

# Faster action needed on ferry woes

Along with local board chairperson Cath Handley, Auckland Central MP Nikki Kaye is asking for heightened urgency on improving Fullers' ferry services. Ms Kaye says Auckland Transport has made it clear there's no technical barrier to Waiheke being included in integrated fares but it was "concerning" that a review into the Public Transport Operating Model (PTOM) could take at least 12 months to possibly two years to complete.



independent organisation to understand what this would cost Auckland for any ferry operator to service, if under the standard operating PTOM model. This is not an audit of Fullers360." Mr Horne says Fullers was open to the review of PTOM "which could include an alternative to exempt service status" and which should encourage investment

in wharf infrastructure from Auckland Council and Auckland Transport.

Ms Kaye is also requesting elderly and vulnerable people are prioritised and the delivery of a well-functioning locals' lane. In response to Ms Kaye's comment, Mr Horne told *Gulf News* the locals' lane does not operate in the winter season, except on public holidays.

"We're currently assessing the eligibility for the locals' lane and how to recognise Waiheke residents' travel needs, including prioritising boarding for the elderly and vulnerable. We're looking at peak travel times and how to manage the boarding process more pro-actively on the wharf." • *Sophie Boladeras*

"I have asked the mayor and minister to make this an urgent priority," says Ms Kaye.

"The exempt status needs to be lifted as soon as possible. Ideally, this would occur in conjunction with Fullers and a contract for services would also be negotiated. I understand Fullers are undertaking a PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers) audit, in my view, a company that is under intense scrutiny around its services should not be commissioning an audit of itself."

Fullers CEO Mike Horne says the ferry company is in commercial discussions with Auckland Transport regarding integrated ticketing and subsidies.

"We remain committed to providing solutions that benefit our customers and are also supportive of a sustainable integrated fare service," says Mr Horne.

"Fullers360 has commissioned an

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