



COCOS (KEELING) ISLANDS FERRY SERVICES SCHEDULE REVIEW – Terms of Reference

1. BACKGROUND

The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development is reviewing the timetable for the ferry service on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands to ensure it continues to best meet community needs, support tourism activity, and encourage economic activity.

The review is supported by the Cocos (Keeling) Islands Strategic Plan developed by the Indian Ocean Territories Regional Development Organisation. Action E1.4 states: *“Review the ferry and bus schedules to ensure that after school activities, night time activities, public holidays and cultural celebrations can be attended by both Home Islanders and West Islanders. Also review ferry to allow more visits to Direction Island (improve tourism outcome)”*.

Potential new services and schedules that could better support a vibrant community and improve tourism outcomes will be explored.

2. METHODOLOGY FOR THE REVIEW


The Review team will assess use of the ferry according to the current timetable. This assessment will be informed by an analysis of use of each leg, over time. Consultations with the community and businesses regarding the current potential changes to the ferry timetable will also inform the review. Outcomes of the Department’s assessment and consultations will be collated and changes to the timetable to better meet demand will be identified. The benefits of any changes to the timetable will be tested against the current timetable offerings and within budget constraints. Changes will be implemented in late 2019, with sufficient lead time provided to ensure that travelers are aware of any changes.

3. OBJECTIVES

The Review will provide information and advice to support any potential changes to the ferry services schedule.

The Review will assess:

- The current ferry services schedule (and related bus services) and the number of passengers on each journey;
- The schedule and its support for inter-island, night time and after school activities for the community;
- Whether there are opportunities within the current schedule to provide additional support to tourism activities;
- If services are not presenting value for money or providing the required community support, investigate if there is an alternate service or schedule that would be better utilised;
- Fluctuations in the utilisation of services due to seasonal influences, school holiday periods and flight delay impacts and the potential to vary ferry scheduling to meet seasonal demands;
- Cost and community/economic benefit analysis of any potential changes to the schedule;
- The impact of cargo on the capacity of vessels to carry passengers; and
- The willingness of other stakeholders to contribute to the cost of additional one-off or regular ferry services.



The Review will also articulate a clear process for considering, and criteria for assessing, future requests for additional ferry services for both community services and commercial hire.

4. TIMING

The Department is asking for submissions to be made via writing to indianoceanterritories@infrastructure.gov.au by Friday 30 August 2019. On island consultations will also be undertaken on 14 and 15 August 2019.

5. REPORTING

Responses received by the Department both in writing and in person will be captured and published following the initial review. Any potential changes to the ferry schedule will be released to the community for comment before it is trialed.

August 2019