



The Traverse Board

Newsletter of the Friends Of The Paul McGuire Maritime Library Inc

May 2026

Proudly Supporting the Paul McGuire Collection of The State Library of South Australia.

President's Report May 2026

Autumnal greetings to you all, and I hope you are enjoying good health in what is still very pleasant weather. In late March a few Friends enjoyed a steam-powered cruise aboard the PS Marion, from Bow Hill down to Mannum, I am told it was a very pleasant time on the Murray. Sadly I missed the boat, literally, due to faulty navigation, no points for that!



Our next meeting will be at the State Library, starting with a talk by historian Clare Parker in the Hetzel Lecture Theatre at 11.00, after which we can take a look at the Hankey Panorama displayed on the Treasures Wall. To follow this feast of history it is planned to adjourn to a suitable place for a pleasant lunch. The talk will require a free ticket, for which Neil has included the link to facilitate this. I believe the display of the Panorama, which features Port Adelaide, will help to promote the Paul McGuire Library, and the Friends too.

I have just finished reading a most interesting book, *The Voyaging Stars*, by David Lewis, in which he tells how the Pacific Islanders navigated their sailing canoes, large and small, over vast distances, by observing and knowing the movements of the stars across the night sky, also wave patterns, bird activity and other features, without a compass or sextant on board.

Time to close this now, hope to see you at the Library on May 26th. All the very best 'til then.

All the best, regards, Julian.

May Meeting

Memory, Fire and Forgery

Tuesday 26th May

11:00 am to 12:00 noon

State Library of South Australia

Institute Building

Hetzel Lecture Theatre

[Bookings Required](#)

The saga of the two new Kangaroo Island ferries continues.

As I write this in late April the first, *Wanggami*, is safely in Port Adelaide, the other *Ruwi* is still at the Batam Island shipyard in Indonesia.

Any hope of a 1st June start to the new service would seem to have disappeared. Bookings from 1st June continue for the old ferries which are showing their age.

Needless to say the KI people are less than pleased about the situation.

Realistically if the new ferries can't enter service before late September when the School Holidays start then the least disruptive time is June next year.

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Kangaroo Island mayor criticises 'pathetically inadequate' communication as new SeaLink ferries delayed again

Isabella Kelly 7th April 2026



The first of the two new ferries, Wanggami, arrived in Port Adelaide on April 6. (ABC: Bobby Macumber)

In short:

Two new ferries for Kangaroo Island will not be operating by June as planned, the transport minister has said.

Kangaroo Island's mayor says communications from the ferry provider, SeaLink, have been "pathetically inadequate".

What's next?

The second ferry is expected to arrive "in coming months", with no revised start date given.

Kangaroo Island's new ferry service will be delayed for a second time, the transport minister has said.

The two new vehicles, delivered by SeaLink, were initially expected to begin service in early 2025, but in October last year the company adjusted the commencement to June 1, 2026.

Speaking to ABC Radio Adelaide, newly appointed transport minister Joe Szakacs said the ferries "won't be ready by June 2026".

Though the minister did not give a revised start date, he said he expected it would be this year.



Michael Pengilly said locals were "not getting the information flow" from SeaLink. (ABC South East SA: Caroline Horn)

In its October 2025 announcement, SeaLink said the first ferry would be arriving "late 2025".

That ferry — *Wanggami* — arrived in Port Adelaide yesterday, having travelled from Batam in Indonesia.

Kangaroo Island Mayor Michael Pengilly said he was "really disappointed" in SeaLink's communication throughout the project.

"I think it's pathetically inadequate, to be perfectly honest," he said. "I think SeaLink have failed dismally here."

Kangaroo Island councillor and local farmer Sam Mumford was not surprised to hear the ferries would not be up and running in June.

"Everything else is not working that well around the world right now, so why should we be any different?" Cr Mumford said.

Sam Mumford says there is no point being pessimistic about the ferries' arrival. *(Supplied: Kangaroo Island Council)*

"Everyone is a bit cautious, but it's all an untried thing with these new boats. But we've got these things for the next 25 years, so it's no point being a pessimist."

While the new ferries have been the topic of much discussion and speculation in the small island community, Cr Mumford said, ultimately, the service provided was vital.

"It's our lifeblood to the island, and we've got these things for the next 25 years. So I just hope everything works."

Cr Mumford said the bigger concern for the community was how long the ferry service would be out of action during the changeover to the new boats.

"As long as we've got some sort of knowledge of when this shutdown is going to happen," he said.

"We don't want to get to the week before and then say: 'Oh, by the way, next week we're going to be out of action for two weeks.'"

Delays continue

Mr Szakacs said communications from SeaLink had been inadequate.

"To be pretty frank about this, I've been disappointed in the advice that we've been receiving from SeaLink, and I've made that clear and sought additional information,"

Mr Szakacs said.

The minister noted matters "out of the direct control" of the manufacturer had contributed to the delays.



Joe Szakacs says he has been "disappointed" in the communications from SeaLink. *(ABC News: Carl Saville)*

In a statement, a spokesperson for the Department of Infrastructure and Transport said the second ferry, Ruwi, was "expected to be delivered in coming months".

"SeaLink has advised the first ferry, Wanggami, has received its Domestic Commercial Vessel accreditation from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and has arrived in Outer Harbour where it will undergo testing over the coming months," the spokesperson said.

SeaLink has been contacted for comment.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-04-07/new-kangaroo-island-ferries-delayed-again-sealink/106537470>

State government will hold SeaLink to account if new boats are late

Stan Gorton 13/04/2026 <https://theislanderonline.com.au/news/2026/04/13/state-government-will-hold-sealink-to-account-if-new-boats-are-late/>



The ferry Wanggami in the early phase of its construction, as published in March 2024. Its sister ship Ruwi is currently under construction in the same shipyard in Indonesia.



New SeaLink ferry Wanggami on rollers about to be launched at the shipyard in Batam, Indonesia, as published in October last year.

The state government will hold SeaLink accountable if the two new Kangaroo Island ferries have not commenced service by June 1.

This scenario could play out because while the new ferry Wanggami has arrived in Port Adelaide, its identical sister ship Ruwi is believed to be still under construction, or at least has not left the shipyard in Batam, Indonesia.

Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Joe Szakacs said the SeaLink contract required the vessels to be in service by the deadline.

"I share the frustration that islanders and island businesses are experiencing from the lack of clarity and certainty being provided by SeaLink about the commencement of its new ferries," Mr Szakacs said.

"What is clear and certain, however, is SeaLink's contractual obligation to commence this service by the first of June.

"We will hold them to account if they fail to meet their obligations."

The Islander contacted SeaLink to find out if there were any definitive dates, but a spokesperson said due to the contract, comment could not be made.

SeaLink booking agents this week were still making bookings with the new ferry timetables for sailings on or after June 1.

Mayor Michael Pengilly said he didn't know when the new boats would start and suspected SeaLink may not exactly be sure itself.

He had a phone call last week with the new chief executive officer of Kelsian Group, the parent company of SeaLink Marine & Tourism, Graham Legh.

While he could not go into details of the discussion, he would be very surprised if the new ferries did start by June 1, but was confident that they would enter service later in the year.

He also urged SeaLink not to start charging island residents a fee to change bookings and not to institute the promised 1.5 per cent multiplier, or surcharge, applied to the base rate for livestock, placing those loads in the same category as dangerous goods.

SeaLink should abandon both measures as a gesture of good faith and not doing so would be "pure greed".

Member for Mawson, Jenni Mitton said SeaLink could do a better at keeping the island informed

"I'm disappointed with SeaLink's lack of communication around the timeline for the delivery of their new ferries," she said.

“The KI community deserves to know exactly when the new boats will be ferrying passengers and freight between the island and the mainland.

“I’ve been dealing directly with Minister Szakacs to share my concerns and the concerns of those on the island.

“The Minister assures me that SeaLink will be held to account if they fail to deliver what they’ve promised.”

At 60 metres in length and 20 metres wide, approximately 10 metres longer and 2 metres wider than the current vessels, Wanggami and Ruwi when they do arrive will provide greater vehicle and freight capacity.

The Department for Infrastructure and Transport in October announced it had completed most of the \$73 million construction at the Penneshaw and Cape Jervis ferry ports to accommodate the new boats.

But before the new vessels begin operation, the loading ramps at both ports need to be upgraded to allow for their different dimensions and roll-on, roll-off loading system.

The ports will be closed for three days for this construction.

The ferry service carries about 500,400 passengers, more than 146,000 cars, and 14,000 freight vehicles per year.

SeaLink secured the 25-year contract to operate the KI ferry service in December 2021.

The new contract, awarded by the state government following a competitive tender, began at the expiration of their previous contract in 2024 and extends to 2039.

The contract involved a \$57 million investment by SeaLink to construct the two new larger ferries.

Old Spirit ferries up sale with new berth 'on track' for October launch, TT-Line say

By Jano Gibson

Thursday 5 February



<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-02-05/spirit-of-tasmania-oct-launch-date-on-track-tt-line/106307332>The operator of Tasmania's ferries says the new ships and their new berth are "on track" to enter service in October. (ABC News: Julian Robins)

In short:

The new Spirit of Tasmania ferries are expected to start operating in Bass Strait by the end of October. It comes as ferry operator TT-Line tries to sell its two existing ferries on the international market.

What's next?

TT-Line says it has no plans to increase ticket prices despite expecting to record a "substantial loss" this financial year.

Ferry operator TT-Line is confident its two new Spirit of Tasmania vessels will begin operating by October — but it says there is a "risk" its existing ships might not be sold by then.

The ferry replacement program, which includes a new berth in Devonport, has been plagued by significant delays and cost overruns over several years.

But at a parliamentary inquiry earlier today, the state-owned company said it was optimistic the project was now on schedule and on budget.

"I'm pleased to report to the committee that the vessel replacement and berth 3 Devonport project remains on target for first commercial sailings of Spirit of Tasmania 4 and 5 in October 2026," TT-Line chief executive Chris Carbone said.

"We're also on target to deliver [the] berth 3 project within the revised budget of \$493 million."

Spirit IV, which was built more than a year ago, is currently anchored in Geelong at a cost of almost \$900,000 a month



Spirit of Tasmania IV pictured leaving Leith, Scotland, in June of last year. (Supplied: TT-Line)

Spirit V, which has been docked in Scotland since late last year, is expected to travel to Australia next month.

"It's approximately a two-month journey, and then we'll be here at the end of cruise season for fitting out," Mr Carbone said.

"It's a logistical question about whether she comes first to Victoria and then to Tasmania, or just comes straight to Tasmania.

"That's really about availability of berths and fit-out logistics."

Older Spirits up for sale

The inquiry was told an international broker was engaged several months ago to find a buyer for the two older ferries that continue to operate in Bass Strait.

Mr Carbone said there had been "some interest" in the vessels, which he said have a "book value" of about \$50 million each.

"Obviously, it's a competitive market ... there are other vessels available for sale at the moment.

"So we're certainly working with the broker to try and sell our vessels."

He said, if necessary, TT-Line was open to selling the ships and then leasing them back until the new vessels come online.

But in an exchange with Labor's Treasury spokesman, Dean Winter, he acknowledged the sale might not happen before October.

Mr Winter: "What's the risk that we end up with [a situation where] we've still got two extra ships that are berthed somewhere that we don't actually need. Is that a real risk? And if so, how do we mitigate against that?"

Mr Carbone: "I think what I'd say [is] it's a risk. I think I'm comfortable, though, that we started the process early. So, we've started the process effectively more than 12 months out from changeover."

One of the new Spirit of Tasmania ships pictured during construction in Finland in May 2024. (Rauma Marine Constructions)

'No planned' ticket prices rise, despite expected 'substantial loss'

TT-Line's finances have been the subject of ongoing scrutiny after the state's auditor-general last year formed the view it had become insolvent in July.

The company, which was given a \$75 million equity injection and had its debt capacity increased from \$990 million to \$1.4 billion in the same month, disputes the claim.

TT-Line sent wrong specs in 'human error', leading to \$9m Spirit ferry fix

The head of Tasmania's state-owned ferry operator blames "human error" for a berth problem that needs a \$9 million fix and modification to the hulls of the two new Spirit of Tasmania ships.

At today's inquiry, TT-Line chair Ken Kanofski said it had not accessed any of the additional debt, but expected to do so next month.

He said that despite performing better than last year, the company was still expected to record a significant loss this financial year.

"I think we have already talked about the fact we have four ships, only two of them are in service and earning revenue.

"You know the substantial holding cost involved in those ships we have.

"With the best will of the world, the operational changeover will cost a lot of money because it just does, and we obviously have a pretty hefty interest bill.

"So, we will make a substantial loss after tax from an accounting perspective for the financial year."

Despite the state of its books, TT-Line said it has no plans to increase ticket prices on the ferries.

"We've operated in a competitive market," Mr Carbone said.

"It's a very contested market when it comes to freight, and certainly from a passenger side of things, there's opportunities for people to fly and rent cars.

"But there's no planned price increases."

Posted Thu 5 Feb 2026 at 3:20pm Thursday 5 Feb 2026 at 3:20pm, updated Thu 5 Feb 2026 at 4:36pm

Our May 2026 Meeting

Memory, Fire and Forgery

An event in the 2026 History Festival



Tuesday 26th May 2026

11:00 am – 12:00 noon

Presented by the State Library of South Australia

Hetzel Lecture Theatre

Institute Building

Corner Kintore Ave and North Terrace

Clare Parker will tell us of Frank Hankey the artist behind this 1855 panorama of Port Adelaide

A free event though bookings are required:

[Book through Humanitix](https://events.humanitix.com/memory-fire-and-forgery)

(<https://events.humanitix.com/memory-fire-and-forgery>)

We will have the opportunity to view the subject of this talk, the Hankey Panorama, at the Treasures Wall upstairs and will follow this with a pub lunch at a venue to be determined.