

Minister for Business, Industry and Resources
Minister for Transport
Leader of the House

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Ms Miriam Beswick
Member for Braddon
Email: laura.ross@parliament.tas.gov.au

04 NOV 2024

Dear Ms Beswick

Thank you for your constituent question asked on 15 October 2024 in Parliament to the Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, regarding availability on the Spirit of Tasmania vessels for vehicles over 2.1 metres high. I am responding on behalf of the Tasmanian Government in my capacity as the Minister for Transport.

TT-Line advises that the vehicle deck space for vehicles over 2.1 metres high, as well as towing capacity, is limited and historically sells out months in advance. In fact, the demand for this category has increased now to the extent I understand it often sells out within weeks of new sailings being opened.

I am further advised that TT-Line's recent sailing schedule was also impacted by dry dock requirements for one vessel during August, resulting in a reduced number of sailings during the month and flow on effects from unmet demand.

TT-Line continues to review its sailing schedule weekly in line with demand and continues to add sailings as demand and schedule allows. This is on top of the 138 additional day sailings already scheduled over the 2024-25 peak season. Above and beyond the additional sailings released, TT-Line is working to ensure passengers waiting to get a large vehicle or caravan on the Spirits can get a spot.

TT-Line updates regular passengers regarding any additional sailings via SMS or email and updates are also provided through its website. However, to avoid disappointment, it strongly recommends booking travel on a return basis and as far in advance as possible. This will also greatly assist in securing availability for any preferred travel dates.

There is also a wait list system in place during peak periods when the vessels are travelling at capacity. It is recommended customers contact the Customer Contact Centre team on 1800 634 906 to discuss waitlist opportunities.

I note your comment regarding the new vessels and acknowledge the impact that the delay to Devonport port infrastructure is having on bringing these ships into service and realising their potential for Tasmanians, our tourists, and our economy. This situation is extremely regrettable. The Tasmanian Government is focused on getting the project back on track, further reforming our government businesses, and supporting our tourism and hospitality industry during this period.

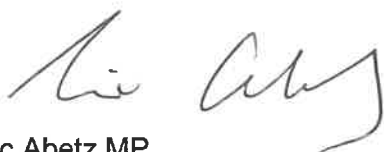
On this last point I note that the Premier, the Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP, last week announced a comprehensive tourism and hospitality package. As part of this, the Government will invest \$6 million to subsidise passenger fares to boost demand and provide for additional day sailings. Twenty sailings have already been added to the 2025 calendar.

Regarding freight, the Spirit of Tasmania vessels provide a necessary service for the passage of freight that is considered perishable and/or requires fast transit due to the frequency of sailing, reliability, and earlier and shorter disembarkation times. Other freight carrying services are, for the most part, unable to provide this level of service and it is important to note the number of jobs and revenue to our economy that the export of these goods provide, and conversely, the benefit to Tasmanians of fresh imported goods.

TT-Line limits the amount of space specifically reserved for freight on its vessels and the Spirit vessels account for only around 20 per cent of the total freight carried on Bass Strait with the majority transported by the privately run shipping companies. I am advised that preference is not given to freight over passenger vehicles.

Thank you for raising these matters in Parliament, I trust this information has been helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eric Abetz', written in a cursive style.

Eric Abetz MP
Minister for Transport