

# East Gippsland Shire Council Service Charter Raymond Island Ferry

East Gippsland Shire Council (Council) operates a vehicle and passenger ferry service between Raymond Island and Paynesville. As part of Council's commitment to provide quality service, Council has developed a Service Charter or level of service commitment for the operation of this service, including the provision of services during ferry outages.

## Purpose

This Charter is a statement of Council intent to more clearly define service standards for transport connectivity between Paynesville and Raymond Island. The Charter is a guiding but not legally binding instrument. The Charter is based on recommendations endorsed by Council at its meeting on 5 May 2020.

The purpose of this Charter is to:

- Provide a statement outlining service levels for transport connectivity and related services between Paynesville and Raymond Island
- Provide clarity of service provision for ferry patrons, emergency services agencies, utilities providers and other service providers
- Serve as a basis for developing future contracts for the operation of the Raymond Island ferry service.
- contribute to increased certainty of service levels and associated costs; and
- provide improved customer service through increased consistency, communication and understanding of service standards and arrangements.

## Scope

This Service Charter covers:

- Principles for operation of the service
- Scheduling of the service
- Arrangements for ferry outages

The Service Charter does not include fees (other than in the Principles), which are set by Council as part of its annual budget process.

## Principles guiding service delivery

The Raymond Island Ferry service is delivered in accordance with the following principles and in accordance with the Operating Contract:

1. Provide a safe service;
2. Excellent customer service;
3. Provide a timely and reliable service;
4. Operate the service in accordance with all relevant acts and regulations;
5. Ongoing communication and co-operation with the Principal, ferry patrons, emergency services and other relevant stakeholders;
6. Provide an environmentally friendly and responsible service; and
7. Enhancement of the Principal's image through the operation of the service.

### **Service Effectiveness**

1. Transport connectivity to Raymond Island will be always be constrained by the fact that it is an island.
2. Provision of reliable, efficient and effective access for persons, vehicles and services.
3. Provide a safe service that minimises the risk of harm to persons and property arising from the operation of the ferry service.
4. Provide alternative services during outages to provide a minimum level of access and minimise inconvenience caused by disruptions to the ferry service.

### **Service Efficiency**

1. Maximise the efficient use of resources including the ferry, related infrastructure, operating and maintenance personnel, and alternate passenger and vehicle vessels.
2. Ongoing communication and co-operation between the Principal, ferry patrons, emergency services and other relevant stakeholders.

### **Financial**

1. In that the Raymond Island Ferry is a core service; ratepayers of East Gippsland should equitably share the cost of the service.
2. Residents of Raymond island should not incur a fee for access to their homes.

### **Community**

1. The ferry service will be managed and operated to address community needs and to ensure equity and access.
2. Exploit the unique character of the ferry to contribute to the amenity of the Raymond Island/Paynesville and East Gippsland community.

# Level of Service

## Scheduling

### 1. Standard Operating Schedule

In the event of weather temperatures exceeding 32°C, the Master of the Ferry has responsibility to ensure safety of the vessel and accordingly shall exercise absolute discretion on reducing the amount of Ferry trips against the advertised timetable until it is again safe to resume normal timetabled operations.

Alternatively, if adverse weather conditions present dangerous tidal systems in the MacMillan Strait, the Master of the Ferry has responsibility to ensure safety of the vessel and accordingly shall exercise absolute discretion on reducing the amount of Ferry trips against the advertised timetable until it is again safe to resume normal timetabled operations.

## Ferry operating times

Council commits to develop and publicise a Ferry Timetable that will be readily available to passengers via Council's website and fixed signage at both the Raymond Island and Paynesville waiting areas. Council will also use electronic signage to advise of any temporary changes to the timetable.

The Ferry contractor is expected to follow this timetable, other than in emergency events or other beyond the Ferry operators' control.

### 1. Seasonal Peak Periods:

A continuous service (immediate return trip) will operate when the ferry is full during seasonal peaks.

An additional operator shall be provided to provide greater efficiency and manage risk during these seasonal peak times with approval given by the Superintendent.

### 2. Emergency evacuation

The ferry service will be available 24 hours a day for evacuation in the event of bushfire or other major emergency.

## Ferry outages

### 1. Definition of services to be provided during Ferry outages:

The current Raymond Island Ferry Service Operation and Minor Maintenance Contract stipulates within the specifications, a range of services to be provided by the Contractor when the ferry is not able to operate for whatever reason.

This service disruption is described generally in the Contract as an “outage”, either planned or unplanned and the services that replace the ferry and other associated arrangements are generally described as “outage services”.

Planned outages generally relate to an outage requiring major or minor maintenance in which the Ferry is deemed unsafe for use during such times. EGSC and the Contractor will generally provide advanced notice of a planned outage allowing for residents and other commuters to appropriately prepare. Unplanned outages generally occur without notice requiring immediate maintenance therefore appropriate advanced notification is not feasible.

The expected duration of the outage will influence which outage services are activated. An outage up to 24 hours will only activate the water taxi and standby barge. An outage exceeding 24 hours may result in all services being activated.

Council will seek to reduce the frequency of “out of water” survey and maintenance interventions for the Raymond Island Ferry to achieve a balance between risk and ferry maintenance requirements.

## Water Taxi

A Water Taxi will be provided for outages up to 24 hours or longer. When in operation, the following measures for the use and operation of the Water Taxi apply:

- The Master of the water taxi has responsibility to ensure safety of the vessel and passengers and accordingly shall exercise absolute discretion on all matters of vessel and passenger safety.
- Emergency response will take priority over all other water taxi services.
- The water taxi will operate from a single landing point on Raymond Island (Public Jetty to the north of the Ferry terminal) and a single landing point in Paynesville (boardwalk near the Ferry shelter).
- The water taxi service will be provided for the same hours of operation as the Ferry when the Ferry is in normal service.
- An emergency stand-by service will be provided for emergency services.
- The water taxi will be free to all passengers during normal ferry operating hours.
- Shelter will be provided at the Paynesville water taxi landing for the comfort of passengers.
- The Master will attempt to accommodate mobility aids and patrons with special needs to the extent of the vessel’s design and safety parameters.

- The configuration of water taxi landing platforms will aim to provide all-ability access.
- Operators of mobility scooters must display adequate competence in the operation of the mobility aid in the conditions prevailing for boarding and disembarking from the water taxi (i.e. a floating platform subject to movement from sea state and wind).
- Patrons with pets or bicycles will be conveyed subject to the discretion of the Master as to loading arrangements and compatibility with other passengers, luggage, and animals either waiting or being conveyed. [Patrons with pets or bicycles, other than bicycle commuters/school children should seek to avoid times of peak demand (0700-0900 and 1500-1700) to minimise being required to wait until passenger only demand has been moved].
- Dogs will be limited to those belonging to one family per trip.
- Any pets must be accompanied by a person capable of exercising effective control and shall be on a suitable control lead or caged.
- No more than two bicycles will be conveyed at the same time as the vessel is conveying passengers, other than at the Master's discretion.
- Dangerous goods and flammable liquids in small quantities and in suitable containers may be carried at the absolute discretion of the Master. Gas cylinders are not permitted to be carried on the Water Taxi.
- Local schools and A'Beckett Park will be notified of these arrangements.

## Barge

A Barge shall be made available for outages expected to exceed 24 hours, with the following measures for use applying:

- The Master of the barge has responsibility to ensure safety of the vessel and passengers and accordingly shall exercise absolute discretion on all matters of vessel and passenger safety.
- Emergency response will take priority over all other barge services.
- The barge is not available as a general commuter service or for those who fail to plan and prepare appropriately for planned outages.
- Access to the barge will only be available to:

- Only those vehicles (including tow vehicle and trailer combinations) that in the sole judgement of the vessel Master can be conveyed safely. (this may vary from time to time depending upon sea state, wind and water levels. Caravans and small trailers will generally be unsuitable for carriage and are excluded from barge access).
- Trade services and utilities providers providing urgent repair / maintenance to Raymond Island properties and infrastructure that for safety or similar compelling reasons cannot reasonably be postponed until the Ferry returns to service.
- Trades service providers (registered businesses normally based on Raymond island) with vehicles that are specifically “tool of trade” vehicles that the service provider requires to be available on the mainland in order to perform their normal trade services. (tool of trade vehicles should be interpreted to include utilities, trucks, vans, tool trailers with specialised trade equipment and/or materials. Passenger vehicles operated by trades people are not included in the scope of this category).
- Injured wildlife transport.
- Mobility scooters that cannot be safely conveyed on the Water Taxi but can be safely conveyed on the Barge.
- Vehicles delivering goods / products that the recipient could not have reasonably foreseen as being required and/ or cannot reasonably be expected to await a delay in delivery. (i.e. the recipient would suffer significant financial or other loss or damage. Inconvenience does not fall within this category nor do grocery or other “on-line” goods deliveries).
- Vehicles conveying essential service providers and their equipment (visiting health/medical or home help services) for service provision that cannot reasonably be delayed, or the service provider cannot reasonably be expected to use the Water Taxi, or, it cannot reasonably be expected that the recipient attends service provision on the mainland via the Water Taxi.
- Fee for service trips will be available to patrons who do not meet the criteria for free passage at a fee determined by Council.

## Temporary Car Parking

For outages of 24 hours or longer:

- Council will aim to ensure that temporary car parking is designated on public land during extended outages.
- Public safety lighting may be provided in designated car park area/s where practicable to do so.
- Normal parking restrictions will be monitored and enforced in areas outside of the designated temporary car parks to ensure parking is available for visitors.
- Additional disabled parking bays will be made available adjacent to the water taxi landing where practical and possible to do so.

## Communication

The arrangements applicable for Ferry outages will be communicated to patrons and other stakeholders through:

- the East Gippsland Shire Council Website and social media pages.
- Raymond Island Community Association.
- Normal SMS and dynamic signage arrangements.
- Printed notices on the Ferry and at the Paynesville Service Centre.
- Mail-out to Raymond Island Residents and other known users of the Ferry service (for scheduled extended outages only).

## Courtesy Bus

A courtesy bus will be made available during planned outages by the Ferry Contractor

The operation of bus service is not an obligation of the ferry contractor and operation of the bus is dependant on the Raymond Island community's voluntary operation of the bus.

The bus service will operate during the hours the Ferry would normally operate and will travel a defined route determined by the bus service operator.

On-demand deviation from the prescribed bus service route will be accommodated where possible, where the service is pre-booked via mobile phone and SMS notification.

Dangerous goods and flammable liquids are not to be carried on the bus.

Animals, other than assistance dogs, are not permitted on the bus.