

Audit scope

Delivery of MV Glen Sannox and MV Glen Rosa

AUDITOR GENERAL 

Prepared by Audit Scotland
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Background

In 2015, Caledonian Maritime Assets Limited (CMAL)¹, awarded Ferguson Marine Engineering Limited (FMEL) a contract to design and build two new ferries. They would replace aging vessels on the Clyde and Hebrides network and their anticipated benefits were improved reliability, increased capacity, and reduced carbon emissions and fuel costs.

The vessels were expected to be completed in May 2018 and July 2018, at a combined fixed price of £97 million.

In December 2019, the Scottish Government brought FMEL into public ownership and formed a new organisation – Ferguson Marine

(Port Glasgow) Limited (FMPG) – to complete the vessels.

In 2022, the Auditor General for Scotland (AGS) [reported](#) that multiple failings had led to delays and cost increases, and that significant challenges at FMPG needed to be addressed to deliver the vessels. The report led to substantial scrutiny by the Scottish Parliament Public Audit Committee in 2022 and 2023. The first vessel, MV Glen Sannox was delivered to CMAL in November 2024, six and a half years later than planned. It began sailing from Troon to Brodick on Arran in January 2025. The second ferry, MV Glen Rosa is currently due to be delivered in Summer 2026. The last forecast estimated that the cost to complete both vessels, in addition to what was spent before the yard was nationalised, will now reach £335 million.

¹ CMAL is a Scottish Government public corporation that owns ferry, harbour and infrastructure assets serving the West Coast of Scotland.

Why this audit is important

There is considerable public interest in the delivery of the two vessels. The delays have affected capacity and reliability on the West Coast ferry network, which has negatively affected island communities who rely on ferries to access goods and services.

The AGS has committed to reporting further on the delivery of the two vessels following their completion.

The audit is important to independently assess the Scottish Government and its partners' response to the challenges to delivering the vessels. The audit will draw lessons for the public sector when it takes on complex or commercial projects.

What this audit will look at

The overall aim of this audit is to assess:

Since 2022, how well have the Scottish Government and its partners responded to the challenges in delivering the MV Glen Sannox and MV Glen Rosa and is there evidence that they have learnt lessons.

It will focus on answering three main audit questions:

- How has delivery of the vessels progressed since the AGS' last report?
- What changes have the Scottish Government, and its partners, made to better manage the vessel delivery since the AGS' last report and how effective have these changes been?
- To what extent have the vessels met their intended objectives and have lessons been learnt from their delivery?

It will provide an independent account of the progress with the delivery of the vessels since 2022. Including their costs; changes made by

the Scottish Government and its partners to improve delivery; and whether the new vessels met their initial objectives.

This audit sits alongside the wider annual audit activity of the FMPG, Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government consolidated accounts. For more details, please see our [work programme](#).

Some areas are outside the scope of this audit. These are:

- A detailed account of spending by FMEL before it was nationalised to form FMPG. An independent analysis of this spending has been commissioned by the Scottish Government. The AGS has agreed to report separately to the Public Audit Committee on this work.
- The procurement of the ferries and the nationalisation of FMEL, which have already received significant scrutiny.
- FMPG and its group's ability to operate as a going concern, as well as its longer-term financial sustainability, will be considered as part of the annual audit.
- The ongoing support of FMPG by the Scottish Government following completion of MV Glen Rosa. This will be considered as part of the Scottish Government's annual audit.
- The governance structure for ferry delivery in Scotland. This has already been considered by Transport Scotland as part of its [Project Neptune review](#) and by the Scottish Parliament Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on its [report](#) on ferry services.
- Judgements on the technical aspects of shipbuilding decisions, which is beyond the remit of our work.

How we will carry out this audit

We will conduct interviews with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, CMAL, FMPG, the ferry operator CalMac and representatives from the bodies responsible for the certification of the vessels. We will also carry out desk-based research, including document reviews and analysis of financial and performance data.

What we want to happen as a result

We want the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland, CMAL and FMPG to learn from the challenges of delivering of MV Glen Sannox and Glen Rosa. These lessons will apply beyond ferry procurement to complex projects or commercial operations.

Timetable

We plan to publish the report on behalf of the Auditor General after the MV Glen Rosa is handed over. The publication date will remain under review as the build progresses.

Following publication, the Auditor General will present our findings to the Scottish Parliament's Public Audit Committee.

Contact

If you have questions about this audit, please contact our communications team on info@audit-scotland.gov.uk.

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