



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

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Press Statement

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The Penang Port has to urgently review its ferry schedule

The Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) urges the Penang Port (PP) to review its current Penang-Butterworth ferry service schedule because its two-hour intervals between trips will cause inconvenience to pedestrian commuters in particular. PP's ferry service schedule is published in its website at <https://www.penangport.com.my/services/ferry-services/schedule>

Pedestrian commuters are often helpless, dependent on the ferry to take them across the channel because likely that they may not have their own transport and taking a taxi across the bridge is expensive.

PP also has to consider those with interconnecting transport to catch or having time-sensitive appointments to meet such as hospital appointments. It cannot expect pedestrian commuters to plan their trip around the ferry schedule because a two-hour interval is just too long, wasting commuters' time.

Twenty minutes to half-hour intervals are more reasonable. Two-hour intervals in schedule do not facilitate transport connectivity as people may have time-critical appointments to meet.

With the life in Penang almost normalised when it transited into Phase 4 of the National Recovery Plan (NRP), the frequency of ferry services should be improved.

If PP thinks that the two-hour intervals are needed to reduce operational cost, then it is wrong because public transport operation should never be considered as a money-making venture. It is part of Penang Port's corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Perhaps PP has to learn from the train service in Hokkaido, Japan, which continued to provide service to the underused and remote Kyu-Shirataki train station several times a day just to send one high-school girl to class and back. It operated until the lone passenger graduated.

Even if PP cannot emulate the Hokkaido train service, it should at least consider the needs of pedestrian commuters to operate a more efficient schedule. It cannot expect a passenger arriving at Pangkalan Sultan Abdul Halim in Butterworth after 11am to wait at the ferry terminal until 1pm to get the next ferry to Penang.

We would like to make another point: the ferry schedule appeared on PP's website. Unless a person checks the website, it is easy to assume that the ferry service is operated on a 20-minute to 30-minute basis. Moreover, the ferry service frequency is drastically reduced on public holidays and weekends.

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