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MEDIA RELEASE

ORC launches expanded Queenstown Ferries service

Monday 22 September 2025

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The Otago Regional Council (ORC) has expanded Queenstown's ferry service; with late night services extended to seven days a week and daytime services running every hour.

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ORC's General Manager Regional Planning and Transport Anita Dawe says the Lake Whakatipu ferry contract was awarded to new owners Watersports Ltd in July and provided an opportunity to expand services.

"Watersports has expanded the ferry timetable which allows us to offer people more options to travel by water in Queenstown."

Timetable improvements started on 4 July, with late services being offered seven nights a week, rather than three.

"From today, services will expand further - running every hour between 8.15am and 9.45pm," says Ms Dawe. Watersports Ltd co-owner Iraj Barabi says, "We are delighted to have partnered with ORC to provide ferry services in Queenstown. Our entire team is mobilised to enhance all aspects of water transport in order to provide the public with a best-in-class transportation experience in a safe, reliable, and efficient manner. We will accomplish this with investing and employing all resources necessary to improve customer experience. Ferry passengers can expect better timeliness, expanded and more reliable services, more efficient processes, resulting in elevated customer satisfaction."

Mr Barabi says, “In the limited time Watersports has taken over the ferry operations, we have extended the late-night service to seven days a week effective 4 July which has resulted in a 9% increase in patronage for the month.”



Queenstown Ferries ferry on Lake Whakatipu

Ms Dawe says total patronage on the Queenstown Ferries service for the 2024/25 financial year was 71,123, a 4% decrease from the same period in 2023/24.

“However, while we have seen patronage slowly decrease since the withdrawal of half price fares in 2023, 2025 has markedly improved, with January to July patronage increasing by 4% compared to the previous year. We are optimistic the expanded timetable will drive higher passenger numbers for the rest of the year.”

Ferry pricing remains the same: \$10 per person, per trip with a Bee Card, or \$14 with a bank card (children under 5 travel for free and cash is not accepted).



Orbus Ferries

Information on the Orbus Ferries in Queenstown - when you can catch them, where they travel and what the fares are.

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Take the lake

Dedicated page for people using the Queenstown Ferries.

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Orbus Ferries on Facebook

Stay up to date on delays, cancellations or other news. Orbus Ferries operates a daily scheduled ferry service between Queenstown Central, Bayview - Kelvin Heights, Queenstown Marina and the Hilton.

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