

政府總部
運輸及房屋局

運輸科
香港添馬添美道 2 號
政府總部東翼



**Transport and
Housing Bureau**
Government Secretariat

Transport Branch
East Wing, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue,
Tamar, Hong Kong

本局檔號：THB(T)L2/11/36
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電話號碼：3509 8158
傳真號碼：2537 5246

[Translation]

28 June 2016

Panel on Transport
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms. Sophie LAU)

(Fax no.: 2978 7569)

Dear Ms. LAU,

Inadequate Outlying Island Ferry Services During Holidays

We acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 31 May 2016 relating the views of Dr. Hon. KWOK Ka-ki. This is a consolidated reply of this Bureau and the Transport Department (“TD”).

Currently, there are 14 outlying island ferry routes in Hong Kong. The TD has been monitoring the operation of various outlying island ferry routes and encouraging ferry operators to deploy their fleet and manpower with flexibility, and arrange additional ferry services to cope with the greater passenger demand during holidays when required and where resources permit. According to the service monitoring survey conducted by the TD during the holidays in end 2015, the services provided by the operators of various outlying island ferry routes could meet the passenger demand.

Regarding Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki's concern about the "Central - Cheung Chau" ferry route, the Government notes that some members of the public consider the services of this route during the Easter holidays this year (i.e. 25-28 March) inadequate. According to the operator's record, the average daily patronage of the "Central - Cheung Chau" route (two-way) during the said period was around 43 000 passenger trips, which was higher than the patronage on weekdays. The situation is similar to those during the Easter holidays in the past few years, although the patronage varied each year.

For the Easter holiday this year, the New World First Ferry Services Limited ("NWFF") provided a total of additional 81 ferry services (two-way) to carry passengers, representing an increase of 26% in ferry services when compared with the original scheduled frequency. In particular, NWFF added 32 ferry services in total on 27 March, which was the busiest day of the said period, representing a 42% increase when compared with the scheduled frequency. During the peak hours on 27 March, ferries were arranged to carry passengers to/from Cheung Chau at an interval of 12 minutes on average. None of the ordinary ferries were full and the loading ranged from 59% to 92%. Although fast ferries were sometimes full during the peak hours, passengers who could not board on the departing ferry were able to board the next one. Therefore, in general, the services of this route could meet the passenger demand.

To further monitor the service of the "Central - Cheung Chau" route during long holidays, the TD conducted on-site surveys on 3-4 April (Ching Ming Festival), 1-2 May (Labour Day) and 14 May (Cheung Chau Bun Festival) this year. Findings of the surveys show that the passenger demand of this route could be met. During the busy hours, the NWFF provided an addition of 94 ferry services to carry passengers. Ferries were arranged to carry passengers to/from Cheung Chau at an interval of around 12 to 15 minutes. Although particular ferry trips were full during the peak hours, passengers who could not board on the departing ferry were able to board the next one.

The Government also notes the request for the setting up of a dedicated passage for monthly ticket holders of the "Central - Cheung Chau" route, so as to bring convenience to people who travel to and from Cheung Chau frequently. The TD and the relevant government departments are currently exploring the feasibility of such proposal with the ferry service operator concerned. The TD will continue to keep close liaison with the various outlying island ferry operators and encourage them to put in place appropriate measures to satisfy the

passenger demand for outlying island ferry services during holidays as far as practicable.

Yours sincerely,

(Vivian HO)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c. Commissioner for Transport (Attn: Mr. Ken Wong)