

SPIRITS REPLACEMENT UPDATE

The new Spirit of Tasmania vessels will deliver significant benefit to Tasmania's visitor economy and the broader Tasmanian economy.

As TT Line fast tracks new berthing infrastructure for the Spirit of Tasmania replacement vessels, your frequently asked questions are answered below.



YOUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ANSWERED

What is happening?

Construction of Berth 3 in Devonport Port is underway, following expert advice that it is the most cost-effective and efficient option. Pile-driving works began in November.

How long will it take?

Berth 3 is expected to be completed by February 2027. All efforts will be focussed on bringing this date forward to October 2026, in time for the peak summer period.

What's happening with the existing vessels?

We have two well-maintained, functional ferries crossing Bass Strait each and every day – they will continue to operate as normal.

Where are the ships?

The new Spirit IV vessel has been relocated to Scotland temporarily, due to icy conditions, while work to identify short-term leasing options is underway. Spirit V is still under construction in Finland and is not due to be completed until mid-2025.

Are the ships going to stay in Scotland until 2027?

Spirit IV will remain in Scotland, temporarily, while we expedite work to identify potential leasing or chartering options.

When will we know if the Spirits will be leased?

We are working as quickly as possible. We expect to receive advice from a broker on potential arrangements within two months. We will then inform Tasmanians of next steps.

Why would we lease the vessels?

The new vessels are not made to sit still. We need to ensure they are in constant use, and by leasing the vessels, Tasmanians will also directly benefit financially, and avoid the need for vessel storage costs.

Should leasing opportunities not prove financially beneficial, TT-Line will seek a storage option in Tasmania. And, if this eventuates, we will ensure TasPorts does not charge TT-Line to store the vessels.

Won't the ships be second-hand if you lease them first?

Not at all. These are purpose-built ships for TT-Line and will serve Tasmanians and visitors alike for decades to come. Any potential lease arrangements will be carefully managed.

Why can't they be brought back to Tasmania? Isn't that cheaper?

Temporarily berthing Spirit IV in Scotland gives us the best opportunity to secure a charter and access the best markets, delivering maximum financial benefit for Tasmanians. It would be a waste of taxpayer dollars to have the vessel brought to Hobart, only to return overseas for a potential lease. For Spirit IV to sail from Finland to Tasmania and back would take approximately three months and be at least three times more expensive.

What about local fit out?

We remain committed to supporting Tasmanian businesses to deliver the final fit out. Most of the local content has now been installed on Spirits IV and V in Finland with local businesses and employers already reaping the benefits. The finishing touches – such as artwork, mattresses and blankets - have already been purchased from Tasmanian businesses, and the timing of the final installation will be determined following any leasing arrangements that are made.

Why can't they dock in Hobart or Burnie? Cruise ships do.

These ports do not have the sophisticated ramping infrastructure for cars and caravans.

Have these delays caused a reduction in tourism?

No. The two existing vessels continue to operate, with additional sailings being added to meet demand. Between now and May 2025, 502 sailings are scheduled, including 138 day sailings. And, with 89 per cent of visitors entering Tasmania via air, we are doing everything we can to back in our aviation industry through our tourism and hospitality support package.

How many additional sailings have you scheduled? Is it enough?

We've already scheduled an extra 28 sailings on the current Spirits during 2025. This is on top of the additional sailings that TT-Line schedules annually in response to customer demand with 502 sailings scheduled between now and May 2025. We are working closely with our tourism and freight sectors to understand their needs and are firmly committed to bring additional capacity on where there is demand.

Can I get my caravan on?

As a result of the additional sailings, plus TT-Line's work to rearrange its vehicle decks to optimise the availability of high space from January to April 2025, more than 300 high space vehicles have been cleared from the waitlist. We know there is demand for people travelling with caravans and high vehicles, and these actions are helping to boost patronage and increase capacity for freight.

Who is responsible for the project?

TT-Line is responsible for delivering the Berth 3 project.

Have TT-line and TasPorts been held responsible?

We have announced sweeping reforms of Government businesses to ensure they take a Team Tasmania approach. The plan proposes a merger of TT-Line, TasPorts and TasRail, uniting our key transport and logistics under a single operation. The Government Business Governance Reform - Draft Plan is available at www.treasury.tas.gov.au/

Keep up to date with the latest information about the Berth 3 Infrastructure project, the new vessels and support for the tourism and hospitality industry, by visiting www.infrastructure.tas.gov.au/

