NEW FERRY TRIAL FOR TIWI RESIDENTS

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Tiwi residents will soon be able travel to and from Darwin by ferry with a new extended trial service starting next month.

Chief Minister Adam Giles has welcomed new operators, SeaLink NT, who will provide a premium level of service for Tiwi residents.

“SeaLink NT is the new local NT branch of the SeaLink Travel Group, which operates tourism and ferry services in three Australian states with more than 20 vessels and 600 staff,” Mr Giles said.

“This is a big win for Tiwi residents providing regular services between Darwin and the Tiwi Islands and delivers on another Country Liberals election commitment.

“The 12 month trial of the Tiwi Ferry service will cater for up to 160 passengers on each trip and will start on 19 September.

The Tiwi Ferry will travel on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. An adult return fare will cost $80, a concession return fare is $60 and child return fare $40 and children under four years old will be free.

“These tickets are half the price of the fares under the 2012 Labor trial.

The purpose of the 12 month trial is to enable the operator and the Government to properly assess the usage of the service over both the wet and dry seasons.

Member for Arafura, Francis Xavier, said the he was excited to see a longer term trial in place.

“A trial run by Labor in 2012 was too short and did not give a clear indication of the viability of the service. We want to make sure this trial is done correctly and efficiently.

SeaLink NT won the Tiwi contract after going through a formal Expressions of Interest process that was advertised earlier this year.

“The company was also recently chosen to take-over the Mandorah Ferry service and we welcome the arrival of this experienced new operator in Territory waters,” Mr Giles said.

“SeaLink has a strong record of providing tourism focused ferry services in Queensland and South Australia and is keen to invest in tourism in the NT.”

The Pacific Cat is a 22.5 metre vessel with three air-conditioned levels. It is currently part of a fleet that runs between Townsville, Palm and Magnetic Islands in Queensland.

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