

Kaitaki returns to service 12th April

Kia ora,

The Kaitaki ferry will be back in full service tomorrow, April 12, providing more certainty for those hoping to cross the Cook Strait these school holidays, the Interislander says.

Kaitaki has been out of service since 4 March due to a gearbox issue.

“Repair of the gearbox has gone well. Following sea trials, our own assurance checks and independent third party signoff, Kaitaki is now ready to resume service,” says Interislander Executive General Manager Walter Rushbrook.

“We are pleased to advise everyone booked to travel from tomorrow they can cross the Strait as planned, beginning with about 500 passengers due to be welcomed aboard Kaitaki for a scheduled sailing at 0845am tomorrow. Later this week Interislander bookings will be opened again after these were paused to protect any available space for Kaitaki passengers.

“The Kaitaki repair was complicated, requiring a particular type of metal for the gearbox that was manufactured and shipped from Germany, along with specialist technical support from the Netherlands. The gear box failure was a surprise, given it was overhauled late last year in drydock.

“Our focus over the past few weeks has been on restoring Kaitaki to service and offering customers booked to sail on Interislander as much certainty as possible about their travel.

“Throughout this disruption we have managed to rebook the vast majority of passengers on alternative sailings. Everyone booked over the Easter weekend was offered a passage across the Cook Strait. Unfortunately, in some other cases we have had to cancel bookings and provide customers with a refund.

“We know this hasn’t been easy for these customers and we are sorry for any inconvenience the cancellations and changes have caused.

“As we look to the future, we’re working on a number of fronts to make sure our ferry service is modern, safe and reliable. This includes purchasing two new, larger ferries that will be built at Hyundai-Mipo Dockyard in South Korea. These hybrid electric/diesel vessels are due to arrive in 2025 and 2026.

“In the meantime, we’re looking at what we can do now, over and above our already extensive process, to improve the resilience of our current, aging fleet. This includes taking our ships out of service more regularly for maintenance checks in wet and dry dock environments and instituting a new approach to managing our assets and fleet,” Walter Rushbrook says.

ENDS.

We cannot thank you enough for your patience and support with us whilst we navigated the last few months of disrupts.

Kind regards and thank you,

Your Interislander Domestic Team

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