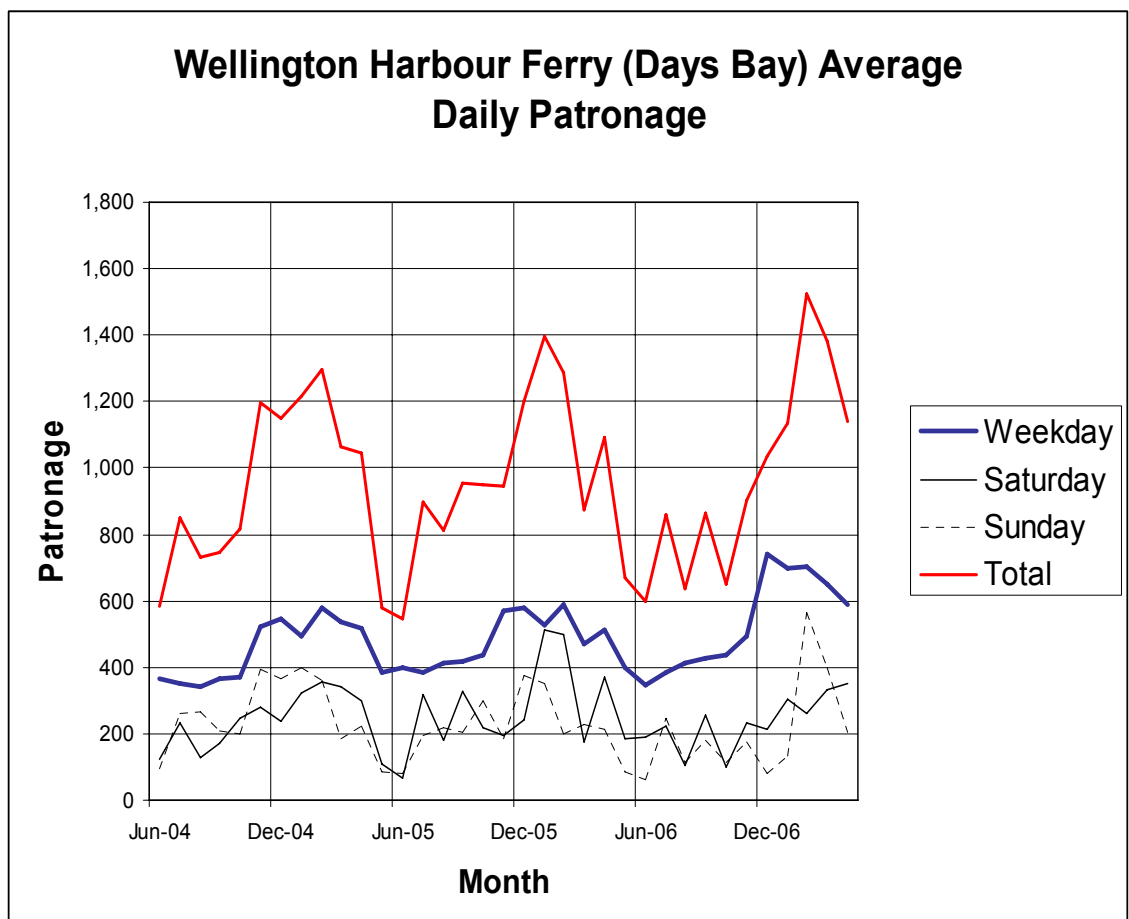
Monthly passes can be purchased at any time during the month and are valid, for example, from the 6<sup>th</sup> of one month to the 5<sup>th</sup> of the next.

Trips to Matiu Somes Island include a Department of Conservation landing fee which is incorporated into the fares.

## 2.5 Patronage

Total average daily patronage varies from 600 in winter to over 1,500 in summer. Average weekday patronage on the Ferry ranges from 350 to over 700, or 17 to 23 passengers per trip. However, these loadings are not evenly spread throughout the day and trips in the counter-peak direction often carry very few passengers. Weekday patronage (mostly commuters) shows a more predictable pattern than the weekends. On the weekends patronage is much lower (around 200). Average daily patronage is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Days Bay Average Daily Patronage (does not include Petone)



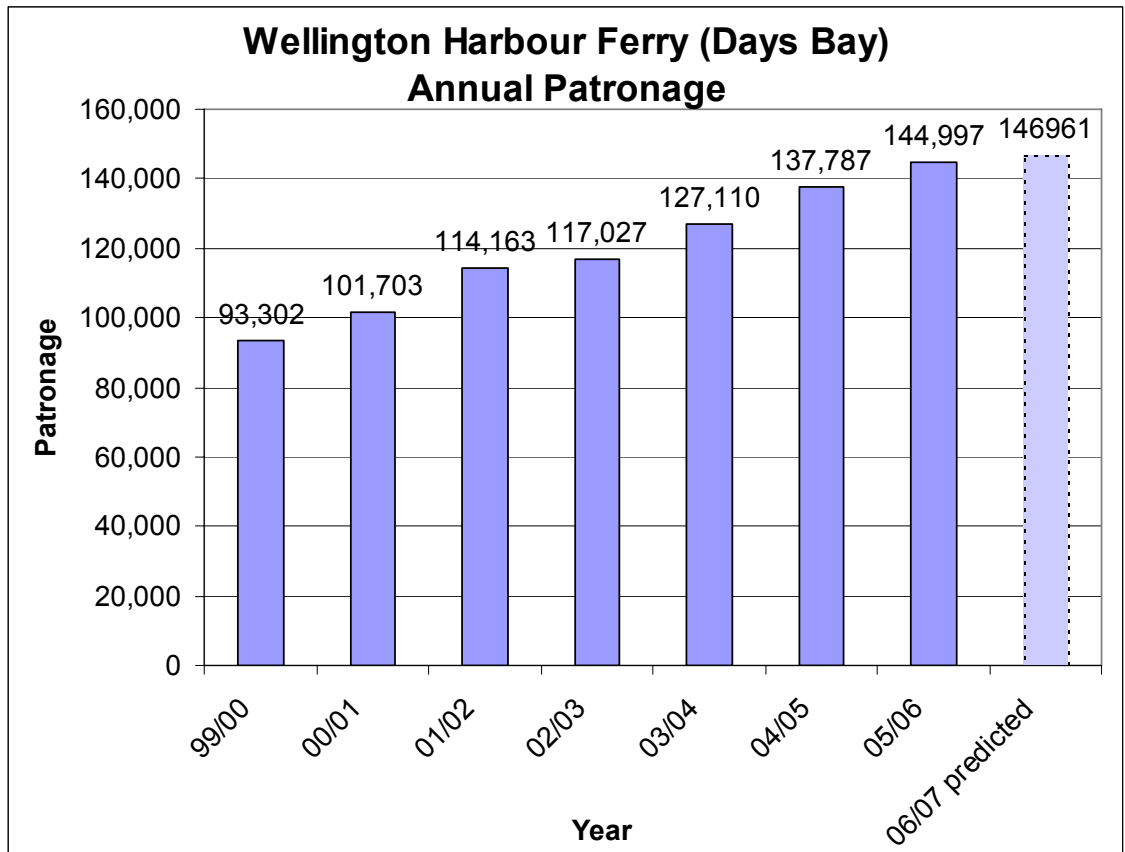
The weekday high season of 06/07 is significantly higher than those of 04/05 and 05/06 and shows a large increase in the weekday daily average around December 2006 which can be attributed to the increased capacity and increased frequency of sailings. The delayed effect of the additional sailings on patronage can be attributed to a period of sustained bad weather during spring

of 2006 that caused an unusually high number of cancelled sailings and would have made the ferry a very unattractive method of commuting. Data is only available from June 2004.

Patronage during the week is fairly consistent across the year, reflecting a loyal commuter base, while weekend patronage, which largely caters for the tourism market, fluctuates according to season – high in summer, lower in winter. The overall trend for sailings in the peak period shows an increase in patronage.

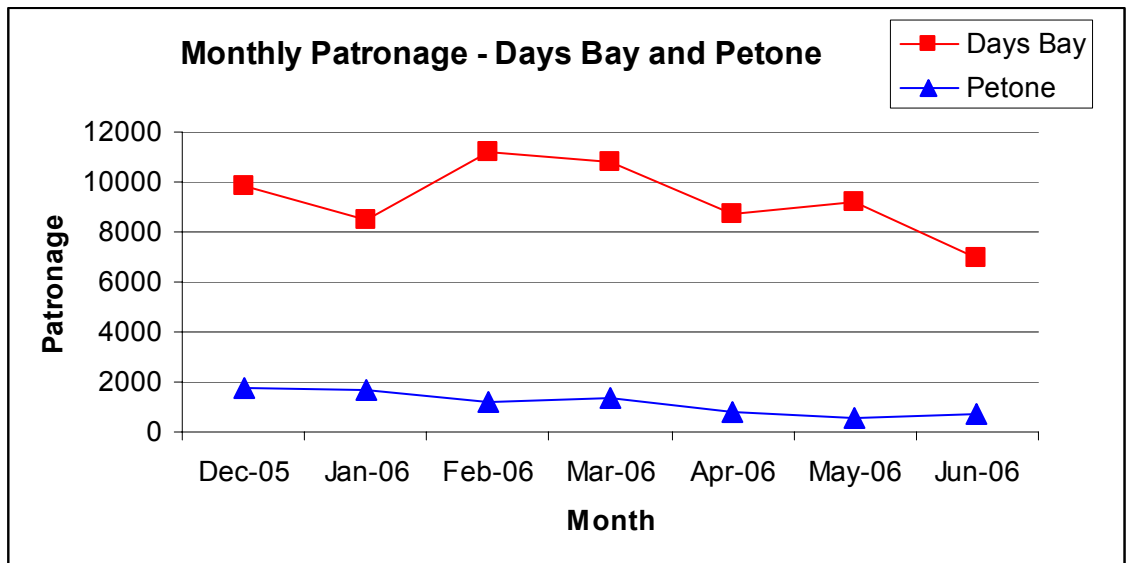
Over the last 5 years annual patronage has increased nearly 60% from 93,000 to nearly 145,000 in 05/06 (fig. 2). The predicted patronage for 06/07 has been estimated by taking the 10 months patronage data available and adding two twelfths.

Figure 2 - Annual Ferry Patronage



As shown below (fig. 3) the Petone trial averaged 1,156 passengers per month, in comparison to 9,306 on the Days Bay service over the same period. During this time the Petone service consisted of 18 trips per week, while the Days Bay service ran 32 a week.

Figure 3 - Days Bay vs. Petone Ferry Service



## 2.6 Destinations

### 2.6.1 Queens Wharf

Queens Wharf is centrally located and provides convenient access for commuters to the Wellington City CBD. The wharf is operated by Wellington Waterfront Ltd, a council controlled organisation owned by the Wellington City Council.

As part of the current waterfront redevelopments, a floating pontoon is being constructed, which will allow passengers to board directly on to the lower level of the ferry. The ticket office will also be relocated to opposite the ferry, providing greater visibility for the service.

### 2.6.2 Days Bay, Eastbourne

The Days Bay wharf is located in Eastbourne which is home to 4,704 people as at the 2001 Census. In comparison to Wellington City it is an area with higher incomes and a comparatively high rate of car ownership. Many people commute to Wellington city for work. Around 20 boys travel from Eastbourne to Scots College in Strathmore (near Seatoun) each day, while younger boys travel in the opposite direction from Wellington City to Eastbourne to attend Wellesley College.

In addition to the ferry service, Eastbourne is also served by buses that travel around the harbour (Routes 81, 83, 84 and 85). 81 travels to Wellington City via Jackson Street in Hutt City, 83 travels to Queensgate and then via Jackson Street to Wellington City, 84 serves the Gracefield industrial area, and 85 travels on the most direct route to Wellington City, bypassing Jackson Street and travelling along The Esplanade.

The Council subsidises the weekend and evening trips as well as a couple of weekday morning trips, as the great majority of the Eastbourne bus services are run commercially.

Buses take approximately an hour to complete the journey between Eastbourne and Courtenay Place and, including all four routes, reach a peak frequency of approximately 10 minutes from the Eastbourne Terminus.

These services carry around 60,000 people each month – significantly more than the number carried by ferry (fig. 4). On average, buses carry around 3,000 passengers per weekday, and around 1,000 on weekends (fig. 5).

Figure 4 – Bus and Ferry Patronage Comparison

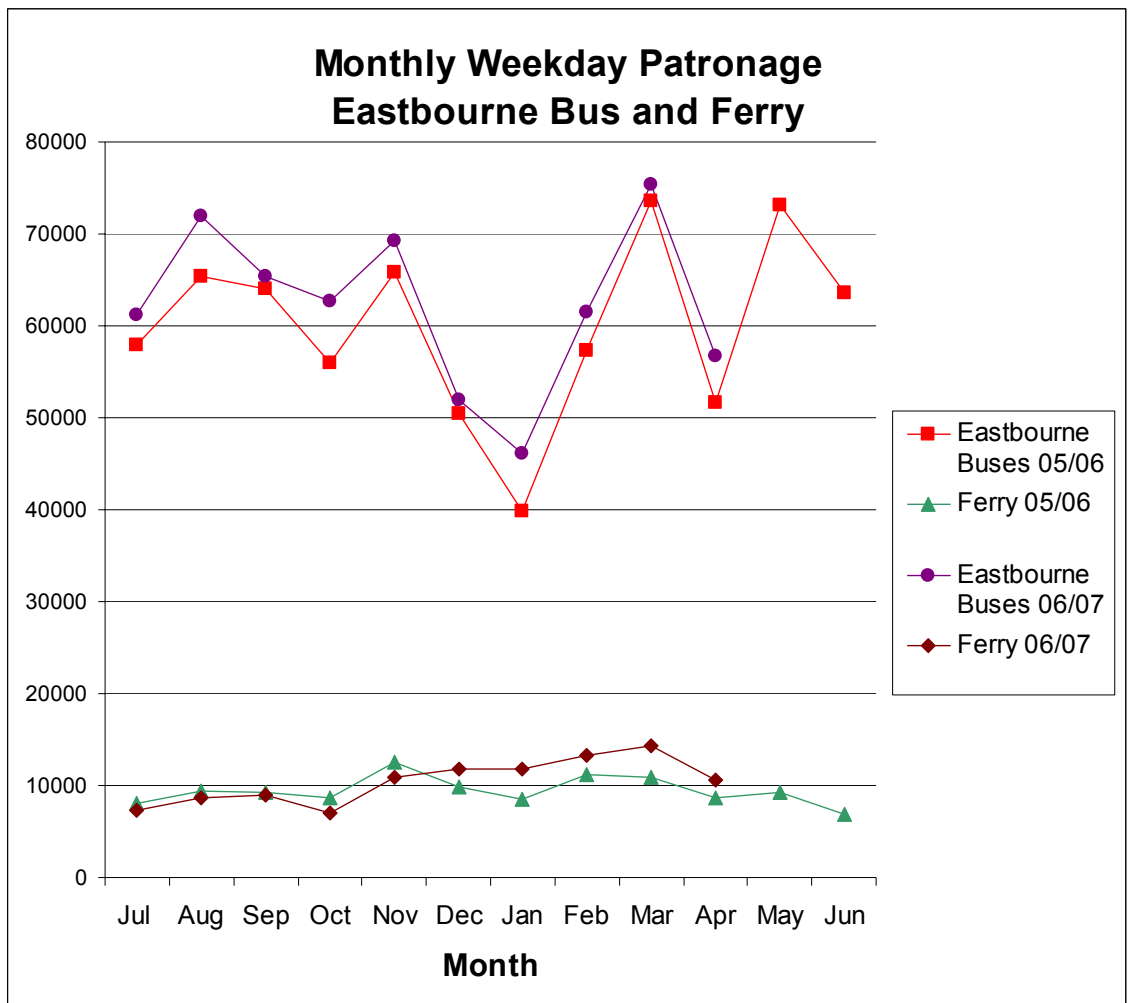
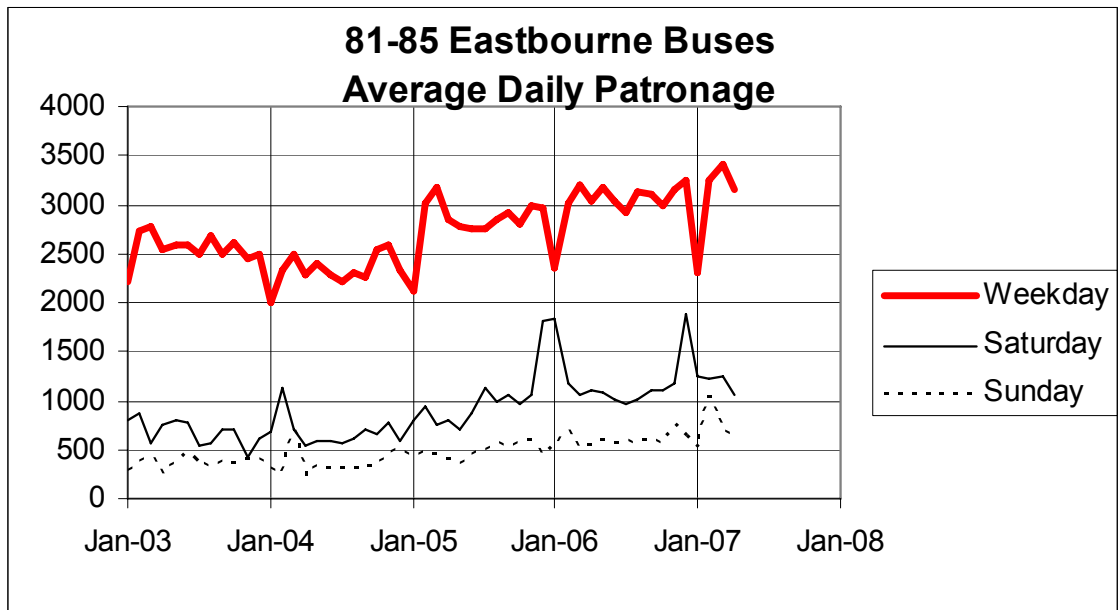


Figure 5 - Eastbourne Bus Patronage



The wharf at Days Bay is owned and maintained by Hutt City Council. At present there is no shelter at the site, however construction of a shelter is expected to be completed by July 2007.

At Days Bay there are approximately 100 parking spaces along the shore, the majority of which are currently used by commuters travelling on the ferry. Some of these are quite a distance from the wharf. These spaces often fill up early in the morning, which during summer can mean there are few spaces available for people who are travelling to Days Bay for recreational purposes.

### 2.6.3 Seatoun

For some time, a ferry to Seatoun has been mentioned by the public and by the operator as a possible addition to the Wellington Harbour ferry service. The operator currently runs to Seatoun on the weekends, a service that the operator believes has been well received. A commuter service from Seatoun would provide time savings and an alternative to cars and buses which can be caught up in road congestion. An analysis of a possible Seatoun service is contained in section 3.1.1 below.

The Seatoun Wharf is located in Worsler Bay and is within 1km of Seatoun, and is owned by Wellington City Council. At present there is no designated parking area near the wharf, however, parallel parking is possible along Marine Parade and Ferry Street. The area is exposed to strong winds and there is currently no shelter for waiting passengers.

To provide for a regular commuter service operating from Seatoun Wharf, some alteration to the wharf may be necessary to ensure the reliability of the service during rough weather. At present the ferry must berth side-on to the prevailing Northerly winds which makes berthing difficult. If the ferry were



able to berth with the bow facing the prevailing winds, then it would be able to run in rougher weather than the current facilities allow.

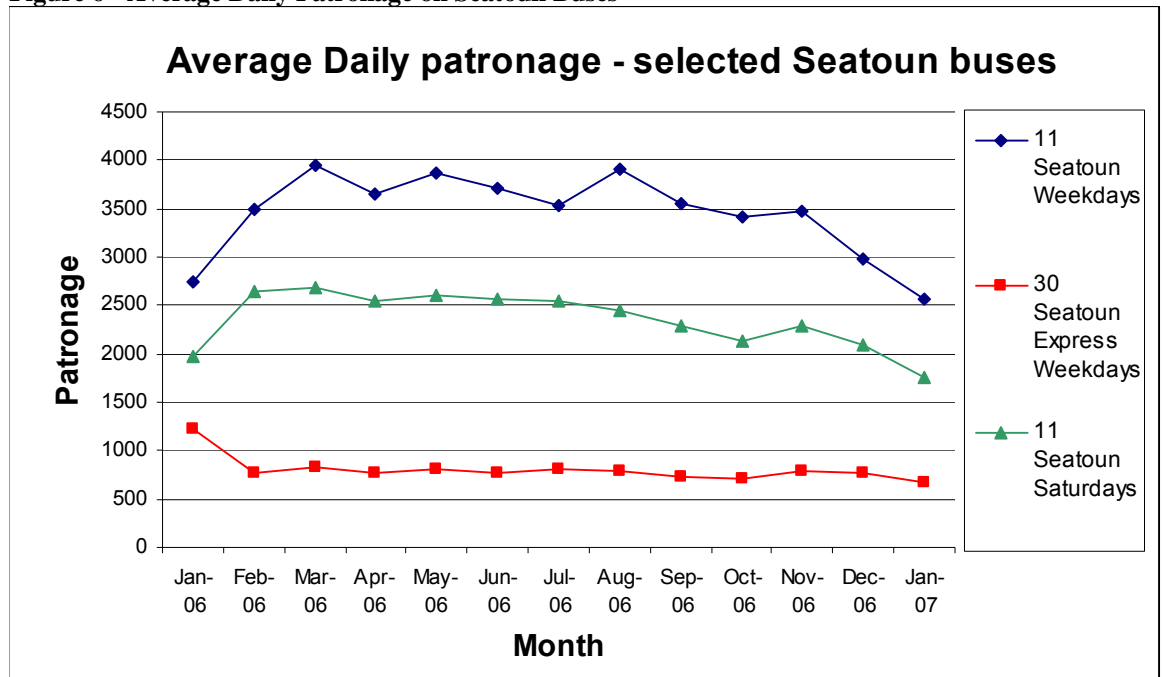
According to the 2001 census, 3,120 people live in Seatoun, Worser Bay and Karaka Bay (in Eastbourne there were 4,704). The area is similar to Eastbourne in terms of income, education and family composition, and in both areas 93% of people have access to a motor vehicle. Annual household spending on transportation was approximately \$10,000 in Eastbourne and \$10,600 in Seatoun/Worser Bay/Karaka Bay. In Eastbourne 1,416 people travel by car to work (including as a passenger) and 198 by bus. In Seatoun/Worser Bay/Karaka Bay 987 travel by car, and 144 by bus.

Located on the other side of the tunnel from Seatoun, and within 2km of the Seatoun wharf, is Scots College, a decile 10 school in Strathmore. At present the roll is 679 and approximately 20 boys travel from Eastbourne to Scots College each day. Pupils use a variety of means to travel to Scots College, including the ferry, private car and shuttle buses organised by the school.

Seatoun is served by bus routes 11 and 30. Route 11 is a Monday to Sunday service from Seatoun Park to Wellington Station via Kilbirnie, Newtown and Taranaki Street (bypassing Courtenay Place). At peak times it runs at a frequency of 10 minutes and takes approximately 45 minutes to complete the trip. Route 30 is a weekday service from Wellington Station to Moa Point or Scorching Bay, via Courtenay Place, Hataitai and Seatoun, running express between Caledonia Street and Courtenay Place. The destination/origin alternates between Moa Point and Scorching Bay, allowing a frequency at Seatoun Park of 10 minutes during the peak and a peak running time of 32 minutes.

The average daily patronage of the route 11 bus on weekdays varies between 2,500 and nearly 4,000. The route 30 express service maintains an average daily patronage of around 800 as shown in figure 6.

Figure 6 - Average Daily Patronage on Seatoun Buses



#### 2.6.4 Petone

Petone Wharf is currently only used by the ferry on weekends three times each day. There is no shelter or dedicated parking at this site.

### 2.7 Subsidies

The current contract price is approximately \$240,000 per annum. Subsidy per passenger trip on the Wellington Harbour ferry (to Days Bay) for the year July 2005 to June 2006 was \$0.82. From July 2006 to December 2006, after the introduction of the additional trips to Days Bay, the subsidy rose to \$1.90. In comparison, the network-wide subsidy per trip (all buses, trains and ferries) was \$1.40.

The subsidy per passenger trip on the Eastbourne bus routes (81, 83, 84, and 85) for the period July 2005 to June 2006 was \$0.41, and from July 2006 to December 2006 it was \$0.53 (this subsidy is significantly below the system average as the majority of trips are run on a commercial basis). The subsidy per passenger trip for the Seatoun Express bus service (route 30) from July 2005 to June 2006 was \$1.19.

While the subsidy for the ferry has risen, the fare recovery ratio (i.e. the percentage of the total costs of the service covered by passenger fares) is still very high. The ratio for the ferry (to Days Bay) for the year 2005/06 was 86% and for 06/07 is estimated to be 75%. For the Seatoun Express bus (30) the fare recovery ratio was 61%, on the Eastbourne buses (81-85) it was 83%, and for the whole network it was 61%.

The ferry service also performs comparably when distance travelled is taken into account. The subsidy per passenger kilometre on the ferry in 05/06 was \$0.08 while on the train network it was \$0.07 during the same period.

## **2.8 Passenger Feedback**

Passenger feedback on the service is extremely positive. In a survey conducted by the operator during October 2006 over 90% of passengers surveyed thought reliability, punctuality of departure time, customer service, and facilities offered onboard were 'good' or 'very good'. 78% were happy with the cancellation advice provided. Passengers are kept informed about the service through a newsletter that is emailed out by the operator to regulars who have registered on a database. The newsletter is also available on-board. Activities such as trivia competitions and 'win a 10-trip ticket' draws also add to the service offered to commuters.

## **3. The Review**

### **3.1 Route**

Only one possible change to the route of the Wellington Harbour Ferry was considered in this review. This was a possible service to Seatoun (either a diverted return sailing or a full commuter during the weekdays).

#### **3.1.1 Seatoun**

The concept of a commuter service to Seatoun was one that had been suggested by a variety of people over recent years. In reviewing this, we considered two possibilities:

- A stand alone Seatoun to Queens Wharf commuter service.
- Diversion of a single trip (8.10am) from Days Bay to Queens Wharf in the morning peak via Seatoun, with two return trips in the afternoon.

The trips to be diverted via Seatoun were selected at the suggestion of the operator. The proposed timetable for these trips is shown below (fig. 7).

**Figure 7 – Proposed Sailing Times**

Proposed times for sailings via Seatoun					
	Morning trip		First return trip <input type="checkbox"/>	Second return trip	
	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Existing</i>		<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Existing</i>
Days Bay	8.05am	8.10am			
Seatoun	8.20am				
Queens Wharf	8.40am	8.30am			
Queens Wharf			3.30pm	5.45pm	6.00pm
Seatoun			3.50pm	6.05pm	
Days Bay			4.05pm	6.20pm	6.20pm

- This trip would not be an alteration to an existing Days Bay-Queens Wharf trip, as during the off-peak the second ferry would be available for an additional trip.

There were several reasons to believe that there might be a base to support a service to Seatoun:

- A ferry service could provide a faster alternative to car and bus during peak traffic.
- The Seatoun area has similar demographics to the Eastbourne area which currently sustains a ferry service.
- A service between Days Bay and Seatoun would provide a far shorter and more direct trip for students from Eastbourne travelling to Scots College.

As part of the review we conducted two surveys (conducted by market research company TNS), contacted local community representatives, schools, community groups, and received feedback from the general public following articles in local and regional newspapers.

The first survey polled the existing users of the ferry service. Over 3 days passengers on the 8.10am ferry from Days Bay were asked to complete a short questionnaire seeking their response to the proposed diversion of the 8.10am service via Seatoun. The 8.10am sailing was chosen as it would allow pupils of Scots College living in Eastbourne to travel to Seatoun (many Scots College pupils currently travel by a variety of means from Eastbourne to Seatoun), would allow commuters from Seatoun to reach Wellington at a reasonable time in the morning, and was the preferred choice of the current operator.

The second survey was a telephone survey of Seatoun and Karaka Bay/Worser Bay residents. Respondents were asked how likely they were to take the ferry from Seatoun to Queens Wharf.

### 3.1.2 Results of Consultation

Feedback received from the community (excluding the survey responses) had three major themes:

- Representatives of the Seatoun area expressed their support for a ferry service, though there was some concern about the lack of shelter and car parking facilities at the Seatoun wharf.
- Representatives of the Eastbourne area expressed concern about a reduction in quality of the existing service should one or more of the sailings from Days Bay be diverted via Seatoun.
- Eastbourne residents with children travelling to Scots College expressed support for a trip from Eastbourne to Seatoun.

The results of the existing ferry users survey showed that 81% of the survey respondents on the 8.10am service would not take the trip if the ferry travelled via Seatoun. 58% would take the earlier 7.45am sailing rather than travel via Seatoun, which would mean an additional 39 people travelling on the 7.45am sailing. This sailing is already the most popular sailing of the day, and as a result this number of additional passengers could cause some capacity problems, and limit the ability to further grow the service.

A further 19% would take alternative modes of transport. A similar trend was seen on the return journey.

The survey showed that the duration of the journey was the most important factor in commuters' choice to travel on the ferry – i.e. the time savings possible in comparison to land transport around the harbour.

The results of the telephone survey of Seatoun and Worser Bay/Karaka Bay residents showed that only 19% of commuters to the CBD were likely to take the ferry at 8.20am, and similarly, only 21% in the evening.

When asked if there were times that would be more suitable, responses showed a large spread of preferred departure times (the proposed 8.20am departure being the least popular time with only 9% of respondents selecting it). This indicates that several trips would be needed to provide for the potential passengers in Seatoun.

The Executive Summary of the final report by TNS is included as **Appendix 1** to this report. A list of those consulted, and a summary of their replies, is included as **Appendix 2**.

### 3.1.3 Comment

The Census 2001 'journey to work' data for the Seatoun, Karaka Bay/Worser Bay areas shows 1,131 people travelled by car or bus to work from these areas. If we take the TNS survey result of 19% and apply it to this figure, we can estimate that approximately 215 people are 'likely' to take the ferry.

However, the number of people who will actually take the ferry each day is reduced by the fact that this figure also includes those who are not travelling to the CBD and for whom therefore the ferry would not be an option. Additionally, not all of those who indicated interest in taking the ferry in the survey will actually do so.

Taking this in to account, the figure of 215 people will be significantly reduced, and when spread over four to six trips in the peak will not sustain a separate commuter ferry service.

Based on the survey results we conclude that there is not enough support to warrant a separate Seatoun to Queens Wharf ferry service.

As for diverting one of the existing Days Bay trips, this would reduce the quality of service on the two most popular trips of the morning, through overcrowding and increased journey time. This would result in current public transport users reverting to the private car.

Diverting a trip may also have a negative impact on the growing patronage of the existing service. The service in its current format has only been operating since July 2006 and so it is recommended that the service be allowed to settle in so that an accurate picture of its costs and patronage can be gained before making further changes. Therefore, neither option is recommended at this time.

It is noted, however, that this does not preclude the operator of the service providing a *commercial* service to Seatoun, but it is recognised that this is not possible without an additional vessel, given current contract requirements.

## **3.2 Timetable**

### **3.2.1 Peak Times**

The current timetable allows for a 25 minute frequency during peak periods. No trips have yet reached capacity - the only trip that reaches full seating capacity is the 7.45am sailing from Days Bay. So, as increasing the frequency of the service would require a third vessel and significant investment from the Council to fund additional trips, there is as yet no reason to increase the number of trips, and it is recommended no changes to the peak timetable be made.

### **3.2.2 Weekday Off-peak**

Off peak during the week the council subsidises three return trips from Queens Wharf to Days Bay (via Matiu Somes Island on request). The operator also runs charter trips for schools and other groups. The off-peak trips are not near capacity and offer little in the way of congestion relief, but provide a limited service for those travelling outside peak hours. Therefore we do not recommend changing the number of sailings.

The hours of operation were increased in 2006 following the introduction of the second ferry on the Days Bay route. We may need to reconsider the appropriateness of these hours once the service has settled in and patronage data has been collected for a full year.

The ferry service runs trips to cater for special events in Wellington City such as late night rugby and cricket matches. These trips are successful and are provided on a commercial basis and therefore require no additional funding, however, should a regular service be sought this would require a subsidy.

### 3.2.3 Weekends

The subsidised trips on the weekend allow a basic level of service, which is considered appropriate given demand levels and its predominantly 'tourist' focus. The Council already subsidises an alternative mode between Eastbourne and Wellington City. A weekend ferry service provides limited benefits in terms of congestion relief, and there are no restrictions on the registration of commercial ferry services in addition to the contracted trips. Therefore we see no reason to make changes to the subsidised weekend timetable.

### 3.2.4 Christmas Timetable

The Christmas timetable provides a reduced level of service over the traditionally quiet holiday period. As the ferry timetable is not linked with other services, changes to this timetable do not cause disruptions to the wider network. The special timetable is advertised widely on the ferry and so regular passengers will be aware of it. We recommend the continued use of a special timetable over the Christmas period.

### 3.2.5 Specified Trip Time

The current contract states that the trip from Days Bay to Queens Wharf is to be made in 25 minutes or less. This is a significant time saving in comparison to the bus service or private vehicle journey times, and the trip time is realistic and consistently met. The passengers have indicated that the speed of the journey is the most important factor in their choice to travel on the ferry. For these reasons we recommend no to change the prescribed trip time in the tender specifications.

### 3.2.6 Pocket Timetable

We recommend two changes to the pocket timetable. On the timetable the service should be consistently branded as "The Wellington Harbour Ferry" to avoid confusion (at present it is variously called the Dominion Post Ferry, the Eastbourne Ferry, and the Days Bay Ferry).

The weekend timetable should be split into a standard timetable format for the contracted trips and a separate section for any commercial trips that do not fit into the standard timetable format. This will make the timetables easier for

passengers to read and understand, and will allow for clear display of fare information relevant to each trip.

### **3.3 Fares**

Fares were recently increased (in May 2006). The fares are significantly higher than those on the rest of the network, but the ferry is a premium service that offers significant time savings over other modes. The council also subsidises an alternative mode of transport from the city to Eastbourne, which allows the public to choose the most appropriate mode of travel for their purpose and budget. As the ferry service already has a higher subsidy per passenger trip than the Eastbourne bus services we do not recommend reducing fares on the ferry.

Likewise, we do not recommend increasing fares, as the fare recovery ratio is high at 86% for the year 05/06, and despite a substantial increase in the services provided, is still estimated to be around 75% for the year 06/07. The GW policy on funding for passenger transport recommends that at least 50% of costs should come from users, and no more than a 50% community contribution. The Ferry service exceeds these targets.

The ferry service does not fit within the zonal fare structure that was established across the network in September 2006, though at the moment this does not present a problem. However, Greater Wellington is looking to introduce integrated fares and ticketing in the future. There may be benefits to aligning all services to a single fare structure, and we recommend considering this prior to the introduction of integrated fares across the region

In the fares section of the pocket timetable, several changes could be made that would improve the information to passengers (fig. 8).

1. The ferry should be named the Wellington Harbour Ferry rather than the Dominion Post ferry for consistency and to avoid confusion for infrequent users.
2. It should be noted that the family pass is a return ticket.
3. The definition of 'student' and 'senior' as well as any ID requirements should be clearly explained.



Figure 8 - Proposed Changes to Pocket Timetable

How much does it cost to ride  
The Wellington Harbour ferry? <sup>1</sup>

	ADULT FARES	CHILD FARES	SENIOR/ STUDENT	FAMILY*
<b>QUEENS WHARF FARES</b>				
One way	\$8.50	\$4.50	\$7.00	\$47.50
10 trip	\$70.00	\$29.00	\$46.50	–
Monthly pass	\$222.00	–	\$152.00	–
<b>MATIU SOMES ISLAND FARES</b>				
Return trip	\$18.50	\$10.00	\$15.50	\$55.50
<b>HARBOUR EXPLORER EXCURSION</b>				
Return trip	\$17.00	\$9.00	\$14.00	–

\* Family – 2 adults and up to 4 children return <sup>2</sup>  
 NZ Senior / Student - definition <sup>3</sup>

In addition, it should be more clearly explained that a one way fare can be purchased to go to Days Bay, Petone or Seatoun from Queens Wharf. At present the timetable gives the impression that you must buy a Harbour Explorer Excursion ticket.

And finally, information on the monthly pass should also be included in the timetable, especially as its terms differ from those of other operators.

### 3.3.1 Concessions

The concession fare system on the ferry is not consistent with the majority of the Metlink network. The categories of people that are eligible for concession fares, and the discounts applied to these, differ greatly from the train and bus operators in the region. The ferry offers ‘senior/student’ and ‘child’ concession fares, where the child fare is discounted at a much greater rate than on other services contracted by the council. Monthly passes are offered to ‘adults’ and ‘seniors/students’, but not children. Consideration should be given to aligning the concession fares and fare structure with the Greater Wellington fares policy once completed.

### 3.3.2 Ticketing

The current system is paper-based and offers single, ten trip and monthly tickets. This is considered appropriate for the service, but should be reviewed when an integrated ticket is introduced over the wider network.

## 3.4 Vessel

### 3.4.1 General Standards

The standards of the current service are considered acceptable and should be maintained, at a minimum. The vessels provide essential elements such as comfortable, sheltered seating, acceptable noise and vibration levels, windows and lighting, and adequate heating, in addition to non-essential elements that increase the quality of the service including an outdoor viewing deck, and a bar service selling newspapers, snacks, coffees, beer and wine. The vessels also provide storage space for several bicycles.

### 3.4.2 Capacity

The current contract specifies a minimum capacity of 90 people. Given the demand for this service we recommend maintaining this as the minimum capacity in the RFT.

### 3.4.3 Vessel Accessibility

When using the current wharf facilities, the vessels are not accessible to wheelchair users, and the steep ramp (the angle of which is dictated by the tides) can become slippery under wet conditions. In addition, the steep and narrow stairs to the lower (sheltered) deck limit passengers to those without mobility constraints. Staff do, on occasion, lift wheelchair users on to the top deck of the ferry but this should not be expected by passengers. This practice also raises health and safety issues and concerns about preserving personal space.

However, given the fact that there are alternative accessible modes of transport to and from Days Bay, that Matiu Somes Island is not itself wheelchair accessible, and that to make the service wheelchair accessible would require a large investment to improve wharf structures, we do not consider that the service should be required to be wheelchair accessible at this time.

### 3.4.4 Safety

Safety issues identified on this service relate mostly to weather conditions. Rough weather can cause passengers to lose their footing when boarding or moving about during the trip, especially when all seats are occupied and people must stand. To take account of this on the lower (covered) deck there are straps attached to the ceiling that passengers can use to maintain their balance and railings on the upper deck. Soft edging on the seating also reduces the risk of injury to passengers in rough weather.

The other major hazard is due to wet and slippery surfaces. The surface of the ramp and the upper deck can become slippery under wet conditions. This increases the risk of passengers and staff falling and injuring themselves. There is little that can be done to prevent these surfaces from getting wet, however the tender document should specify all vessels have a non-slip coating on the upper deck.

### **3.5 Infrastructure**

#### **3.5.1 Shelter**

The Days Bay Wharf and Queens Wharf cater for the majority of passengers on this service. At Days Bay a shelter is due to be completed by the end of July. Queens Wharf is undergoing major redevelopment which will result in the ferry office and the vessel being relocated along the wharf. Relocating the ticket office to opposite the ferry will present an opportunity for more consistent branding through ensuring signage on the office and notice boards carries the name 'Wellington Harbour Ferry'. The Queens Wharf area provides shelter for waiting passengers under eaves and in nearby restaurants and cafes.

The wharves at Seatoun and Petone receive the fewest passengers, and do not serve the commuter market. This means that the passengers likely to use the ferry at these wharves are less likely to be present during bad weather. For this reason, and the limited patronage (six sailings a week), we do not recommend the construction of shelters or further facilities at these sites.

#### **3.5.2 Parking**

Parking is provided at Days Bay consisting of approximately 100 spaces available for general use. In summer this can cause conflict between commuters and recreational users of the wharf. We recommend investigating options for increasing the number of spaces available and increasing the use of feeder buses.

No parking is offered at Queens Wharf, but given that the City is the major destination for ferry users and the inner city nature of the site, there is no need to provide dedicated parking.

The Seatoun and Petone wharves do not have dedicated parking, but as these wharves receive only limited use by ferry passengers, we do not recommend its provision.

#### **3.5.3 Accessibility**

To ensure full wheelchair accessibility in the future, improvements would need to be made to the wharves. The wharves would need to allow access to the lower, sheltered, decks of the current ferries and any future vessels operating on these routes. An investigation would need to be carried out into the possibilities for enabling access – such as building floating pontoons.

However, during rough weather the use of these may not be feasible. We recommend no further action at this time. See section 3.4.3 above.

### **3.6 Cancellations**

During rough weather the current contract specifies the provision of replacement transport for peak time trips to maintain the reliability of the service. Passengers subscribed to the text cancellation service also receive a message informing them that the service has been cancelled. We recommend these practices continue.

## **4. Summary**

After completing the review of the Wellington Harbour Ferry Service we conclude that in its current format it is successful and recommend the continuation of the service.

## **5. Acknowledgement**

Greater Wellington would like to thank Jeremy Ward, Managing Director of East by West, and his staff for their time and assistance with this review.

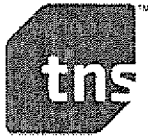
## **6. Recommendations**

*It is recommended that:*

- 1. The service continue to be provided.*
- 2. Existing trips are not diverted, but any future additional trips from Days Bay via Seatoun to Queens Wharf are not precluded.*
- 3. A stand-alone Seatoun to Queens Wharf service should not be funded by the council at this time.*
- 4. The current number of sailings should be maintained.*
- 5. The maximum trip time between Days Bay and Queens Wharf should be maintained at 25 minutes.*
- 6. The service should be consistently branded the “Wellington Harbour Ferry”.*
- 7. The weekend timetable should be split into two sections - standard format, and a section for trips that cannot be displayed in this format.*
- 8. The current fares should be specified as the maximum fares in the tender document.*

- 9 *Alignment of the fares and concessions of the ferry with that of the wider network should be considered prior to the introduction of integrated fares across the region.*
10. *It should be noted in the timetable that a family pass is a return ticket.*
11. *The terms 'student' and 'senior' should be defined and any ID requirements should be set out in the timetable.*
12. *The use of paper vs. electronic ticketing should be considered prior to the introduction of integrated ticketing in the region.*
13. *Vessels currently used on this service should not be required to be wheelchair accessible in the tender document, but wheelchair accessibility should be considered for any new or additional vessels to this service.*
14. *A coarse surface should be laid on the upper decks to prevent slipping.*
15. *Shelters should not be constructed at Petone and Seatoun wharves.*
16. *The options for increasing parking at Days Bay and increasing the use of feeder buses should be investigated prior to the expiry of the new contract.*
17. *Dedicated parking at Seatoun or Petone wharves need not be provided at this time.*
18. *Options for improving access for wheelchair users should be investigated prior to the expiry of the new contract.*
19. *The provision of substitute peak services during rough weather should be continued.*

Appendix 1: TNS Executive Summary – Demand for a Seatoun Ferry Service  
Appendix 2: Summary of Consultation



## 1.0 Executive Summary

### Background and Research Objectives

TNS was commissioned in March 2007 to conduct research which will aid Greater Wellington in ascertaining the estimated level of demand from Seatoun residents for a ferry service, as well as understand any likely impact of this new service on existing regular users of the Eastbourne service.

The research was designed to meet the following research objectives.

#### Current User Research Objectives:

- To explore current users' reaction to the proposed Seatoun stopover.
- To identify whether current users are likely to change their preferred ferry sailing time if such a service were to be introduced.
- To identify reactions to the additional journey time that would result from the Seatoun stopover.
- To explore users' perceptions of any advantages and disadvantages of the introduction of a Seatoun stopover.

#### Seatoun Residents Research Objectives:

- To identify Seatoun commuters' interest in a ferry service operating from Seatoun to Queens Wharf.
- To identify Seatoun residents who would be willing to take the ferry as a form of public transport instead of their car or bus to work.
- To identify Seatoun residents who are interested in the ferry option who would be willing to take the proposed 8:10 am sailing.
- To identify acceptability of the proposed fare for this sailing.



### Current Users

- Over half (57%) of users identified the 8.10am sailing as the ferry they would normally catch. When looking at how often respondents actually used this sailing, 59 percent were classified as regular users (use this sailing more than three times per week).
- Over half (58%) of current ferry users would change to a different sailing should both the departure time change to 8.05am and the Seatoun stop be implemented. One in five indicated they would catch the 8.05am sailing.
- One in five users (19%) indicated they would change their mode of transport, with the majority (85%) opting to use a private car and the remainder (15%) choosing the bus.
- Three quarters of those who would change to a different ferry would catch the 7.45am sailing. This is equivalent to nearly half (43%) of those who currently catch the 8.05am changing to the 7.45am sailing.
- Less than a quarter of users (21%) currently catch the 6pm sailing. When told that this sailing would change to a 5.45pm departure time, over a third (36%) indicated they would catch this sailing.
- Half (50%) of users who indicated they would change from the 5.45pm sailing would change to the 5.30pm sailing. As a proportion of all users this equates to 29 percent using the 5.30pm sailing and 36 percent using the 5.45pm sailing.
- Users identified the changes as being 'good for Seatoun residents' (20%), 'good for parents with school children' and 'good for the ferry's business (both 12%) as the main advantages.
- The main disadvantages identified included 'lengthening the travel time' (46%) and the 'change of the timetable not as suitable' (29%).

### Seatoun Residents

- The majority of Seatoun residents are currently using a private car as a driver (83%) to travel from their home to the Wellington CBD, while just under half (45%) are using public transport (bus) on some occasions.



- One in five residents indicated they would be *likely* to change from their current mode of transport and use the ferry from Seatoun to Queens Wharf (19%) and from Queens Wharf to Seatoun (21%).
- Three quarters (75%) of residents were *unlikely* to change from their current mode of transport and use the ferry from Seatoun to Queens Wharf, and two thirds (67%) indicated they would be *unlikely* to change for the ferry sailing between Queens Wharf and Seatoun.
- The proposed sailing times of 8.20am (Seatoun to Queens Wharf) and 5.45pm (Queens Wharf to Seatoun) were deemed to be the least suitable departure times for residents (only 9 percent preferred 8.20am and 8 percent preferred 5.45pm).
- Residents would prefer earlier sailings in both the morning and evening, with the 8.00am and 5.30pm sailings identified as being the most suitable (23% and 17% respectively).
- Residents identified ease of travel and less stress (41%) as the main advantage of a Seatoun ferry. Other advantages included avoiding traffic (33%), faster trips (27%) and not having to park in town (26%).
- The potential for bad weather was the main disadvantage (34%), followed closely by the cost, and the limitations of the schedule (both 29%).

## Conclusions

- Overall current users are likely to be quite inconvenienced by the possible changes to the ferry schedule and the implementation of the additional Seatoun Stop. This is particularly evident for the 8.10am sailing where over half of users said they would change to a different sailing, and nearly one in five would change to an alternative method of transport.
- Although the return trip from Queens Wharf to Days Bay was not met with as much resistance, fewer respondents seem to use the 6.00pm sailing (which is likely to be affected).





Possible Seatoun Ferry

- The main issues raised by current users include lengthening the travel time, and that the changes to the timetable are not as suitable. These were identified by many users, and would be extremely difficult to overcome as they are caused by the implementation of an additional Seatoun stop, and the possible changes to the timetable.
- While the inconvenience current users might face could possibly be offset by strong demand for the Seatoun Stop by current Seatoun/Karaka Bay residents, the survey results show that this is not the case. Only 19 percent of the sample indicated they would be likely or very likely to take this ferry service to the CBD should it be available and a similar 21 percent would take the return service.
- This finding sheds considerable doubt over the demand levels for the proposed Seatoun ferry service.

## Summary of Consultation

### Wellington City Councillors (Eastern Ward)

Rob Goulden	All for PT and ferry to Seatoun. Sees it as a step to a much larger service - 4 boats, many stops incl. Petone, Shelley Bay, Evans Bay. Suggests contacting Peter Love at the Wellington Tenth Trust.
Ray Ahipene-Mercer	No input. Wishes to be kept informed.
Leonie Gill	No input.

### Hutt City Eastbourne Community Board

Joy Baird (also councillor - Harbour Ward)	Concern that diverting a trip would reduce attractiveness for Eastbourne Commuters. Strongly suggests asking Eastbourne Commuters their opinion. Potential at weekends/holiday times.
Ross Jamieson (also councillor - Harbour Ward)	Thinks diverting a commuter DB-QW service is a bad idea.
Geoff Mann - Chair	No input.
Geoff Rashbrooke	No input.

### Hutt City Council

Bruce Hodgins (Manager Parks and Property)	Happy with how things are going at present. No input.
Lyle Earl (Traffic Supervisor)	No input.

### Wellington City Council

Stephen Harte (Manager Network Capacity)	No input.
--	-----------

### Community

Scots College	Anne Walker - keen, but want more concrete options first. Christain Zachariassen (Director of Operations) - currently 18 boys by shuttle and 5 on ferry to school, 22 on shuttles home. 21 boys "definitely interested" 6 maybes. 8.20 arrival may be 'cutting it a bit fine'. 6.05 departure may be a little late.
Seatoun School	No input.
St Anthony's School	No input.
Worser Bay School	No input.
Wellesley College	No input.
Mahina Bay Residents' Association	No input.
Lowry Bay Residents' Association	No input.
York Bay Residents' Association	No input.

Michael Mellor - Seatoun and Bays Progressive Association	Association currently inactive. Personal opinion: Good idea, but need to address price (should be similar to bus). Reliability (if only one service diverted through Seatoun). Timing (better if more frequent). Shelter (none at Seatoun Wharf). Parking (leaving car on Marine Parade all day not attractive to commuters or residents). Also could improve the weekend link between Seatoun and Eastbourne so that more time can be spent in Eastbourne.
Age Concern Wellington Inc	No input.
Disabled Persons Assembly (Wellington)	No input.
Peter Love - Tenth's Trust	Supports ferry to Seatoun. Thinks WCC should provide some funding. Promote it.

### Individuals

Andrew McIntyre	Supports ferry to Seatoun.
Carole and Tom Swan	Strongly supports ferry from Eastbourne to Seatoun. Boy going to start at Scots College - need shuttle from Seatoun Wharf to Scots. Live in Eastbourne Village - regular ferry users - would like ferry to stop at Eastbourne wharf rather than Days Bay.
Heather Morris	Supports service from Seatoun to Eastbourne for children going to Wellesley (she has 2 boys who currently use the ferry). Says about 10 boys use the ferry now to get to Wellesley. They come from Hataitai, Kilbirnie, Mirimar, Seatoun.
Wayne Dyer	Strong support for ferry from Seatoun. A Seatoun resident, believes a ferry would offer a good alternative to congested roads.
Virginia Flaus	In response to committee paper. Currently uses bus, but kids and husband catch ferry. Boys go to Scot's college. Lives in Eastbourne. Supports ferry, and wonders if there are more options we could look at in the report (in terms of diverting different trips - suggests the 7.45am).