

Operational Panui June 2026

Kia ora,

We are fast approaching the three-month period where Interislander will be operating one ship on Cook Strait, and our teams have been working hard to ensure things run as smoothly as possible.

As you'll be aware, freight capacity will be reduced over this time.

We know this will require careful planning across the freight sector, and we appreciate your ongoing cooperation and flexibility as we work together to keep freight moving across Cook Strait.

Please see the information below to help guide your planning over this period.

Timetable (22 June – 26 September)

- Kaiārahi wet dock: Monday 22 June – Monday 13 July 2026
- Kaitaki dry dock: Saturday 18 July – Saturday 26 September 2026

There will be four daily sailings as below.

During the one ship period our layby schedule will be fortnightly rather than weekly. Every second Monday the operating ship will be off the run between 03:30am and 09:30am as per the table below.

Wellington-Picton					Picton-Wellington				
	Depart	Arrive	Depart	Arrive		Depart	Arrive	Depart	Arrive
Mon	330	700	1530	1900	Mon	930	1300	2130	100
Tues	330	700	1530	1900	Tues	930	1300	2130	100
Wed	330	700	1530	1900	Wed	930	1300	2130	100
Thur	330	700	1530	1900	Thur	930	1300	2130	100
Fri	330	700	1530	1900	Fri	930	1300	2130	100
Sat	330	700	1530	1900	Sat	930	1300	2130	100
Sun	330	700	1530	1900	Sun	930	1300	2130	100
Mon	Layby	700	1530	1900	Mon	Layby	1300	2130	100
Tues	330	700	1530	1900	Tues	930	1300	2130	100
Wed	330	700	1530	1900	Wed	930	1300	2130	100
Thur	330	700	1530	1900	Thur	930	1300	2130	100
Fri	330	700	1530	1900	Fri	930	1300	2130	100
Sat	330	700	1530	1900	Sat	930	1300	2130	100
Sun	330	700	1530	1900	Sun	930	1300	2130	100

What this means for your bookings

- Freight capacity has been allocated based on demand, with priority given to contracted and time-critical freight.
- If you do not already have confirmed forward bookings, availability will be very limited.
- We highlight that all freight must have a confirmed booking before arrival at our terminals.



Some friendly reminders of what you need to do

Book early

Please review your forward freight requirements now and ensure all critical shipments are booked in advance.

Provide accurate booking details

- Correct vehicle type, dimensions (length/height), and load information are essential.
- Changes after booking may mean we can't accommodate your load due to space constraints and/or the load plans on the day.

Cancel unused bookings early

If your plans change, please cancel as soon as possible so space can be reallocated to other customers.

Consider alternative options

Some customers may need to:

- Adjust travel days or run times
- Move non time-critical freight to alternative services, including KiwiRail's NZ Connect coastal shipping offering. Please see below for more information.

Booking rules during this period

- Unfortunately, we cannot take any same-day or turn-up bookings over this period or accept standby or waitlist vehicles
- Only confirmed bookings can be accepted.
- For KiwiRail Freight bookings all Interislander bookings during this period will be made via our KiwiRail Freight Contact team (not through our freight portal). Contact details are below.

These measures help ensure fair access for all freight customers.

Dangerous Goods (DG) requirements

Most DG can be accommodated; however, passenger-limiting DG is restricted to specific sailings only:

- 03:30 – Wellington to Picton
- 21:30 – Picton to Wellington

DG cannot be accepted on non-designated sailings, so please ensure your bookings are aligned with the correct sailings.



What we're doing

During the one ship period our layby schedule will be fortnightly rather than weekly. Every second Monday the operating ship will be off the run for the 3:30am and 9:30am sailings.

We're adding additional resources, including extra tug operations, to support efficient turnarounds and help keep sailings running smoothly.

Managing service disruptions

If a disruption occurs, our teams will be available to support you and help manage any impacts. We've also strengthened and tested our business continuity plans for this period, ensuring we can respond quickly, prioritise effectively, and support you through any disruption.

With a single vessel in operation, disruptions (such as weather or mechanical) may have a greater effect than usual, and recovery could take several days. If a sailing is cancelled, your booking will also be cancelled, and we'll work with you to secure the next available option.

As always, in the event of a disruption, essential freight such as livestock and refrigerated goods will be prioritised along with contracted customer commitments. We've also moderated passenger capacity to help keep freight moving.

Weather assessments

If weather impacts the schedule, our preference is to continue operating and gradually recover rather than cancel sailings, as this typically reduces overall disruption.

We understand delays can still affect your operations, and we'll keep you informed and work closely with you on any changes.

Safety will always guide our operations, and we'll carefully assess conditions using a range of real-time information, including MetService and NIWA forecasts, marine guidance, and on-the-water observations from our crews.

We look at conditions across the Cook Strait, not just a single data point, so there may be times when reported conditions appear within limits, but other areas are more challenging. This broader view helps ensure safe and reliable operations.



Our new NZ Connect product



COASTAL CONNECTION FOR NEW ZEALAND FREIGHT



Linking Auckland and Christchurch
with a reliable weekly coastal
container service

NZ Connect is a weekly coastal shipping solution designed to move domestic freight efficiently between the North and South Islands.

By combining rail, port and coastal shipping, KiwiRail provides a seamless container service between Auckland and Christchurch, helping businesses maintain reliable supply chain connections across New Zealand.

Connecting key freight hubs by rail and sea.



HOW IT WORKS

A simple end to end coastal freight solution



WHY NZ CONNECT?

- Reliable inter-island freight connection
- Integrated rail and coastal shipping solution
- Seamless connection between key North and South Island freight hubs
- Supports domestic supply chains
- Weekly service with Friday cut-off
- 7–9 day end-to-end transit time
- Fully managed by KiwiRail
- Booking and billing managed through KiwiRail

SERVICE DETAILS

Origin and destination

Auckland (Southdown) → Christchurch (Middleton)

Equipment

20ft and 40ft HC containers

Collection

Customer to arrange collection from Middleton Container Terminal

SERVICE SCHEDULE

Cut-off

Friday 12:00pm

Arrives Port of Auckland

Tuesday 7:00am

Arrives Lyttelton

Friday 7:00am

Transit time

7–9 days

EXTENDED SERVICE OPTIONS

Terminal handling

Auckland and Christchurch container support

TERMINAL LOCATIONS

Auckland

Southdown Container Terminal

Christchurch

Middleton Container Terminal

Book your NZ Connect shipment

Talk to the KiwiRail Freight team for bookings and pricing

Email: Customer.Success@kiwirail.co.nz

KiwiRail Freight



Working with you

We recognise the impact this period may have on your operations and want to thank you for your continued support, planning, and flexibility. This maintenance has been carefully scheduled during the lower-demand winter season to help minimise disruption as much as possible.

This work is essential to maintaining the safety, reliability, and performance of our fleet through to the arrival of the new ferries in 2029.

Our Customer Delivery team will be working hard to support you. If you need support managing your bookings, please contact the KiwiRail Freight team:

Phone: **0800 351 351**, available **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**.

Email: domestic@kiwirail.co.nz or imex@kiwirail.co.nz

Interislander Commercial Vehicle (CV) and Passenger call centre:

Phone: **0800 660 670**

7:30am – 7:30pm, Monday to Friday

8.30am – 2.30pm Saturdays and public holidays

Email: freight@interislander.co.nz

Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding when working with our teams.

Ngā mihi nui,

KiwiRail Freight Team.

