

# A ferry good deal for KI

ELIZABETH HENSON

## SeaLink to upgrade fleet, boost services and slash fares

THE number of daily ferry services between Kangaroo Island and the mainland will more than double under a new transport deal.

And the cost of fares will drop by almost 80 per cent for island residents by March next year.

Two new, larger, state-of-the-art vessels that reduce motion sickness and have improved drive-through capability will also be built and join the fleet within a few years.

The state government has awarded SeaLink a new con-

tract to deliver KI ferry services until at least June 2039, with a further two five-year performance-based extension options.

SeaLink has provided ferry services to KI since 1989.

Although the contract officially takes effect in 2024, KI residents will start enjoying savings within months.

From early March, a standard adult fare for KI residents will fall from \$31 to \$6.80 and the standard vehicle fare for

residents will drop from \$98 to \$65. Concession prices for residents will reduce from \$16 to \$5.10.

Discounts for students and children will also apply.

Freight costs will drop from \$39.60 to \$25 from mid-2024.

The number of daily services will increase from five to at least seven from March next year, while this number will rise again from July 1, 2024, when at least 11 services a day will be offered.

SeaLink will also design and build two new 59.7m-long diesel-fuelled catamaran vessels in the next few years. It will also upgrade the wharf and harbour infrastructure to cater for the new ferries.

Chief executive of SeaLink's parent company Kelsian Group, Clint Feuerherdt, said SeaLink would drive new investment and visits to SA. "The additional capacity and confidence we have in continuing to build visitation is the key to

being able to offer cheaper fares to residents on this route," he said.

Transport Minister Corey Wingard described the new contract as "a big win for Kangaroo Island and all South Australians".

"This new contract with SeaLink is fantastic news for tourism, local business and for residents on Kangaroo Island, with more services, cheaper fares for residents, cheaper freight and new larger capacity

vessels making the island an even more desirable destination," he said.

Premier Steven Marshall said: "We have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with tourism and hospitality operators during the pandemic and we are focused on ensuring the sectors are ready to take full advantage of our strong position as we emerge from the Covid shadow". SeaLink currently operates two large, modern vehicle and passenger ferries, SeaLion 2000 and Spirit of Kangaroo Island, with the journey taking just 45 minutes for the 16km crossing.

## Gov's pooch has plenty of new rooms to explore

PATRICK JAMES

GOVERNOR Frances Adamson's cavoodle, Alfie, has not yet visited every room in his new stomping ground at Government House.

Alfie is still adjusting to his new dwelling, but Ms Adamson said he was "full of that cavoodle spirit" and loved all his new visitors.

"Alfie loves welcoming people to Government House, but he's finding the size of the house and grounds a lot to cover for one small dog," Ms Adamson said.

Fortunate to have lived in a number of different places, Alfie "hates suitcases" but always did his best to keep his loving family happy, Ms Adamson said.

"In Canberra, Alfie would stand at the top of the stairs up from the garage when I came home from work, tail wagging furiously and not let me pass until he'd been properly patted."

Alfie will feature in The Advertiser Foundation's special edition calendar, 2022 Power Pets.

He joins the four-legged-friends of other influential figures such as Premier Steven Marshall and Police Commissioner Grant Stevens.

All sales from the calendar will raise money for Ronald McDonald House.

Ms Adamson will send a signed Christmas card to the winning bidder.



**12 PETS OF CHRISTMAS**

Scan the barcode to bid for the ninth of 12 limited edition Power Pets calendars featuring influential SA people and their furry friends. You will be supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities, which help ill children.



Governor Frances Adamson with Alfie, her five-year-old cavoodle. Picture: Tricia Watkinson

## Arrest in MacGill case

A MAN wanted by police after the alleged kidnapping of former Test cricketer Stuart MacGill has been arrested in Sydney.

The man was pulled over on the Anzac Bridge, Pyrmont, on Wednesday afternoon and taken into custody.

Detectives also raided a Casula home, in Sydney's southwest, seizing a firearm, illicit drugs and cash.

Police said they had been

surveilling the man for several weeks. The man was being questioned by police over alleged drug dealing.

He was expected to be charged overnight and face court on Thursday. The strike force that carried out the arrest was formed after MacGill's alleged kidnapping.

Police would not confirm the man's links to the alleged incident. There is no suggestion he was involved.



Michelle Edge

## Senior public servant quits job

PATRICK JAMES

DEPARTMENT of Primary Industries and Regions SA chief executive Michelle Edge has stepped down from her position.

Ms Edge's departure was confirmed in a statement from Premier Steven Marshall on Wednesday, but it did not explain why she had left the position.

The statement credited her

response to South Australia's fruit fly outbreak and leadership of PIRSA through the Covid pandemic.

"I thank Mrs Edge for her service over the past two years, in which she has led the department through unprecedented times during the Covid-19 pandemic," Mr Marshall said.

Ms Edge's current deputy, Professor Mehdi Doroudi, will lead the department in a care-

taker role while the state government recruits a new chief executive.

Before being appointed to the position in April last year, Ms Edge was chief executive of an industry-government partnership organisation for Primary Industries New Zealand.

Prior to her role in New Zealand, she held various positions in the Victorian government, and led the Australian Meat Processor Corporation.