GREG visit of the Spirit of Tasmania Terminal at Corio Quay, 25 May 2023

The TT-Line Company Pty Ltd trading as Spirit of Tasmania is a government business enterprise wholly owned by the Tasmanian Government. For those interested in the Company's history, the online site https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spirit_of_Tasmania is well worth visiting.

A pre-arranged and long-awaited visit of the Spirit of Tasmania ferry terminal was attended by twenty-three enthusiastic visitors made up mostly of GREG members and including partners, and non-members.

Our guides were the Manager Port Operations, Justin Kearney, who welcomed us and gave us a view of the important sights, Chief Operating Officer, John McGrath, who gave us an overview of the three initiatives that the Spirit of Tasmania organisation has embarked upon, and Technical Manager, David Crane, who filled us in on the technical details.

Like most organisations these days, security is taken seriously and this tour was no exception as the terminal involves mass public transport on a single means of transport, viz, a ferry. Accordingly, entry requirements are the same as those used at major airports. After each of us provided a means of identification, we were asked as a group the standard questions about declaring the carriage of specific goods before passing through security screening. The same level of scanning applies for all vehicles before boarding.

Once inside the Terminal at the passenger lounge, Justin briefly explained the major advantages of the site over Port Melbourne which are the availability of space and the opportunity to build upon a greenfield site. This allowed the facility to be designed according to the requirements of the current two ferries and the two larger new ones that are expected by late 2024. One major advantage of the new site is that the parking of passenger vehicles and trucks can be achieved on-site, allowing passengers the opportunity to move indoors to the passenger lounge or visit Geelong, and trucks to leave their trailers to be loaded independently. Moving upstairs, Justin invited us to view the ferry crew quarters which are made available to those needing accommodation either side of their shift.

We were then shown through the office and works areas to the Conference room. This provided an opportunity for us all to hear more about the terminal and its operations as well as ask questions. John spoke about the three major undertakings that TT-Line is in the process of delivering, namely, the new Corio Quay Terminal, the two new vessels, and the redevelopment of the Devonport Terminal.

An interesting point on the docking of the ferries is the ability to achieve docking without the aid of tug boats, provided that the weather conditions are not at their worst. Most of us discussed between ourselves whether the wharf mounted elaborate equipment constraining the vessel against the wharf were electro-magnetic or suction. John explained

that this method of docking is new to the operators and is being installed at Devonport also. It involves manoeuvring the vessel to its forward position relative to the wharf while being a couple of metres out. The perpendicular sliding arm structures fixed to the wharf have end suction pads attached. When the vessel is in the correct position, the arms are extended out to the vessel until the pads contact the vessel's hull. Suction is then applied to the pads and the arms slowly retracted to bring the vessel to the wharf. Currently, the vessel is then secured with mooring ropes, however these ropes may become redundant in the future. The captains and their crew are still in the familiarisation stage of the process and once all procedures are mastered, it is likely that docking will be achieved without the aid of tug boats or physically roping the vessel to the wharf which will save a considerable amount of time and money. Minor structural modifications have been made to the hulls of the vessels where the suction pads are applied. John also briefed us on the advantages of the Corio site, emphasising the advantage from a traffic management point of view for both the travellers and the ferry operations. Discussion continued over varying aspects of the Corio site and the works in progress for the redevelopment of the Devonport terminal. John and David then spoke about the two new vessels specifically designed and currently being built in Finland to meet TT-Lines requirements. These new vessels will be Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) powered in the interest of being as environmentally friendly as possible. John advised that an opportunity to look over the new vessels before they go into operation will be made for the public and that it may be possibly for another GREG tour of them including inspecting the engine room.

At the conclusion of the Q&A session, we moved back downstairs to the passenger lounge to enjoy a wide variety of finger food while watching the ferry reverse out of the dock under its own power and turn around before heading out of Corio Bay.

It was agreed by all that the tour had been a great success and John and Justin were thanked for the effort that the Spirit of Tasmania staff had gone to in making us welcome.

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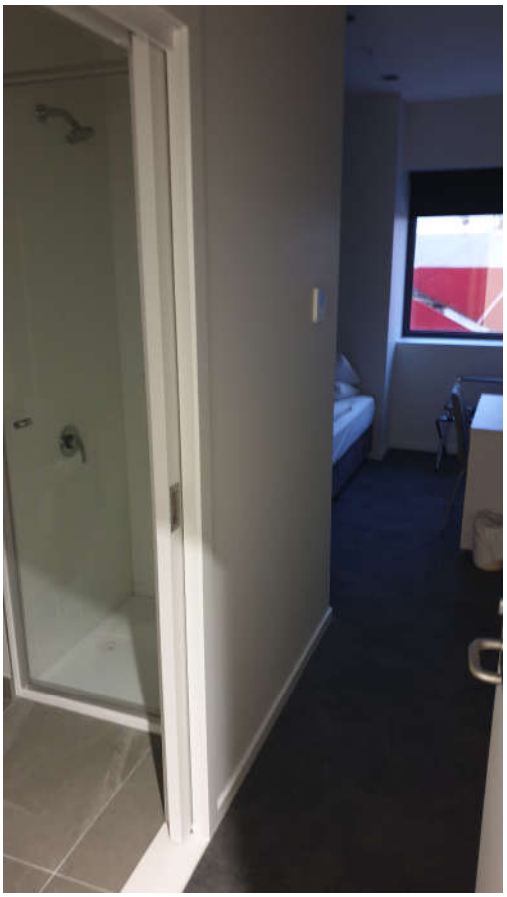

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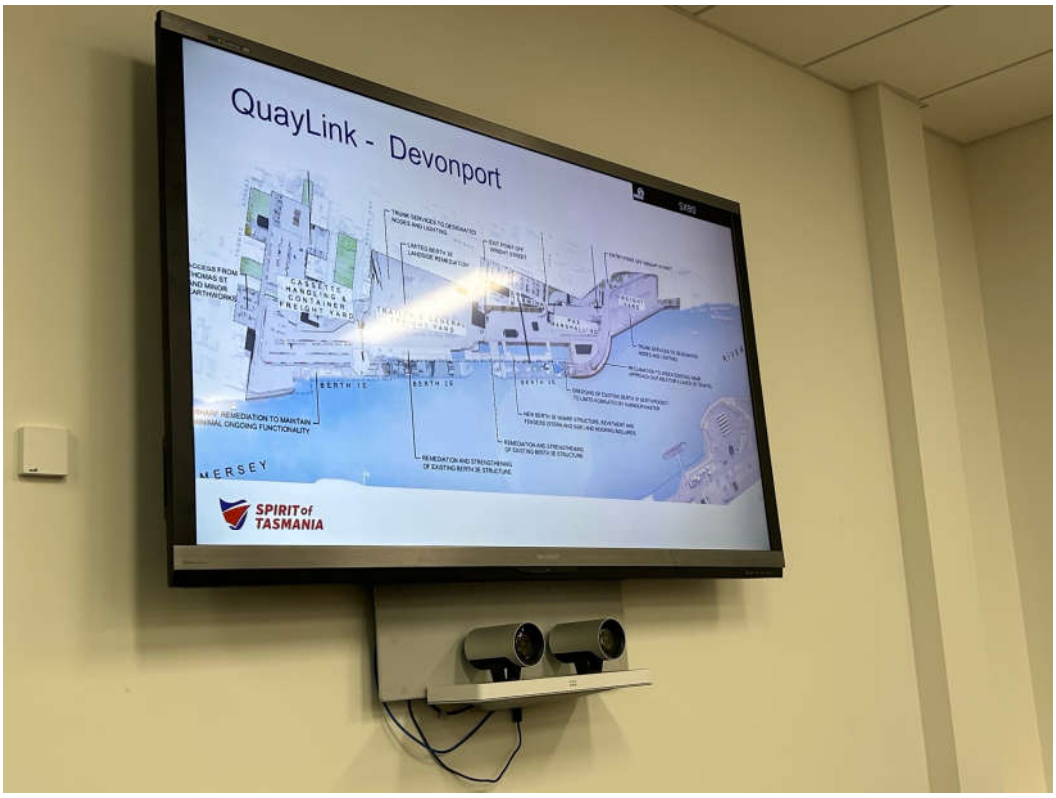
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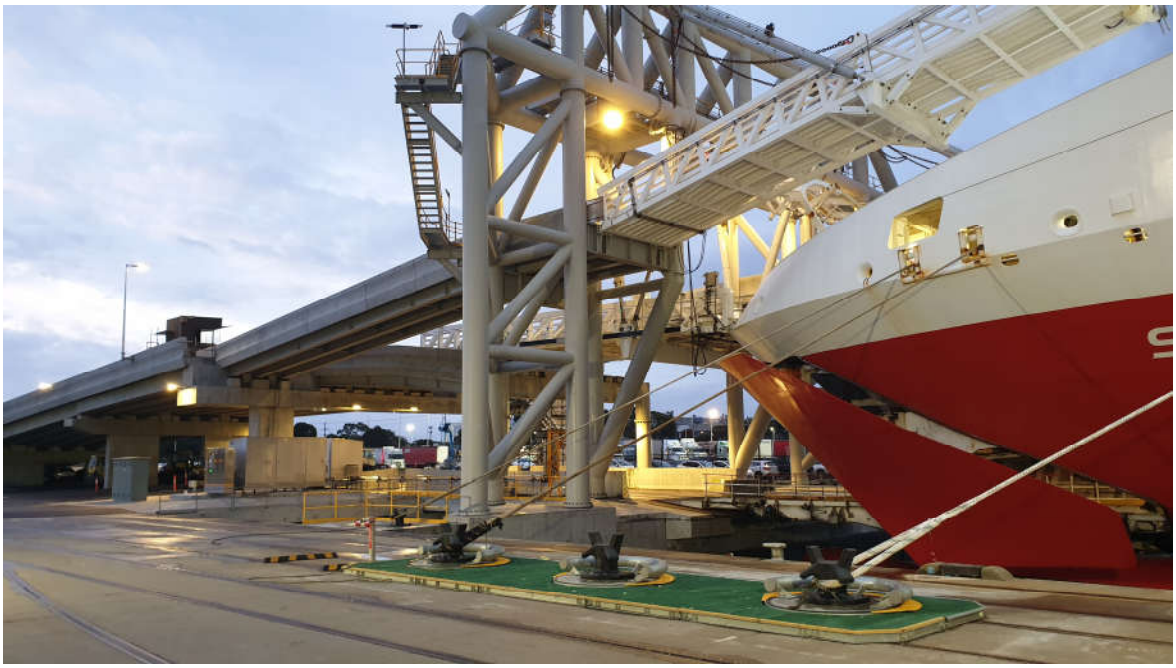

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