MIN-4128 Auckland Ferries – short-term plan to address unreliability issues

20 April 2023

A cover note summarising the high-level, short-term (0-2 years) plan to address the service unreliability issues affecting ferries in Auckland caused mainly by staff shortages.

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency's response:

- The shortage of skilled staff has negatively impacted Auckland's ferry reliability and punctuality. Less than 80 per cent of ferries are on time (down from 92 per cent in July 2022), and less than 85 per cent of scheduled ferries have sailed (down from 91 per cent in July 2022).
- This has resulted in the loss of public confidence in public transport and reduced patronage.
- The unreliability has been caused by staff shortages due to staff exiting the workforce, a lack of incentives to enter domestic training pathways, and difficulties in recruiting staff from overseas.
- In response to the Minister's request at the multi-stakeholder meeting on 23 March 2023, Waka Kotahi has facilitated the preparation of a short-term plan with immediate actions to address the unreliability issues. (See attached).
- Waka Kotahi sought feedback and obtained agreement from maritime stakeholders on the immediate actions, which target issues related to recruitment, retention, education and training, and scheduling.
- We note the Government's 11 April 2023 announcement of ship masters / skippers and deckhands being added to the transport sector agreement that provides a time-limited residency pathway, with more details to come in May 2023. This has been incorporated as an immediate action.
- s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]

s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]

[redacted]

Additional points from Fullers and Auckland Transport

- s 9(2)(f)(iv) [redacted]

[redacted]

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Auckland Ferries

A short-term plan to address service unreliability, staff shortages and training pathways

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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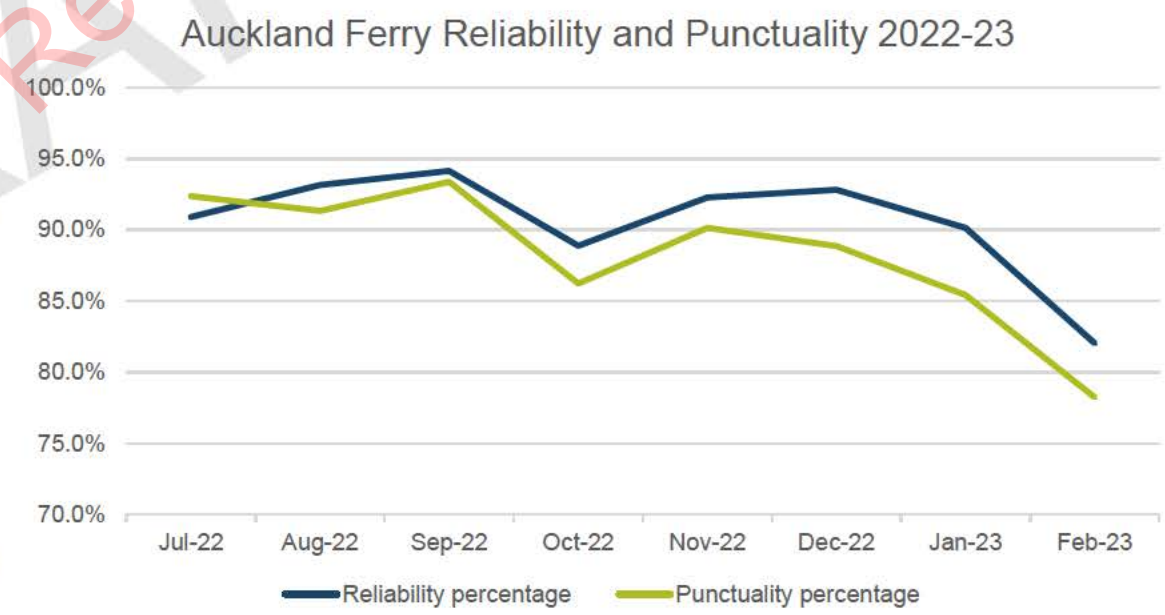
Problem Statement and Context

The shortage of skilled staff has negatively impacted Auckland's ferry reliability. This has resulted in the loss of public confidence in public transport, patronage and opportunity.

- The ferry network in Auckland has experienced declines in service reliability and patronage since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ferry patronage is currently at 71 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.
- While patronage and reliability decreases from 2020 to 2021 can be attributed to COVID-19 lockdowns and disruptions, since 2022, patronage recovery has been hampered by unreliable ferry services. There have been frequent unplanned cancellations causing disruptions and loss of confidence for passengers.
- Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi are co-investing in vessel refits and new vessels to renew the ageing ferry fleet.
- The unreliability has been caused by staff shortages due to staff exiting the workforce, lack of incentives to enter domestic training pathways and difficulties in recruiting staff from overseas
- A multi-stakeholder meeting with the Minister for Auckland/ of Transport took place in March 2023 to discuss an action plan to support ferry reliability
- This action plan sets out the core issues affecting the delivery of ferry services in Auckland and the immediate short-term response (0 to 2 years) that should be implemented by all stakeholders to turn around the existing decline in reliability and patronage.



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