

From: Tony Henderson <tonyh@humanist.org.hk>
To: panel_t@legco.gov.hk

Date: Sunday, April 13, 2008 02:10PM
Subject: Re: Invitation for views - outlying island ferry services

Dear Sarah,

Here is the viewpoint of the Humanist Association of Hong Kong.

Regards

tony

Ferry service to Mui Wo.
Suggestions from Humanist Association of Hong Kong

The Transport Department states that running a regular ferry service to Mui Wo is not economically tenable. We say that is not the point. The point is the people living in Mui Wo and nearby places must have a ferry service and, besides that, it would be to the detriment of Hong Kong if there was no proper ferry service or if it was so limited the use of the service never developed - as domestic tourism goes on increasing.

The Inter-Island ferry service is also absolutely necessary, wonderful if we could bring in Lamma as well. The Outlying Islands have a set of cultures all of their own and much would be lost without regular means of physical transport for people and goods.

The Government keeps repeating this policy of no-subsidy but the government will have to pay if that is what the situation demands. There are too many people that would be left out-on-a-limb otherwise. However, don't believe these commercial companies that would demand excessive subsidies but rather help establish a Mui Wo people-owned company as a co-operative. Then it would not be a state-enterprise with those well-known inefficiencies.

An extra leg on the Peng Chau route is another possibility as the in-bound ferry always fills up after docking in Peng Chau.

The business sector can pay the higher fees as may be demanded by using those direct super-duper fast ferries which are too costly to run apparently but that decision of purchase for use on this route was made by First Ferry company itself.

However, there are students, senior citizens, and all those without high incomes plus the unemployed, then the disadvantaged in one form or another. This adds up to a majority. A fairly regular ferry service is a must for these people. The 'slow' - 50 minutes, not too bad - ferry is ideal, given its decent pricing.

At fifty minutes from Mui Wo to Central for the slow ferry, the time difference with the fast ferry is only 15 minutes. Why not give a few extra revs to the slow ferries during business hours and drop that difference down to 10 minutes?

Then we could have 'slow' for the business people and 'super-slow' for the unemployed.

Yours faithfully

Tony Henderson
