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MEDIA RELEASE

Media release: ORC's Bee Card links buses and boats – QT style

Tuesday 25 October 2022

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The Otago Regional Council is launching its passenger Bee Card pay service to incorporate Queenstown Ferries alongside the tourism mecca's bus services - starting from 26 October.

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The Otago Regional Council is launching its passenger Bee Card pay service to incorporate Queenstown Ferries alongside the tourism mecca's bus services - starting from 26 October. Being able to use the Bee Card on the ferry service creates a seamless payment link between all available public transport options around Queenstown, says ORC's Interim Manager Transport Doug Rodgers.

"Given the congestion along Frankton Road and Queenstown's CBD at times, and pressure on parking in town, people are on the lookout for new public transport options," he says.

"The combination of water ferry and busing will improve accessibility to and from the town centre," Mr Rodgers says.

ORC launched its Bee Card in September 2020 and since mid-2021 has been part-subsidising the lake ferry operator Queenstown Ferries, which is owned and operated by RealNZ.

"We are really excited to be the first water-based public transport operator to adopt the Bee Card system in New Zealand," says RealNZ General Manager of Queenstown Experiences, Dan Maroszek.

"Water-based public transport is the most sensible and immediate solution to the roading and parking issues we are now seeing in central Queenstown. We are committed to providing solutions to community problems with the support of ORC, and the seamless connection between roading and water-based public transport systems will support this."

The ferry is the first public transport water service to be added to the Bee Card network, bringing the system a step closer to a national ticketing solution.



Using a Bee Card on the ferry will cost \$5 for a single trip, but the cost rises to \$7 each way if customers use a bank card (cash cannot be accepted on the ferry). There are no free transfers between the ferry and bus services, so these fares must be purchased separately.

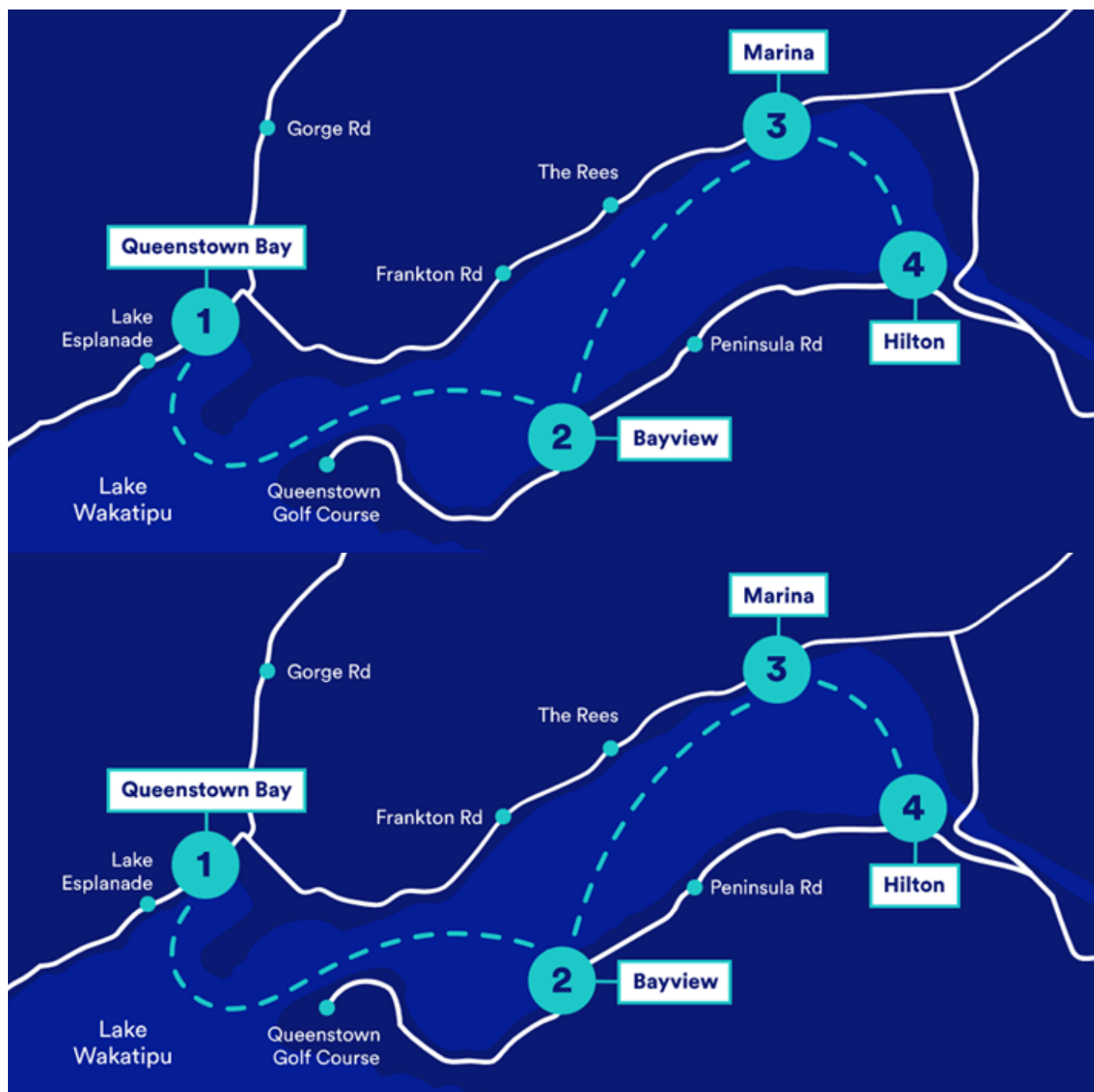
Mr Rodgers says at present the ferry service charges are already half price and are likely to remain at that level until late-January 2023.

"We encourage people to purchase and register a Bee Card to take advantage of the reduced cost of travel across all available public transport services in Queenstown," he says.

A launch event will be held at Steamer Wharf, by the RealNZ kiosk, between 8.30am and 1.30pm on Wednesday 26 October to encourage people to purchase and register a Bee Card.

Prizes for registering a Bee Card include a RealNZ jet boat and white-water rafting experience for one worth \$199, plus 60 and 25-minute Queenstown Jet Boat experiences worth \$99 and \$79 each. There will also be free cupcakes and Bee Card giveaways for the early birds.

The ferry service, used by commuters and tourists alike, links Queenstown Bay, the Frankton Marina and the Bayview and Hilton jetties; within a 15-kilometre round trip, which in total takes about an hour return.



The ferry service has been added to the Queenstown Orbus network as Route 6, and all timetable information can now be found on the ORC website here <https://www.orc.govt.nz/qtferries> and on the Transit App.

During workdays there are eight hourly departure times from all four stops, starting at Queenstown wharf from 7.45am until 5.45pm, plus three extra evening services in the weekend; the final one departing at 9.45pm, for the last run to Frankton and the Hilton jetty.

Fare paying passengers can take either a bike, scooter, child's stroller, dog or up to one large luggage item on board the ferry depending on passenger demand.

Way To Go Partnership

In early-2020, under the umbrella of the Way to Go partnership, the ORC, Queenstown Lakes District Council and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency joined forces to drive changes in public transport issues to deliver a safe, connected, and accessible transport network for the Whakatipu District.

In seeking connected travel solutions for Whakatipu, the Way to Go partnership included the long-established water ferry operation, as part of a number of business cases, for consultation with the local community about paying for the ferry service.

For more information:

[Queentown ferry service](#)

[Queenstown Ferries](#)

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