

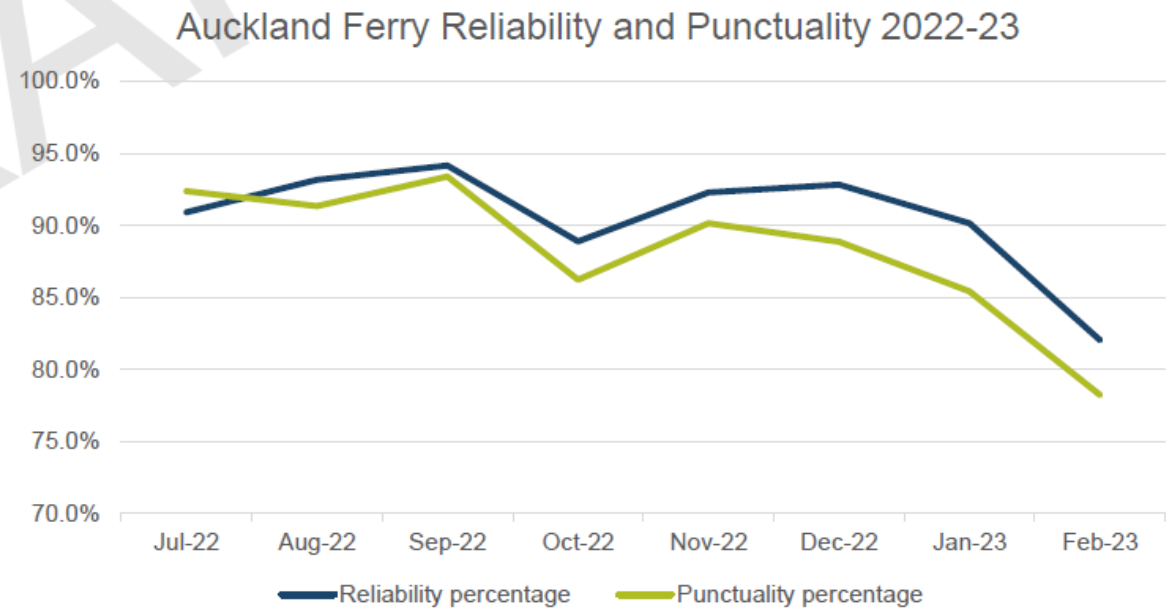
Auckland Ferries

A short-term plan to address service unreliability,
staff shortages and training pathways

Problem Statement and Context

The shortage of skilled staff has negatively impacted Auckland's ferry reliability. This has resulted in the loss of public confidence in public transport, patronage and opportunity.

- The ferry network in Auckland has experienced declines in service reliability and patronage since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ferry patronage is currently at 71 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.
- While patronage and reliability decreases from 2020 to 2021 can be attributed to COVID-19 lockdowns and disruptions, since 2022, patronage recovery has been hampered by unreliable ferry services. There have been frequent unplanned cancellations causing disruptions and loss of confidence for passengers.
- Auckland Transport and Waka Kotahi are co-investing in vessel refits and new vessels to renew the ageing ferry fleet.
- The unreliability has been caused by staff shortages due to staff exiting the workforce, lack of incentives to enter domestic training pathways and difficulties in recruiting staff from overseas
- A multi-stakeholder meeting with the Minister for Auckland/ of Transport took place in March 2023 to discuss an action plan to support ferry reliability
- This action plan sets out the core issues affecting the delivery of ferry services in Auckland and the immediate short-term response (0 to 2 years) that should be implemented by all stakeholders to turn around the existing decline in reliability and patronage.



Our focus	Issue	Immediate action (0 to 2 years)	Owner
Our people			
Recruitment	Short-term overseas recruitment is difficult due to barriers related to qualification recognition and immigration settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a package of measures that could further expedite the certification of seafarers seeking to work on Auckland Ferries (including those with overseas qualifications) Ship master/ skipper and deckhands added to transport sector agreement, providing a time limited pathway to residency (further details in May 2023) Greater flexibility in immigration settings 	Maritime NZ MBIE
Retention	Staff attrition due to unattractive working conditions – mixture of long shifts and lack of time off, which are exacerbated by staff shortages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop more attractive and flexible rostering to enable work-life balance, enhance well-being and staff engagement Create time to develop people and their career pathways 	All ferry operators
Education and Training	Long-term staff development hampered by unclear domestic training and career development pathways as well as insufficient resource for on-the-job training for the varied roles in the ferry industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore with the maritime schools, Te Pūkenga, operators and unions how maritime training might be improved, made more attractive for a wider variety of potential NZ seafarers and better aligned with certification requirements; so that the number of New Zealanders seeking access to the sector is increased Industry-wide response to recruit domestically and develop clear and rewarding training pathways for stable careers Rationalise service offering initially to free up staff and vessels to enable training, development and upskilling of existing staff On completion of immigration, training/qualification and remuneration interventions, further rationalise network on a temporary basis to deliver accelerated training programme 	Maritime NZ All ferry operators (supported by AT and maritime sector)
Our service			
Scheduling	Current crew numbers are unable to deliver all timetabled service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimise the network to align advertised services with available resources, including temporarily suspending services and reallocating crew and vessels to alternative peak and off-peak services with the greatest customer demand For any changes, communication and marketing plan to communicate service changes including alternative public transport options. Once supply is stabilised, consider marketing additional off-peak services targeting routes with highest patronage opportunity. 	AT (supported by operators and Waka Kotahi)