

History of the

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Community Group

2007 – 2023



Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group
Bellarine Ferry and Portarlington Safe Harbour Project

This document records what a small group of volunteers were able to influence and achieve.

In 2007, none of the volunteers thought they were putting their hand up for a project that would take over 25 years to see through.

The project team, consisting mainly of retirees, persevered until

- the Victorian State Government committed to and then built a safe harbour
- a daily ferry service was operating between Portarlington and Melbourne, and
- pedestrian safety and amenity to and from the ferry was in place.

In the beginning there were two project teams, one for a safe harbour and one for a daily commuter ferry but in time the Ferry Group assumed the responsibility for both projects.

The safe harbour was a major infrastructure development in Portarlington. It provides a [safe haven](#) for anyone caught out in bad weather on Port Philip plus secure and extra berths for our aquaculture industry – Portarlington is the mussel capital of Australia. It was also essential so that there was a safe and secure berth for a commuter ferry.

The ferry operates from Portarlington to Docklands and provides an excellent mode of transport to Melbourne's CBD. It also opens up employment and educational opportunities for everyone living on the Bellarine Peninsula. It's expected more families will choose to live in the peninsula's rural districts and towns because the ferry makes it so easy to commute – raise a family in the country and work in the city.

take a step back in time and follow our journey

Follow our story

Start at the beginning or pick a year that interests you

[In the beginning](#)

[A ferry needs a safe harbour](#)

[Contact us](#)

Year

[Before 1880](#)

[1880-1938](#)

[1888](#)

[1991](#)

[1993](#)

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[2011](#)

[2012](#)

[2013](#)

[2014](#)

[2015](#)

[2016](#)

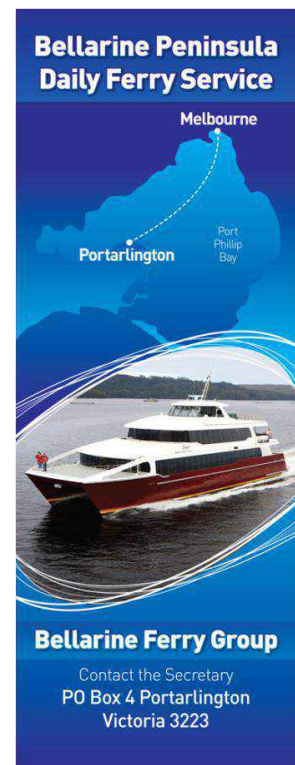
[2017](#)

[2018](#)

[2022](#)



Our volunteer community groups begin



First ferry trial results in a daily service to Melbourne

Stage 1 of the Portarlington Safe Harbour is officially launched

Finish

In the beginning ...

The origin of our volunteer community group

In 2006, the Department of Planning and Community Development funded 19 communities of less than 5,000 people for four years. The purpose was to engage residents to identify and work on local priorities, reinforce local networks and advance local skills, knowledge and resources.

Portarlington was identified as a town to have a Community Building Initiative Project.

Early 2007, a community opportunity workshop attended by 200 residents identified over 100 ideas that were narrowed to five key priorities.

The top two priority projects were:

Bellarine Ferry Project

Aim: To have a commuter ferry operating between the Bellarine and Melbourne.

Portarlington Safe Harbour Project

Aims: to support the development of a safe harbour in conjunction with Parks Victoria; keep the community informed of the status of the project and ensure Parks Victoria is accurately informed of community feedback. Residents wished to have targeted community input into the Parks Victoria multi-million dollar development.



Hon Peter Batchelor , Minister for Community Development and John Turner, Chair, Portarlington Community Building Initiative

FROM THE MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, October 4, 2007

PORTARLINGTON COMMUNITY PLANS GET FUNDING BOOST

Extract

Plans to revitalise Portarlington are a step closer to reality, thanks to funding now available for projects linked to the Victorian Government's Community Building Initiative (CBI).

Visiting Portarlington today, the Minister for Community Development, Peter Batchelor, launched the Macpherson Smith Community Alliance, a partnership between the Victorian Government and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.

"The Alliance will provide grants to support projects identified as being important for the local community, allowing the CBI projects to move from the planning stage into action.

"Here in Portarlington, that funding could go towards improving local transport, establishing a neighbourhood house or upgrading the local harbour – the important thing is that the local community will set the priorities."

As a state government funded program, the auspice provided validity and leverage for projects with both government and commercial enterprises. Projects would not have advanced if solely based on volunteer resources.

As a result of the community's decision on what was most important; committees were formed to take these forward.

There was one committee for the ferry project and another for the safe harbour. Neither project could be achieved in four years so when State Government funding ceased, both committees came together as one to continue the case for a safe harbour and ferry service as both groups had common goals.

Continue

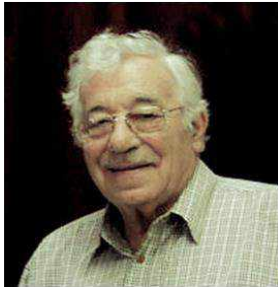
Project volunteers

Locals from diverse backgrounds put their hands up to support the Safe Harbour and the Bellarine Ferry Projects.

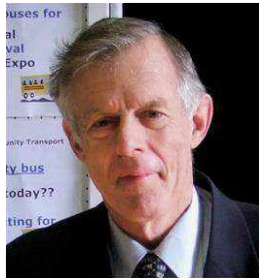
Most members didn't know each other and lasting friendships formed.

Volunteers contributed their expertise, skills, knowledge and enthusiasm.

Here are some of the original project volunteers.



Alec Finney



Alex Eagleson



Bob Gibb



Geoff Henderson



Graham Shirley



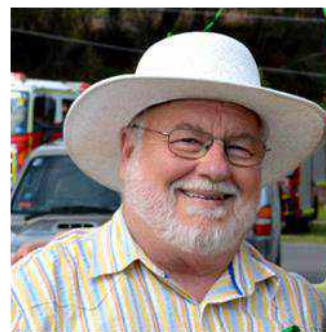
Grant Hutchins



Ian Faulkner

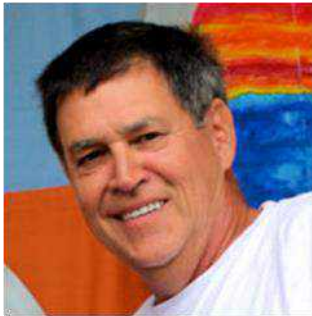


John Rae



Lindsay Ellis

Continue



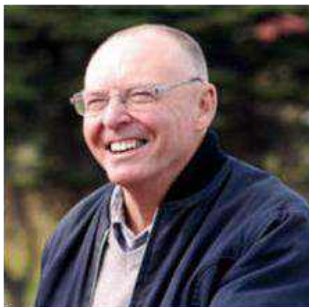
Richard Underwood



Ritchie Cork



Robin Roberts



Rob Fleming



Sarah Crisp

All volunteers contributed to the best of their ability.

Over time, volunteers had to withdraw due to health, family or work commitments or because they were involved in other community projects and something had to give.

All volunteers for the Bellarine Ferry and Safe Harbour projects are acknowledged and thanked for their willingness to contribute to bringing two massive projects to fruition.

John Rae and Geoff Henderson were key members from the very start and remained 'the face' of the projects supported by Rob Fleming, Sarah Crisp and in the latter editorial times by Elizabeth Turner.

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A ferry needs a safe harbour

Portarlington is a town with a long history of commercial and passenger transport to Melbourne, long before road and rail.

For nearly 100 years ferries transported goods and passengers between Melbourne and Portarlington until the SS Edina ceased service in 1938.

Having a daily commuter service between Portarlington and Melbourne was restoring the status quo as it were.

It was identified early-on that keeping the project in front of the community was very important. Steps were taken to build a solid relationship with the local press. The Ferry Group was seen to be a reliable source of information on the project.

Also the ferry group needed to gain a full understanding of the maritime business and in particular the ferry section. To this aim, a technical data source was set up which included experts such as InCat in Tasmania, Searoadferries at Queenscliff, a ferry captain familiar with Port Phillip, the Manly Ferry captain who later became the General Manager of Brisbane Ferries.

These links gave technical support whenever requested.

Committee members were invited to join the crew on ferries operating on Port Phillip and spend time in Brisbane going through Brisbane Ferries operation.

The Station Pier management spent a day going through all the potential issues of a ferry docking at Station Pier that would need to be addressed.

Over time, Victorian Government departments such as Parks Victoria, valued the Ferry Group's input to issues under consideration due to its local knowledge of the Bellarine.

Meetings were held with Geelong and Port Melbourne Councils, Victorian Government Ministers including the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition.

This role continued for the full 11 years of the Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry projects.

One of the major hurdles the group had to overcome was the Melbourne destination point. Given the government's reluctance to use the Yarra River, the only other option was Station Pier.

A large amount of time was taken up in meetings with various government departments, Port Melbourne council, Yarra Trams and Station Pier management.

The government indicated that it would support the use of Station Pier as it considered at the time the asset was not being fully utilised.

Car parking in Melbourne was a major issue so the use of the light rail system operating from Station Pier was a key advantage.

Station Pier was used by the Ferry Group as the Melbourne embarkation point right through until 2015 when the Government's view on the use of the Yarra River for ferries changed.

2007 wasn't the beginning...

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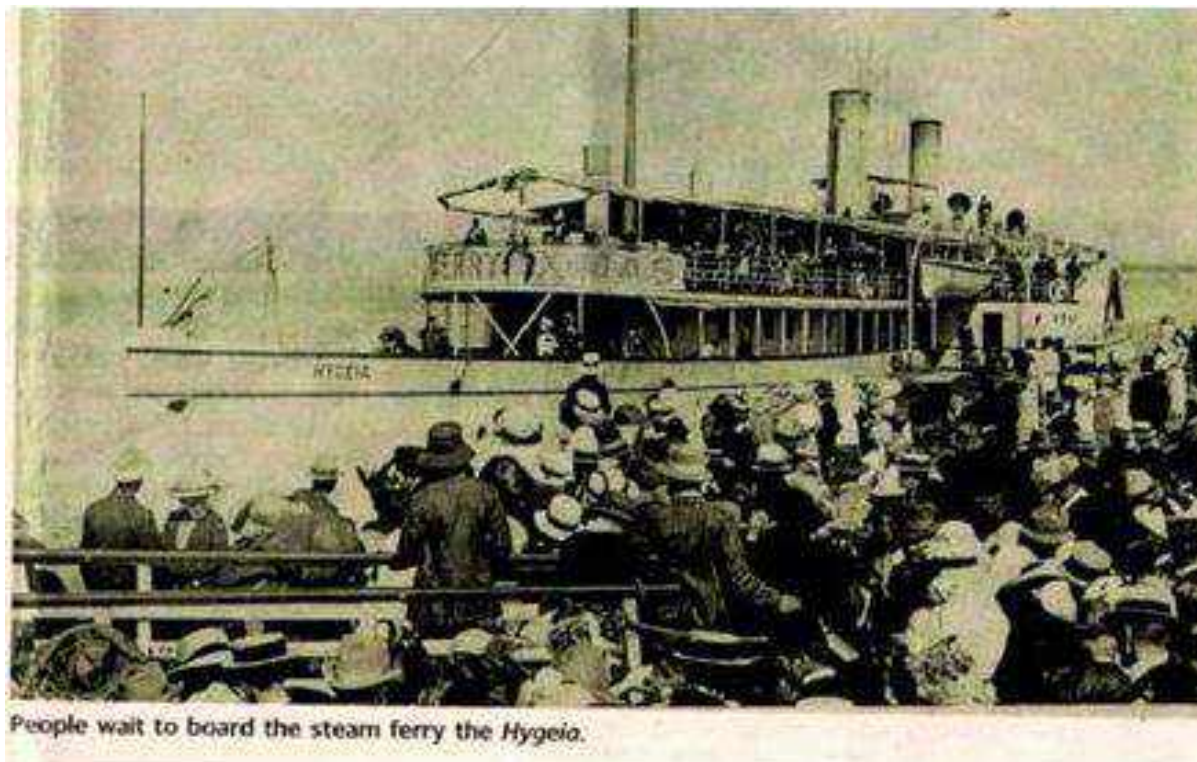
Before 1880

Ferries or [steamers transported](#) people from Portarlington to Geelong and Melbourne from as early as 1841.

The pier had tram tracks to take goods such as flour from the original Flour Mill to ships.

In the 1850's, Captain Edward Marriner transported Ti Tree from Portarlington to Williamstown as bakers liked Ti Tree for their ovens.

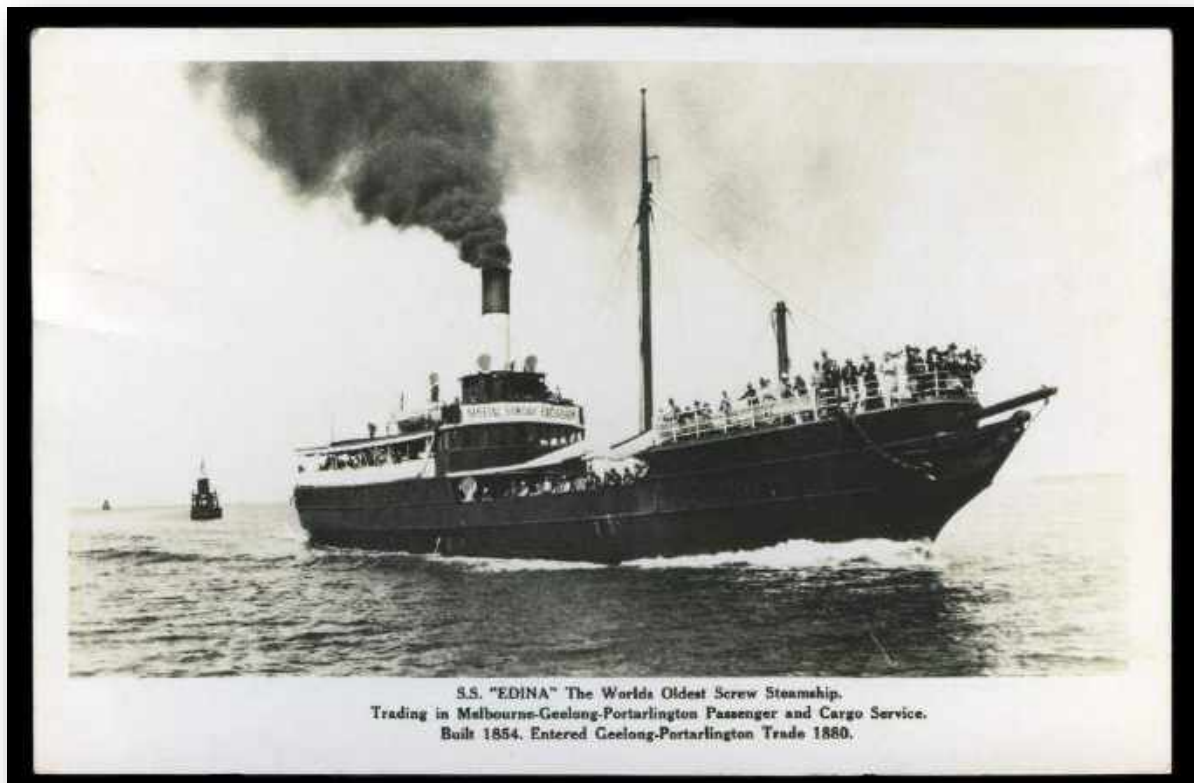
Tram tracks running on the pier to take produce to ships



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1880 - 1938

The [SS Edina](#) ferries passengers and cargo between Geelong, Portarlington and Melbourne.



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1888

The unofficial race for Cock of the Bay

The *Courier* and the *Ozone*

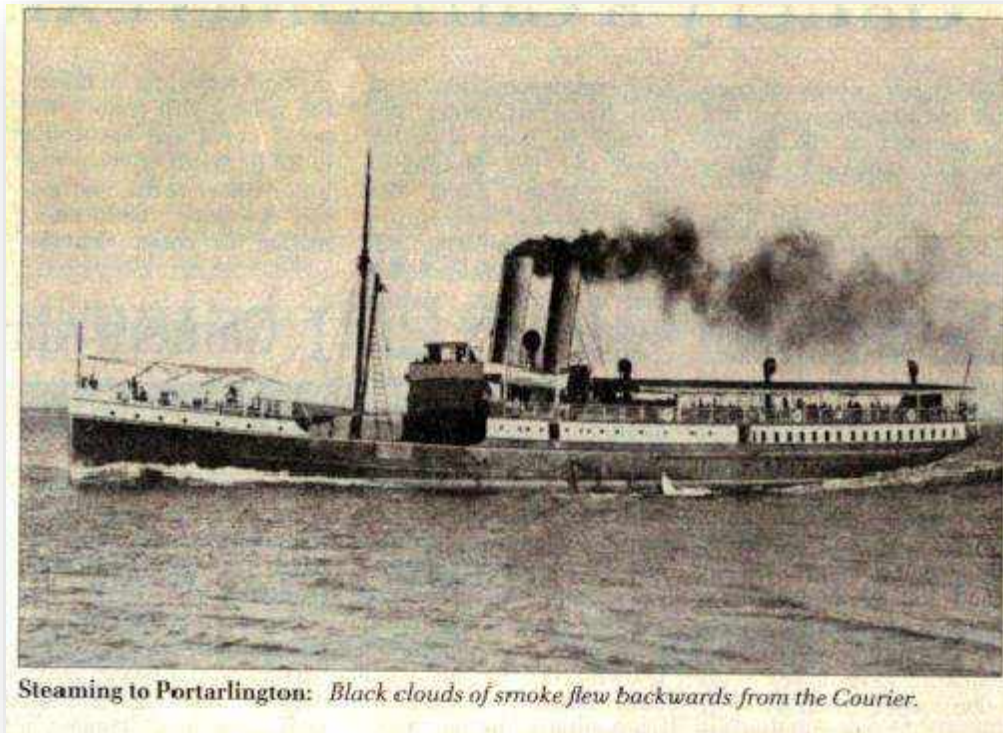
Two shipping companies said a race never took place ...

One company merely wanted to see what the *Ozone* could do at her best ...

There was only wild talk of wagering ...

There was one winner to take up the title Cock of the Bay

Read the gripping story [here](#)



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1991

May

A public meeting documented by the Portarlington Development Association noted: The meeting formed into three groups to discuss the following topics regarding the Portarlington Pier

- Confer with fishing groups
- Tourism aspect
- Safety aspect
- Historical value
- Necessity for survival of fishing industry

1993

May

A meeting was held with Melbourne Ports re upgrade works for the Portarlington Pier.

1995

May

Pier upgrade to commence.

1997

June

Upgrading of Pier (2nd Stage) – breakwater, lights, etc.

2000

May

PricewaterhouseCoopers were engaged to conduct a feasibility study which considered the opportunities and mechanisms required to develop a scheduled passenger and tourist ferry service on Port Phillip Bay. Portarlington was identified as a viable port for a service.

2002

The Victorian Coastal Strategy indentified Portarlington as a site for the development of a safe harbour facility.

In July Parks Victoria completed a preliminary planning exercise to develop a concept plan for a safe harbour at Portarlington for both recreational and commercial vessels in line with the Victorian Coastal Strategy.

Following this preliminary work and given the potential expansion of the aquaculture industry in nearby Pinnacle Channel, a feasibility study was deemed necessary to examine the preferred location for a safe harbour on the Bellarine Peninsula.

A principal aim of the study was to confirm whether Portarlington was the preferred site for development of such a facility when compared with other sites on the Bellarine Peninsula.

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2005
December

An exhaustive study was carried out by the Victorian Government through Parks Victoria after it was deemed necessary for a Safe Harbour site on the Bellarine Peninsula. The study utilised data gained from studies and reports from a range of Government departments developed over a number of years that were responsible for such areas as:

- Coastal strategies
- Marine aquaculture expansion
- Melbourne’s sustainable growth
- Regional tourism growth
- Environmental conservation
- Future strategies for commercial and recreational boating
- Protection of indigenous, post-settlement cultural heritage and geological sites of significance.

After review, four sites were selected to study in detail using 13 criteria.

The four sites were Geelong, St Leonards, Portarlinton and Queenscliff.

Connell Wagner Pty Ltd was engaged by Stratcorp Consulting to undertake an engineering, environmental, policy and planning assessment on a number of options. Their report formed part of an overall study carried out for Parks Victoria by Stratcorp Consulting for the preliminary analysis on the commercial and operational aspects of the development of a safe harbour facility on the Bellarine Peninsula.

The study’s major findings were:

- Portarlinton is a preferred location for the development of a safe harbour on the Bellarine Peninsula; and
- An estimated \$20-30 million is required to construct the safe boating facility dependant upon final configuration.

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www.cnw.wag.com



**Bellarine Peninsula Safe Harbour
Policy, Planning, Environment and
Engineering Feasibility Study**

30 September 2005
Reference: 5330 30
Revision: 1

Connell Wagner

BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT

Prepared for Parks Victoria



Final Report - Volume 2
December 2005

Prepared by Stratcorp Consulting Pty Ltd
Suite 2, 91, 93 and 95
Lawson Street, SAC, 3141
VIC 3141, AUSTRALIA
P: (03) 9637 2600
F: (03) 9637 2600
www.stratcorp.com.au
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stratCORP
CONSULTING
in conjunction with Birru
and Connell Wagner

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

Port Phillip is shallow in comparison to the ocean. In bad weather it is choppy rather than rolling waves.

This is inside the pier before the rock-walls were added to protect the harbour from rough seas.

The colour is at it was on the day several years ago when a storm carried dry soil from the Mallee during a drought. Everything was brown and very low visibility on and offshore



Outside the harbour is open to the elements



Images courtesy of Jude Oakley ©

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2006

The Labor State Government announced that a safe harbour would be built at Portarlington and that the development of the Safe Harbour Master plan by Parks Victoria would start immediately and would include full community consultation.

As a result of the Victorian Governments plans for a safe harbour to be built at Portarlington, a Melbourne developer contacted a group of Portarlington businessmen offering to provide funds for a feasibility study on the profitability of operating a ferry service based at Portarlington. As part of that study, a meeting was held with the Victorian Department of Transport. It was made clear at that meeting that the department would not support a ferry the size that was needed to operate on Port Phillip using the Yarra River.

The study did not proceed as the group believed the use of the Yarra River to Melbourne's CBD was a key factor in operating a ferry service on Port Phillip.

Local mussels bound for market



The pier can be very busy with a mix of commercial vehicles and pedestrians



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2007

February

Many technical reports were prepared to look at the complexities related to having a safe harbour in Port Phillip. Reports have covered coastal processes, heritage, costs, feasibility and much more.

Maunsell Australia Pty Ltd

**Portarlington Safe Harbour
Coastal Processes Investigation**



Report No. J538/R01

February 2007



June

As the existing Portarlington pier was in poor condition, \$1 million was spent in 2007-8 on short-term bridging work to extend the pier's life until 2012 to allow time for the new pier to be constructed. Even so, the pier had only a short-term life after the temporary repairs.



The pier structure was deteriorating to such a state that:

- mussel operators had to halve the size of the transport used on the pier to move their harvested mussels
- the local CFA unit was restricted on the size of water tankers they could move onto the pier in response to a fire on berthed vessels



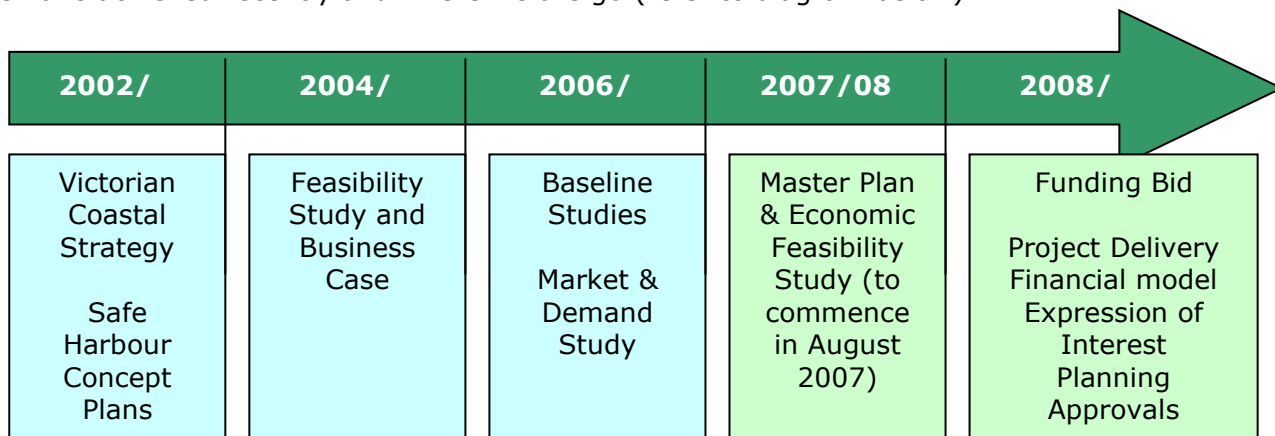
Geoff Henderson, Sarah Crisp, John Rae and Grant Hutchins meet to discuss a ferry service

2007 July

Extract from Parks Victoria **Portarlington Safe Harbour Community Bulletin, July 2007**

A key objective of the planning is to ensure that the redevelopment of the harbour is integrated with the foreshore reserve and township.

The bulletin is intended to provide a summary of: where we have come from, what we have achieved recently and where we are go (refer to diagram below).



The Master Plan will ensure the harbour redevelopment is integrated with the foreshore and township and addresses the site constraints identified in the baseline studies in more detail.

The Master Plan will be the blueprint for the future use of the harbour and adjoining foreshore incorporating the development of new, or refurbishment of existing, infrastructure for commercial and recreational boating, and supporting the local tourism industry within Portarlington. The Master Planning process will involve three main stages which are outlined in the diagram right.



September

As the Portarlington Community Building Initiative was a State Government funded initiative, Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Children and Minister for Aged Care received regular updates.

The September update included:

Portarlington Safe Harbour Project - The Portarlington Safe Harbour Group are working closely with Parks Victoria so as to be recognised as a local reference group. The group is developing a media strategy to engage the community through the period of community consultation and the development of the final master plan. In order to reflect broad community aspirations, the team encouraged residents to be part of the group

Passenger Ferry Project - The Ferry Group started work on the feasibility of running a daily ferry service to Melbourne from Portarlington. All the potential barriers to the project were listed such as car parking, fuelling, wastage disposal, impact on the environment, crewing etc. Each item was studied to ensure it was not a project stopper.

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2008

April

After lobbying by the Bellarine Ferry Group [Parks Victoria](#) confirm a ferry berth will be included in their draft Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan.

Whilst [not committing to a ferry service](#), including a berth in plans is essential.

May

With a small grant from the City of Greater Geelong, the ferry group could research the demand for a ferry. At the same time, the group decided to investigate interstate ferry services to identify what type of ferry would best meet travelling across the Bay. Article from the Bellarine Peninsula Independent.

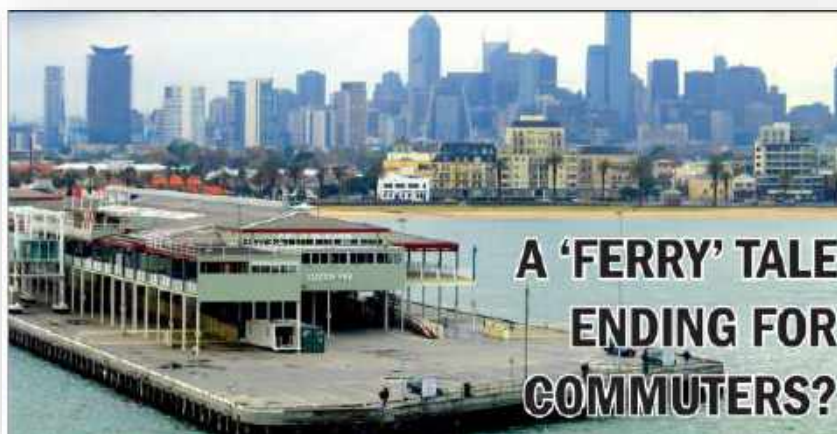


July

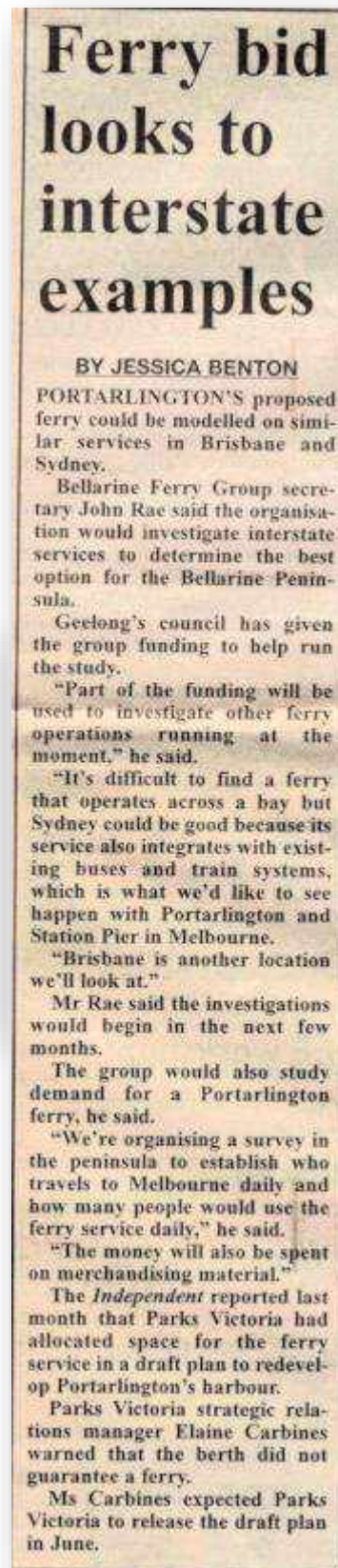
The group continued to promote the service and [The Age](#) article recognised our role as a reliable source for information.

August

The media was used to [promote a ferry service](#) to reach as many people as possible. Local and state media were very supportive.



The Portarlington Mussel Festival was an [ideal opportunity](#) to test-run a ferry.

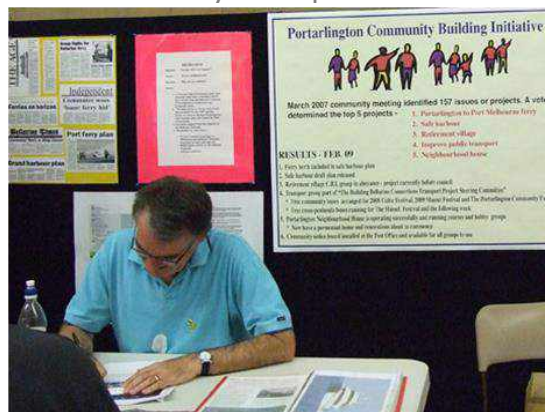


2009

February

The Portarlington Community Expo brought together over 60 community groups and was attended by 1,500 residents.

This was an ideal environment for the group to explain in person the ferry and safe harbour projects as many residents had only read about them before this.



Geoff Henderson

March

The Bellarine Ferry Group understands

- that Parks Victoria, after taking into account the public submissions, have finalised the Portarlington Safe Harbour plan
- the plan will now be costed and included in the state government's 2009-10 budget process
- while the group had not yet been shown the final plan they believed the preliminary plans covered most of the communities suggestions and concerns.
- If the position of the ferry terminals is correct the Bellarine Ferry Group fully supports the plan layout as shown

As a group, [we questioned the costings](#) for a ferry.

May

The final Portarlington Safe Harbour Plan has been presented for consideration to the Victorian Government.

July

The group reviewed the status of the Ferry Project with Mr Yehudi Blacher, Secretary, Department of Planning and Community Development. The Secretary visited Portarlington to be updated on Portarlington Community Building Initiative projects.



John Rae, Mr Yehudi Blacher, Secretary, Department of Planning and Community Development, Geoff Henderson

Updates were provided to Cr John Doull, Coryule Ward, City of Greater Geelong. Included:

- Portarlington Safe Harbour Project is awaiting the release of the Safe Harbour Master Plan by Parks Victoria. The future role and group activities will be clearer when the plan is released.
- Bellarine Ferry Group to commence presentations to community groups across the Bellarine outlining the vision for a commuter ferry service between Portarlington and Station Pier.

Presentations coincide with a City of Greater Geelong and state government funded consultation to advise on the viability of a daily commuter service. The process of building a new web site <http://bellarineferrygroup.yolasite.com/> was commenced by Sarah Crisp, Chair, Portarlington CBI Steering Committee¹.

August

Funding from a number of government departments for a survey into feasibility of ferry usage was announced in June and this study is currently [being undertaken](#).

¹ The content Sarah created was exceptional. As the project is complete, the site now tells the story of Portarlington Safe Harbour and Ferry volunteers

2009 September

A real bonus for us was a visit by [Professor Reggie Bowden](#).

Professor Bowden asked to review our project as she was involved in similar community team building projects in North America and one of which was a ferry service between Buffalo, New York and Toronto, Canada.

Stateside support for ferry



Image: John Rae, Prof Bowden and Geoff Henderson

The group continued to talk to [the media](#) and [community groups](#) across the Bellarine Peninsula about a commuter ferry service.



Presentation to the Ocean Grove Community Association: Peter Hibbert, Geoff Henderson, John Rae and John Fendyk

Portarlington Community Association

Guest speaker

Geoff Henderson: [Bellarine Commuter Ferry](#)

Government feasibility survey happening now

How a ferry service can operate

Your questions answered

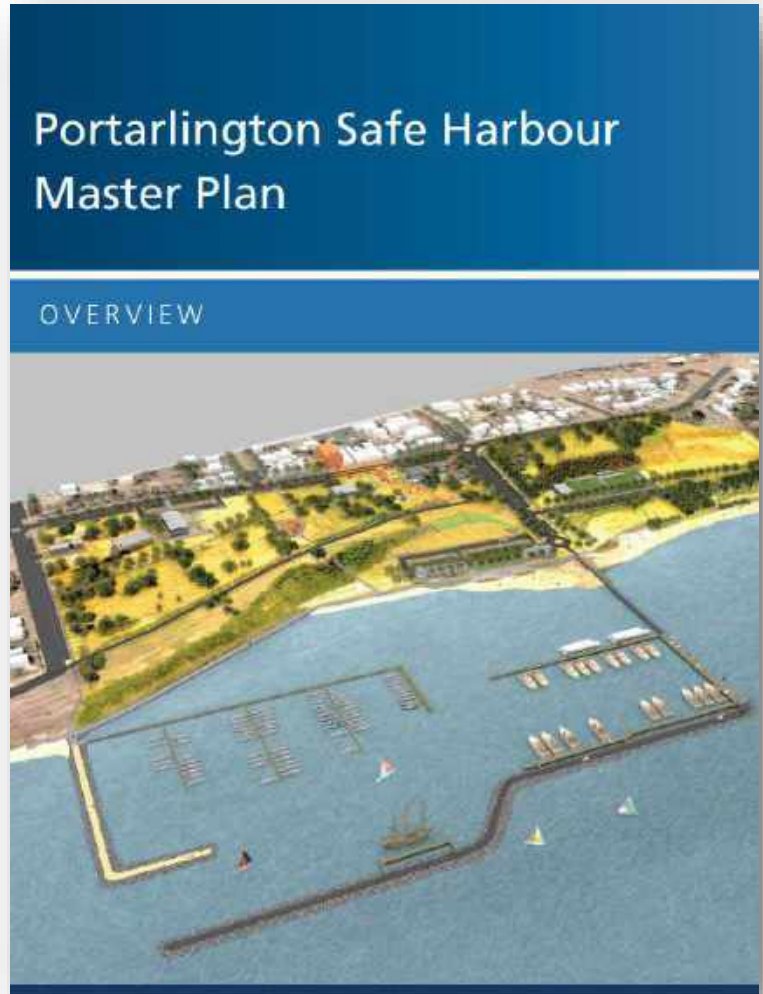
Wednesday, 2 September 2009 at 7:00 pm
Portarlington Community Health Centre, 43 Fenwick Street
All welcome to come along and be updated

Transport assistance: John Turner, 5259 2657

2009 October

The [Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan](#) was officially released by the Victorian State Government on 29 October 2009.

- The plan includes the provision for two ferry berths and has the full support of the Bellarine Ferry Group.
- It will take 10 years for the Safe Harbour complex to be fully completed and it is understood ferry berths will be part of stage 1 of the project.
- It is planned to commence in 2010.
- Under stage 1, the existing pier will be replaced with a new and expanded pier that will provide berthing facilities for the Bay's commercial mussel boats, visiting vessels such as tall ships, and the ferry berths.



The final plan recognised the necessity for ease of access to commercial aquaculture moorings and ferry berths

Potential for recreational boats

Potential for visiting tall ships



Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

The group were able to explain the harbor and ferry projects to personnel from the City of Greater Geelong's Community Development Unit as part of a day visit to Bellarine Peninsula initiatives.



Geoff Henderson, John Rae, Sarah Crisp and Jane Wager, Coordinator, Community Development Unit, City of Greater Geelong

2009 November

The Portarlington Safe Harbour Plan [was officially presented](#) to the community by the Hon Gavin Jennings MP, Minister for Environment and Climate Change, at a meeting of invited guests at Portarlington's Parks Hall.

Minister Jennings said the government understood the importance of the harbour to the people of the Bellarine Peninsula.

The new Safe Harbour Plan accommodates mussel farmers, commuter ferry berths, community facilities and provides a major tourism boost for the Bellarine Peninsula.



Derricks on show - a beautiful Portarlington morning on the pier

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2010

January

The Bellarine Ferry's first booth at the annual Portarlington Mussel Festival. An enormous amount of interest was shown by the community in both the Safe Harbour and the Ferry projects.



Geoff Henderson, John Rae, Rob Fleming



Rob Fleming and Gayle Tiereny MP, Member for Western Victoria

February

1. Members of the Bellarine Ferry Group met with the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Children and Minister for Aged Care for a progress review.

The group informed Minister Neville:

- the original driver for a regular ferry service i.e. the difficulty in getting to Melbourne by either road or rail from the Bellarine, had become progressively worse over the three years since the group formed.
- vives the group were picking up from its regular community update meetings and from the recent Portarlington Mussel Festival (attended by over 10,000 people) was the community wanted action this year on getting a regular service.

The two items specially requested to achieve a commitment from the State Government were:

- a. Include the first stage of the new Portarlington Safe Harbour, including provision for two 300 capacity ferry berths, in this year's State Government budget.
- b. Have the Department of Transport tender out the running of the ferry ASAP to allow the operator time to set up a sound operating service and be available to work with the construction firm to ensure the new harbour meets operating requirements.

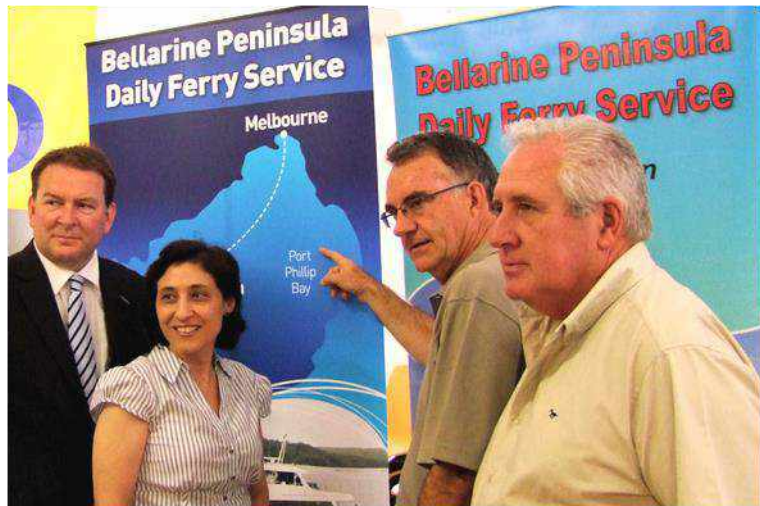
Minister Neville assured the Ferry Group that stage one of the new Portarlington Safe Harbour was in her top five requirements for this year's State Budget.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

2. The Bellarine Ferry Group welcomed the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio, Minister for Community Development [when she visited Portarlington](#) to see firsthand the achievements of the Portarlington Community Building Initiative.

The Minister said

- she was impressed with all of the achievements so far
- paid particular attention to the Portarlington to Melbourne ferry initiative
- requested a tour of the existing harbour facility
- wanted details of the new Safe Harbour project and where the ferry berths would be located
- after the review the Minister indicated that she fully supported the initiative.



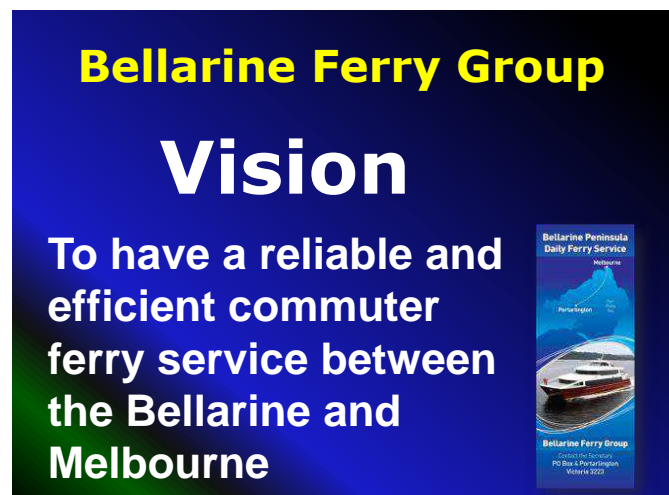
Cr John Doull, Minister Lily D'Ambrosio, Geoff Henderson and Graham Shirley

2010 May

The Bellarine Ferry Group has developed a formal presentation on the potential for a daily ferry service between the Bellarine and Melbourne.

Over the last 15 months the group has made many presentations to interested groups right around the Bellarine Peninsula. For example at the end of May the group presented to around 75 people from the Ocean Grove Probus Club on this exciting and visionary project.

The group is also receiving unexpected [support](#) from people in Melbourne.



June

Overwhelming Support for the Bellarine Ferry

The Bellarine Ferry Group presented the case for a regular daily ferry service from Portarlington to Station Pier at a [public meeting](#) held in Portarlington's Parks Hall.

The meeting was called by Kurt Reiter, Liberal candidate for the Bellarine to learn about community support for the project.

The Hon Terry Mulder MP, Shadow Minister for Transport and Roads and Hon Denis Napthine MP, Shadow Minister for Ports and Regional Cities, were also present.

The attendance exceeded expectations with more than 320 people from across the Bellarine Peninsula and Melbourne attending. Shadow Minister Mulder said he had never attended such a large community meeting to talk about transport.

It was an ideal setting to [clarify issues](#) and dispel myths.

Portarlinton Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

When asked about the next steps, the Bellarine Ferry Group nominated two main actions:

- The Victorian State Government provide funding and a start date no later than 2011 to build stage 1 of the Portarlinton Safe Harbour which they announced in November 2009. This stage contains two ferry berths.
- The Victorian Department of Transport to call for expressions of interest in operating the service immediately to give potential ferry operators sufficient time to have all aspects of the ferry service tested and fine-tuned by the time the first stage of the Portarlinton Safe Harbour is completed.

The public meeting was in strong agreement that the current road and rail access to Melbourne for Bellarine residents was woefully inadequate, especially during peak times, and there was an urgent need for the introduction of a regular ferry service.

The group continue to put their position that a commuter ferry should be part of the [public transport system](#) and be subsidised just the same as trains and trams, which no-one expects to be profitable.

It was also clear that this topic is going to be a major electoral issue for the Bellarine ward during the upcoming state election.



2010 July

Ferry Passenger Demand Estimation Survey Results

The long overdue Passenger Demand Estimation Survey for the proposed Portarlington to Melbourne Ferry was released on 9 July 2010.

The Bellarine Ferry Group and the City of Greater Geelong were briefed on the results by Parks Victoria and the company that conducted the survey Ipsos-Eureka Social Research Institute.

Key findings were:

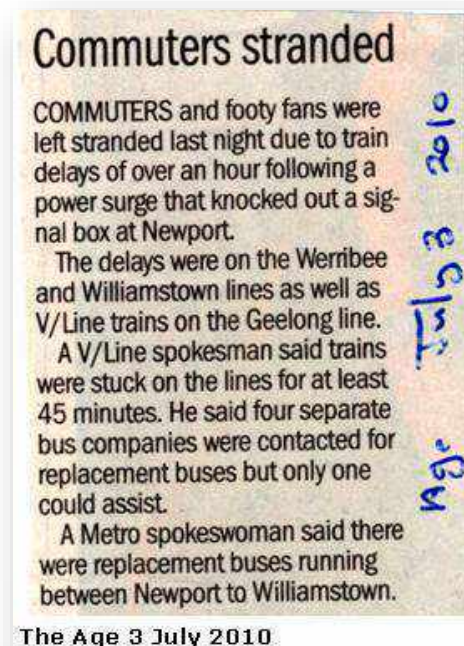
1. Bellarine residents were dissatisfied with access to Melbourne at peak times due to considerable pressure on the public transport services and congested roads.
2. It was estimated that Bellarine residents take around 28,200 trips to Melbourne each week.
3. Between 15,000 and 16,000 trips were work related and the balance for personal, leisure and social purposes.
4. Potential passenger numbers would be impacted by the cost of fares charged.
5. For study purposes a \$30.00 return trip was used and a conservative (deflated) estimated daily passenger rate of 900 return trips a day was projected. *The group has continually maintained that the fare to travel over water should be similar to the fare to travel by road or rail and that would obviously increase the number of potential passengers*
6. Improved transport links to Melbourne would encourage families to remain on the Bellarine Peninsula and encourage families to move to the Bellarine Peninsula.
7. The long distances that need to be covered by land to Melbourne may make a fast ferry service across Port Phillip to Port Melbourne a potentially viable alternative i.e. the journey time would be significantly less than the next best alternative.

It should be noted the survey did not take into account any tourist or children passenger numbers in its estimates.

Current perceptions about existing travel options on the Bellarine Peninsula

Participants in community survey groups highlighted that there were limited transport options available on the Bellarine Peninsula and into Melbourne. The main modes of transport currently available to residents were motor vehicles, the train and, to a limited extent, buses. Participants noted that the bus network was quite limited and it did not service the inner towns of the Bellarine Peninsula. They identified a clear gap in the transport options network, in particular for return peak hour travel into Melbourne.

Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the current public transport options on the Bellarine, including travel to Melbourne by train.



2010 August

The Group's two major objectives are:

1. To get the Victorian Government to begin the first stage of the new Portarlington Safe Harbour (this stage includes two ferry berths), and
2. To get the Department of Transport talking to interested ferry operators about running a regular ferry service between Portarlington and Melbourne.

The current status is:

Portarlington Safe Harbour

Has not only been added to the G21² list of projects but has been included in its top 15 Priority Projects for 2010-11.

Department of Transport

At a meeting with the Strategic Planning & Development section, it was made clear the completion of the first stage of the Portarlington Safe Harbour is key to any further discussion on a ferry service. Our group has always supported this stance.

September

The two projects, commuter ferry and a safe harbour, were the top two projects the community backed to take forward under the auspice of the Portarlington Community Building Initiative. The Community Building Initiative was to initially run for two years however the department recognised this important initiative needed more time to make lasting benefits for communities across the state and funding was extended for a further two years and so to cease early 2011.

Sitting down to prepare a final report was a good way to take stock of how much a small group of volunteers had accomplished. This is our report:

Achievements:

Bellarine Commuter Ferry Project

- Have had two ferry berths included in the [Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan](#) that was launched in October 2009.
- Had a survey completed on commuter and non commuter use of the ferry. The survey results stated that 400 commuters and 500 non commuters would use the ferry daily. The team has kept this project before the community, City of Greater Geelong and State Government. Support across the Bellarine has grown following presentations to many community groups over the past three years.
- The group have applied to be members of G21, Geelong Regional Alliance, to ensure the safe harbour and commuter ferry gain regional support.

Portarlington Safe Harbour

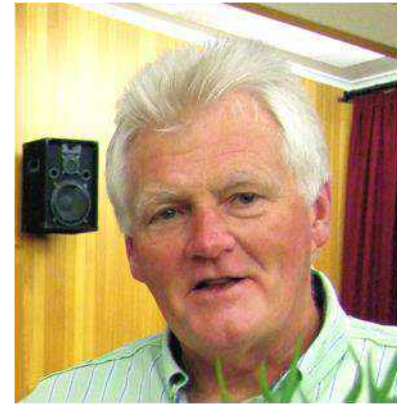
- The project team had input to the plan along the way and were responsible for having the two ferry berths and the mussel boats moved to more suitable positions within the harbour.
- The project team also provided an essential link between residents and government by giving residents a local voice and coordinated local information sessions for community participation with Parks Victoria.

Included in the final report was an acknowledgement about how powerful the Community Building Initiative was in order to take forward community dreams:

² [G21](#) is the formal alliance of Government, business and community organizations which is aimed at working together to improve people's lives in the Geelong Region. In reality nothing of a major infrastructure nature happens in the Region unless it comes through the G21 system. Being on the top 15 priority listing means G21 focuses on these projects and actively promotes them to all levels of Government.

The Minister was thanked for the initiative by the Portarlington Community Building Initiative Chair, John Rae:

The CBI program has had a wonderful impact on Portarlington, bringing community groups together and achieving a great deal in the major projects identified by community members. It has provided a conduit to bring together community members who have a positive vision for the town. Without the project there was no single mechanism for people with professional, business and community development skills to work together to achieve ambitious and lasting community outcomes. New skills and knowledge are now shared as CBI members have taken on leadership roles within the community.



John Rae

As a government auspiced initiative, the project provided legitimacy to community aspirations and 'opened doors' across the three tiers of government and businesses. As a result, residents have been empowered and are willing to challenge potential barriers rather than be overwhelmed. Positive working relationships and respect now exist between local government and the town, essentially due to the City of Greater Geelong providing the overall auspice as well as program support for specific CBI projects. Positive dialogue and assistance are now the norm as both the town and City of Greater Geelong work together to deliver practical and planning support for local ventures.

One key component to the success of this program is the provision of paid staff. Many community members would have burned out if we had to do all the work and I believe the program would have failed. We were most fortunate to have had Rob Fleming as our facilitator. The support from Jane Wager, City of Greater Geelong and Amanda Miggins, DPCD also contributed to the success.

The Community Building Initiative has brought Portarlington groups together, increased communication and will leave a larger body of more knowledgeable and better equipped volunteers who will contribute more effectively within our community.

We also found the notion of a ferry service had significant coverage with [Going Solar](#) that focussed on sustainable transport.

2010 November

We have been working hard on two fronts:

1. establishing an actual start date for building the Portarlington Safe Harbour, with provision for two ferries, and
2. having the Department of Transport talking to interested ferry operators

The Victorian State Election, in November should provide clarification on both.

Recently in a press article by the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Children and Minister for Aged Care said:

"The results of the survey are a good starting point for proponents considering the viability of a ferry service. The Victorian Government is now encouraging genuine interested proponents to work with us to further develop options for a viable ferry service."

The group contacted the ferry companies they have been liaising with and two notification of interest documents have been forwarded to the State Government. Remaining interested parties continue to review the service and we are confident further applications will follow when policies are announced by all parties.

Meetings were held with Minister Neville and Gayle Tierney, Member for Western Victoria, to discuss the Safe Harbour.

Portarlinton Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

The group's key focus was the Safe Harbour commencement date and what funds each candidate will commit to this work beginning in 2011. Minister Neville was delighted that interested ferry operators had taken up her offer to contact the Department of Transport and also asked us to contact her if any problems were encountered and she would become involved with both the Department of Transport and the Ferry Operators.

Minister Neville said having the Safe Harbour project on the priority list of G21 was very significant to the State Government as it showed the project was supported by all relevant bodies.

A meeting also took place with the Liberal candidate Kurt Reiter who has supported a regular ferry service.

2010 December

The Victorian State election is over. The Labor Government lost power and a new Liberal-National Party Coalition Government was formed.

The bad news: promises by candidates for funding - in brief, there were none.

The good news: Bellarine is now considered one of the most marginal seats in the state, which means infrastructure monies will be directed towards the Bellarine Peninsula.

What the group understands: because Bellarine was considered a safe Labor seat, neither the Labor nor Liberal candidate got the okay from their Party to announce expenditure for a safe harbour.

The Liberal candidate has contacted the Bellarine Ferry Group and confirmed that both the Safe Harbour and ferry remain part of the coalition's agenda

The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Shadow Minister for Environment, Climate Change and the Arts, stated publicly that even though she is now part of the Opposition, she is focussed on securing funding for the Portarlinton Safe Harbour.

In the November issue of Portarlinton's *The Port Report*, Minister Neville wrote "we have completed a ferry usage study which now enables potential ferry operators to work with the Department of Transport on developing a proposal to deliver a ferry service once the infrastructure is complete. This is an important project and I am pleased that work is continuing to ensure the Safe Harbour remains a priority for Portarlinton and the Bellarine."

In summary it is pleasing now to see the Safe Harbour Project referred to by both parties as "when" and not "if".

Following extensive public consultation a set of drawings were prepared, signed off by all appropriate government bodies and released with much fanfare in October 2009. Since that date no further work has been carried out on the Safe Harbour project.

With the news that the Safe Harbour Project had been deferred and placed low on the Parks Victoria "things to do list" the Bellarine Ferry Group took on the responsibility of getting the project reinstated as without a safe harbour at Portarlinton a ferry service to Melbourne was not possible.

[Return](#) to calendar

2011

February

The Group had discussions with the new State Government about the possibility of having a member of the Liberal Party to join the Bellarine Ferry Group.

The status of the two objectives is:

1. Ferry

We have a number of local and overseas ferry companies wanting to run the daily ferry service after reviewing all the data we have.

These companies have notified the Department of Transport in writing that they wish to be involved in running the proposed Bellarine Ferry Service between Portarlington and Port Melbourne.

The Department of Transport has told us they want to see the new Portarlington Safe Harbour (stage 1) completed before handling these notifications of interest.

We agree with this stance as the ferry service must have an all-weather berthing facility to operate effectively and the State Government's published [Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan](#) is ideal to meet this objective.

2. Portarlington Safe Harbour

The Hon Terry Mulder, Minister for Transport, indicated the revised estimates (blowout) for the Regional Rail Link between Melbourne and Werribee has led to the State Government to seriously relook at the safe harbour and ferry project. Priority needed to be given to the now \$4.3 billion required to provide separate rail tracks for Metro and V/Line services. The blowout in costs could ultimately lead to the abandonment of the plan.

This is the major hurdle in getting the ferry service up and running and we continue our discussions with the new State Government.

Additional pressure has been placed on the State Government by the local mussel farmers who urgently need the pier upgraded to maintain and grow the aquaculture industry.

August

The Group was fortunate to discuss the ferry plan with Mr Matt McDonald, CEO, Searoadferries. Searoadferries operate the long-standing Queenscliff to Sorrento ferry service and Mr McDonald has had operating experience captaining vessels both overseas and in Australia.

We were especially interested in his extensive experience skippering vessels on Port Phillip. He confirmed that:

- the vessels we have used in our studies were suitable for the bay conditions
- Portarlington was an appropriate starting point for the service, and
- our travel time of 42 minutes between Portarlington and Station Pier was rechecked and confirmed.

This confirmation from a service provider that has never missed a sailing due to bad weather in well over 20 years on the Bay was good to receive.

An action plan to get the project moving again has been drawn up and meetings have started with all relevant parties and in particular the local mussel industry.

While it appears inevitable that the harbour will have to have some private investment, it is our aim to push for the first stage to be government funded. This is to protect the mooring fees of the Port Phillip mussel farmers who operate out of the existing Portarlington harbour.

Given repairs to the existing pier in 2007-08 were to maintain the life of the pier for about 5 years, it's a case of not if, but rather when the new harbour is built, which in turn will allow the ferry service to operate.

2011 November

The overwhelming interest in a ferry service means the Bellarine Ferry Group are still getting requests to make ferry presentations from organisations and groups on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Presentations were run past significant people who know the project and on confirmation that all relevant issues had been covered and all the facts correct, we began working through our list. The list included asks from departments in the City of Greater Geelong plus the Victorian Department of Primary Industry who offered full support and insights.

Next on our list are more State Government Ministers as this project touches a number of Government Departments.



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2012

February

In January, the Group again had a booth at the Portarlington Mussel Festival. The Festival attracted over 20,000 people.

Continual presentations were run for visitors to view what the group wanted to achieve and why.

We kept a tab on where people who approached us lived. The majority were evenly split between the Bellarine Peninsula and Melbourne. There was a third group that we weren't aware of - a significant number lived in country Victoria, holiday on the Bellarine Peninsula and would love ferry access to Melbourne as part of their holiday experience.

Many hundreds of people endorsed the Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry concepts.



Below is a picture of our stand just after the doors were opened ... we were just too busy to take any photos for the rest of the day!



2012 April

Troubles on the Geelong to Melbourne rail link continue. A range of press articles appeared about local public transport issues throughout April 2012.

[Warning over rail fail pain](#), [Signal fault stops Geelong Trains](#), [Geelong rail woes set to continue](#), [No room to move on packed Geelong trains](#)

A ferry service operating out of Portarlington's Safe Harbour would go a long way to alleviate the rail and road issues that exist today from the Bellarine to Melbourne.

Also in the news recently there was a strong and clear message from the Liberal candidate from the last election on the benefits of the Portarlington Safe Harbour and a daily Bellarine to Melbourne Ferry service.

Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Shadow Minister for Environment, Climate Change and the Arts again expressed her desire to see the safe harbour project continue. There is no doubt that these two issues are going to dominate the 2014 election issues for the Bellarine.

Given that Lisa Neville, who was a Minister in the last Labor State Government, was unable to obtain funding to build the Portarlington Safe Harbour, getting money for this item of infrastructure from the current State Liberal Government remains a major issue for us.

May

Bellarine to Melbourne Ferry

Ferries on the Bay are [making news](#) sure the Bellarine ferry is in the mix



John Rae (bottom left) and Sarah Crisp (top right) represent the Ferry Group at a gathering with other community group members, May 2012

June

Bellarine to Melbourne Ferry

Whether you live on the Bellarine or in Melbourne you would have no doubt read or heard the recent discussions on the need for regular ferry services to be introduced to Port Phillip. As a result of all these discussions Matthew Guy, Planning Minister, announced a \$300,000 study into commuter ferry services for Port Phillip. [News](#) of the study was widely reported, including reassurance that the proposed service from the Bellarine to Melbourne will be included.

The Group will do everything in its power to ensure that it will have input into the study as it has gained an in-depth knowledge into this subject over the last five years.

Portarlington Safe Harbour

There can be no regular ferry service without a safe harbour to operate from. We are waiting on the result of the meeting we had with the Hon Denis Napthine, Minister for Ports, on the status of the new Portarlington Safe Harbour project.

October

Victoria's largest mussel grower, Lance Wiffen pushed for [harbour expansion](#) and upgrades so the mussel industry can grow. As Lance says, more commercial berths are needed to take more boats.

2012 November

Volunteers from our project catching up with Jenny Gallop, co-owner of Mr Mussel. Jenny and Wayne Gallop fully support the safe harbour to secure and grow their mussel farm.



Rob Fleming, Sarah Crisp, Geoff Henderson and Jenny Gallop from *Mr Mussel*

December

Ferry

As a result of the study into the viability of ferries operating on Port Phillip, which was announced by the Hon Matthew Guy, Minister for Planning, discussions were held with Ernst & Young, the consultants appointed to carry out the study.

They came to Portarlington to meet with the group and to view the existing harbour facilities. The group was able to fully brief the consultants and hopefully they left the meeting with an understanding of how important this project is to the future of the Bellarine Peninsula. We were informed the aim was to have the final report to the Minister by March 2013.

Portarlington Safe Harbour

From all the recent meetings we have had, it is clear to us that:

- a) The Safe Harbour project is on the list of items that the State Government needs to undertake but current budgetary constraints are an issue.
- b) The fact that the Bellarine seat is now one of the most marginal seats in Victoria will make this project one of the top priorities for both parties in the 2014 state election.
- c) The only hope for a short term start to this project is for a private developer to work with the State Government. There has been interest shown in recent months and where proposals make sense, our group will do everything we can to ensure the proposals get the appropriate attention from the State Government.

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2013

March

Consultants [Ernst & Young](#) notes that travel times on the Yarra should be increased. It's apparent that travelling by [ferry is still a novel idea](#) and not considered a feasible alternative to traditional public transport or road travel.

April

Melbourne Ferries Background Study

The Government initiated a discussion paper as it is interested in understanding the economic and technical feasibility of introducing ferry services in Melbourne's west. Importantly, and in a break with previous studies, the aim is to identify the preconditions, possible pathways and mechanisms for establishing and maintaining a sustainable service.

Discussion Paper

This initial Discussion Paper provides a preliminary review of the key operational facts, issues and challenges in operating commuter ferry services for Melbourne's west. The paper is informative and highlights some of the key challenges. It:

- provides an update on the state of play in Melbourne's west and Docklands and how patterns of growth and demand could support a Port Phillip ferry service
- considers the use of water transport services in other places in order to identify lessons to take into this study
- clarifies the importance of our shipping channels and waterways, and how a ferry service to Melbourne Docklands would be required to share waterways with recreational users and commercial vessels accessing the Port of Melbourne
- contains a preliminary review of possible ferry berth locations in Melbourne Docklands, Wyndham, Hobsons Bay, Portarlinton and Geelong, and canvasses some of their pros and cons
- identifies possible vessel options and what can be achieved in terms of capacity and journey times
- provides an overview of ongoing technical work.

Further work is being undertaken to identify the conditions where ferry services would be viable, including the service conditions to be an attractive alternative to the road or rail, forecasting commuter and recreational passenger demands, and necessary infrastructure investments.

A final report with a feasibility analysis is expected to be completed by mid 2013.

July

Great to see a movement to have ferries operating on Port Phillip, which confirms the Group's position that once you have a safe harbour, ferries will follow.

An extension to Wyndham Harbour to fast track a ferry service was announced by Hon Matthew Guy [Minister for Planning](#). This would fast track a ferry service from Wyndham to Docklands in Melbourne's CBD.

The Age [editorial](#) recognised that travelling across water could be a reality as experienced in Sydney and San Francisco.

There is also talk of a second ferry service from Avalon airport to the South Eastern suburbs.

A second ferry service to Avalon Airport has been flagged for 2015.

Wyndham Harbour developer Lyons Capital, which is behind the ferry service from Werribee South to the city, is investigating a separate ferry service from Melbourne's southern suburbs to the airport. Lyons Capital planning manager Greg Miller said with the airport status recently upgraded to international, the service would help reduce the time it took travellers from the other side of Port Phillip Bay to get to the airport.

2013 November

Ferry Status

We have yet to receive a copy of the consultant's report on the viability of ferries operating on Port Phillip which was given to Mathew Guy around the middle of the year.

While we understand the report was favourable it would be good to read it in full.

It is clear that the state election which is scheduled for next year is the key to both the Portarlington Safe Harbour and Ferry Projects.

The Bellarine seat (currently held by Labor) will play a major part in deciding who will form the next state government. Recent redistributions have favoured the current government but the margin is still extremely tight.

We will be seeking iron clad promises on these two projects (including timing) and we will be reporting back to you on the stance of each party.

Portarlington Safe Harbour

As stated above, the upcoming election is the key to getting this project back to the head of the queue as regards capital spending. We have spent the last quarter liaising with the relevant government departments on the status of the project. In addition we have confirmed that the project is still on the priority list of both the City of Greater Geelong and G21 which is critical.

Our update list has grown every month since it was first started in 2010. This fact clearly demonstrates the importance of these two projects not only to the people of the Bellarine but to many people outside the Bellarine who have holiday homes on the peninsula or who wish to move here once a regular ferry service is operating.

As this is the last update for 2013 we wish you all a Safe and Happy Christmas and New Year. 2014 is the crunch year and we will be asking for your assistance during the year to bring these projects home.

With many differing ideas and misconceptions about a ferry service, the Group prepared a [Portarlington Pier and Ferry Information Sheet](#) as a handout when we were asked to speak at community meetings. We continued to refresh the information sheet over time.



BELLARINE FERRY AND PORTARLINGTON SAFE HARBOUR

WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE BELLARINE

Opens up education: students can travel for tertiary studies and still live at home. **Quickest option for students and cheapest option for families.**

Opens up employment: more choice for school leavers and mums and dads without having to relocate the family.

Boost for business: tourism is essential to retain our many small and family businesses.

More infrastructure and services: larger towns attract a bigger share of government spending.

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2014

February

Two significant things have happened:

Portarlington Safe Harbour news

The Hon David Hodgett MP, Minister for Ports, has confirmed the Portarlington Safe Harbour project has been included in the State Government's Budget Submissions.

Bellarine Ferry news

The Napthine Government [wants a private ferry](#) not a beach for Docklands.

The Napthine Government thinks the Docklands would make an ideal location for a private ferry terminal.

A FERRY terminal, not a beach, would suit the Docklands waterfront, says the Napthine Government.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy rejected the idea of an urban beach to enliven Harbour Esplanade, as suggested in a report commissioned by state authority Places Victoria.

"It would be a silly idea, the water's static, (it) would be a great spot to be our ferry terminal into the future," he said.

It seems that the Government is favouring the introduction of privately-run commuter ferry services, with final studies to be completed within weeks.

Services would run between the city and places like Williamstown, Point Cook, Altona, Werribee South and Portarlington.



Picture: Mark Wilson Source: News Limited. February 14, 2014 10:35AM

Ok, what does all this really mean?

The Portarlington Safe Harbour expenditure is being considered by the State Government along with other capital expenditure programs for this year's budget. As it's reported to be N° 1 on Parks Victoria's port upgrade list, we are very hopeful.

The State Government's study into commuter ferries on Port Phillip will be finalised within weeks. What we want to see coming out of the study is:-

1. The ferry service from Portarlington goes direct to Melbourne and does not stop at other locations like Werribee.
2. The service, while being privately operated, is part of the public transport system and subsidised like the trains, trams and buses. The Bellarine is only 39 kms by water from Melbourne and needs direct public transport to enable commuters to get to work in Melbourne with a reasonable travel time in lieu of the present 2 hours each way.
3. For the ferry service to go direct to Docklands (our preference from day 1.) means that two things need to happen:-
 - a. The speed limit on the Yarra needs to be lifted for the commuter ferry operation to be viable.
 - b. The ferry needs to be given right of way when travelling on the Yarra. The alternative of travelling direct to Station Pier would be a fall back solution if these two items cannot be changed.

2014 April

The Australian Labor Party made a \$15 million pledge ([media 1](#), [media 2](#), [media 3](#)) for [stage one](#) of the Portarlington Safe Harbour Project.



Pictured: Portarlington Safe Harbour and Ferry Group treasurer Geoff Henderson, Portarlington Business Development Association president John Rae, Bellarine MP Lisa Neville and state Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews are thinking big about the future of Portarlington's harbour.



Opposition leader Daniel Andres promises \$1.5m for the Portarlington Safe Harbour if his party wins election. Pictured from left: MP Lisa Neville, Geoff Henderson (Portarlington Ferry and Safe Harbour Group), Opposition leader Daniel Andrews and John Rae (Portarlington Ferry and Safe Harbour Group). Photo: GLENN FERGUSON

Source: News Limited

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

The Opposition Leader, Daniel Andrews said if elected in November, Labor would fund the first stage of the \$58 million project. Mr Andrews said the funding would deliver a new pier, ferry berth, berths for the aquaculture industry, services for refuelling and pumping out of the current breakwater.

The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine added that the new pier would allow an oyster and abalone industry to grow and the blue mussel industry to expand, while a ferry service would boost local tourism.



2014 June

The Hon David Hodgett MP, Minister for Ports announced that the Victorian Government would [invest \\$3 million](#) for the [immediate redevelopment](#) of the Portarlington Pier.

Tenders have been issued and work would start immediately and would be finished in June 2015. The work would include a new pier that would be built beside the existing pier, which would also get much-needed repairs. The new pier would allow the mussel industry to use heavier vehicles to unload their mussels than is possible at the moment. The minister said that the Government was working closely with Parks Victoria on the project and further announcements would be made later.

From talks we had with Parks Victoria senior management, the \$3 million expenditure includes provision for pylons to provide the base for floating pontoons for the ferry berths.

In theory this would allow a ferry service to operate from mid next year while the safe harbour was being built around it.

What does all this really mean?

The Bellarine seat is the most marginal seat in this year's state election, so if either party is to win overall they must win the Bellarine seat.

So what do we have six months out from the Election?

Labor: An election promise of \$15 million that will be in next year's state budget (only applicable if elected) which is just over half of the stated stage one cost when the safe harbour plan was released after community consultation in 2009.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

Labor has left the door open for further announcements, which it could be assumed would be after they see what the Liberals announce.

Liberals: An immediate start on stage one (to be completed by mid 2015) with an indicated total cost of \$3 million. The Minister also said that the government was working with Parks Victoria (the relevant government department) and that further announcements would be forthcoming. There was no clear indication if this was before or after the November election.

The ferry service impacts the entire Bellarine (and Melbourne people who wish to live on the Bellarine and continue to work in the city). While there are a number of town specific needs that have to be addressed on the Bellarine, the ferry is arguably the one major Bellarine item that will get either party across the line.

The ferry service is now even more important to the Bellarine than it was at the last election. The transport system to Melbourne at commuter times has deteriorated further and is now a lot worse than it was in 2010.

What will we be doing?

We intend to go out to the Bellarine population with the details of both party's stance on the Portarlington safe harbour, to ensure they fully understand the situation. The building of the safe harbour is the one thing holding back a ferry service.

2014 October

This is the last update before the November State Election. There has been a lot of action on both the Portarlington Safe Harbour and the Bellarine Ferry over recent months.

Below is a summary on where both parties stand on these projects:

Portarlington Safe Harbour

Labor

Have promised that if elected in November will, in their first budget, include \$15 million for the building of the first stage of the approved safe harbour project that includes two ferry berths. This amount has been confirmed by Parks Victoria as the projected cost of building the first stage of the project. This expenditure will allow the existing harbour to be doubled in size and provide a new breakwater on the east side to make the harbour protected on all sides, hence the term safe harbour.

Liberal

Have released \$3 million to provide a new pier that will allow the mussel industry to use larger vehicles on the pier. This new pier will be within the framework of the current pier and does not contribute to making the harbour a safe harbour, which is required to operate a ferry service. We have been advised that work will begin on this project in early 2015 and should be completed by the middle of next year.

As regards to the building of the first stage of the Safe Harbour, the current Liberal Government have said they will work with the City of Greater Geelong to come up with a strategy to build the new harbour. At this stage no information is available on how long this investigation will take.

Portarlington is the mussel capital of Victoria and needs a larger and safer harbour to expand.



Portarlington/Bellarine Ferry

Labor

[Have announced](#) if elected they will take the lead on this project by working with interstate ferry operators on the viability of a regular ferry service from Portarlington to Melbourne. This study would run parallel with the work on the safe harbour to ensure if viable, it would be put in place immediately the first stage of the harbour is complete.



Bellarine Times

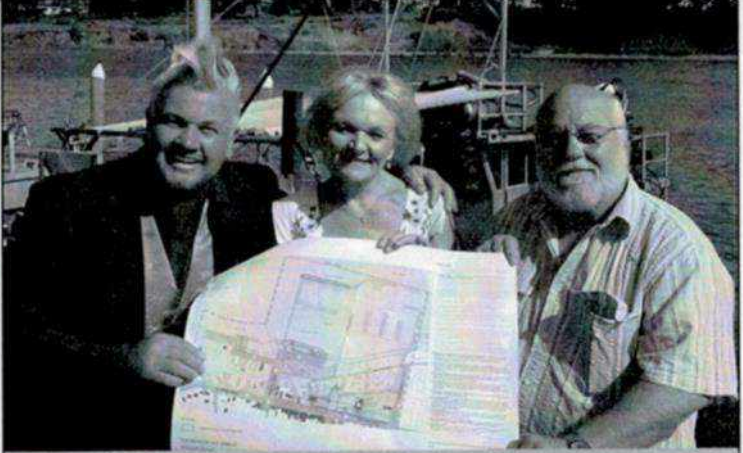
Liberal

We have been unable to get a clear position statement on the ferry. We note that Hon Matthew Guy, Minister for Planning, has supported a ferry from Werribee and is studying what is required to allow ferries to travel up the Yarra River to berth at Docklands.

We have always taken a non political position on both projects and now it is up to the voters in November to decide which party will provide the best outcome for these important projects.

2014 November

The Victorian State election is over. The Liberal-National Party Coalition lost power and a new Labor Government was formed. Fortunately, the City of Greater Geelong is behind us.

<p>BUSINESS CASE FOR PORT HARBOUR The City of Greater Geelong and the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure have partnered to prepare an implementation plan for the redevelopment of the Portarlington harbour. Both parties will provide up to \$100,000 each for the development of the business plan. "The project will be an economic driver for the Bellarine Peninsula, creating employment for the growing aquaculture industry and generating further opportunities for leisure and tourism," Mayor Lyons said. Cr Lindsay Ellis said the City was currently seeking tenders for a consultancy firm to prepare the business case. The business case will articulate the economic benefit to the region, test the market demand for recreational berths, understand private sector interest to invest in the harbour and develop a staging plan for infrastructure works. It should be completed by mid 2015.</p>	 A photograph showing three people, Mayor Darren Lyons, Elaine Carbines (G21), and Cr Lindsay Ellis, standing together and looking at a large, colorful map or plan of the Portarlington harbour. They are outdoors, with a boat and other structures visible in the background.
<p>Mayor Darren Lyons, Elaine Carbines (G21) and Cr Ellis with harbour plan</p>	

The Port Report November 2014

A bigger contribution

Mark Contos (Letters, 19/2) underestimates the direct contribution of the Victorian Coalition government to public transport. It is not "40 to 50 per cent". The government provides about 65 per cent of the operating cost of metropolitan public transport and 75 per cent for V/Line.

Terry Mulder, Minister for Public Transport and Roads

The Age 20 February 2014

[Return](#) to calendar

2015

January

The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Environment and Climate Change and Minister for Water [announces](#) pier construction work will begin next month.

April

You may recall we finished our feasibility study into running a daily ferry service between the Bellarine (Portarlington) and Melbourne (Station Pier). We had several ferry operators from around Australia review our study results and all of them contacted the Department of Transport to advise them they were willing to run such a service and that they would participate if tenders were issued.

The only problem we had was the approved Portarlington Safe Harbour plan had stalled and therefore we were not prepared to push for the ferry service until the first stage of the plan was complete.

Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine and Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water in the newly elected Labor State Government lobbied long and hard to get the necessary funds required to build the first stage of the Safe Harbour and she was successful.



John Rae, Minister Lisa Neville and Cr Lindsay Ellis

Current status

Portarlington Safe Harbour

Work has been begun on the first stage of the project. The first stage doubles the size of the harbour and builds the necessary infrastructure to make the harbour safe.

By doing this there will be additional berths available for the mussel farmers and other aquaculture activities like scallop farming. This stage will also provide two ferry berths as well as berths for visiting vessels such as tall ships.

\$3 million has already been allocated for the work now taking place on the western arm of the harbour. Daniel Andrews, the then Opposition leader, and Hon Lisa Neville announced in April 2014 that if Labor was elected there would be a further \$15 million dollars allocated in the 2015 State Budget to complete stage one of Portarlington State Harbour. The total cost for stage one therefore would be \$18 million.

Work should start later in the year based on the budget allocation.

Ferry

The Labor Party has been supportive of the ferry project. We had discussions with the then Shadow Minister for Transport, Jill Hennessey late last year on the next steps into the investigation of the ferry project. She was keen to push on with the review now and not wait until the first stage of the harbour was complete. Jill Hennessey was allocated the Health and Human Services portfolio in the new government so we are waiting to meet with the new Minister of Transport, Jacinta Allan, to confirm the same timetable is still in place.

2015 June

Portarlington Safe Harbour Project

Funds required to complete the first stage of the Portarlington Safe Harbour were included in the 2015 State Budget as promised in the run up to the recent State Election.

Parks Victoria has indicated that the necessary planning work has already begun to release the funds. Stage one will double the size of the existing harbour as well as making it into a safe harbour.

Work is nearing completion on the initial part of this first stage

This is the area of the new harbour that will contain the two ferry berths

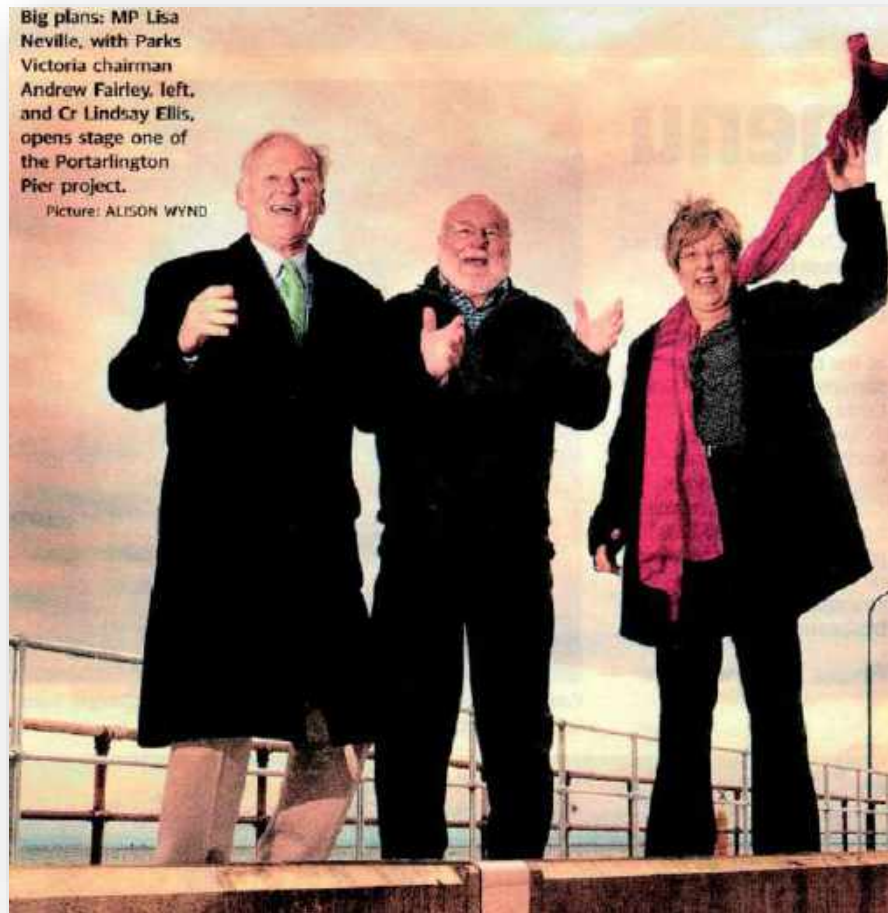


2015 July

Ferry Project

An [announcement](#) was recently [made](#) by the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water, on the Safe Harbour the Ferry status. Minister Neville confirmed that talks with the Hon Jacinta Allan, Minister for Transport had begun on the ferry service from the Portarlington to Melbourne (Station Pier).

We understand that a working group will be formed and that our group will be contacted to assist in this process.



2015 September

Portarlington Safe Harbour Project

The initial stage of the Portarlington Safe Harbour was opened on 24 July 2015 by the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water. Parks Victoria, who has responsibility for the Safe Harbour project, was represented by its Chairman, Andrew Fairley.



This new 175 metre pier section is the first of the upgrades delivered under the \$15 million Portarlington Safe Harbour development.

The works, which started in February, improve vehicle access to the harbour.

The next stage of the works will deliver better facilities to grow the aquaculture industry and provide the infrastructure necessary for a ferry terminal.

In opening this stage of the works Minister Neville said that the new pier would build a strong foundation for the delivery of the Safe Harbour by December 2017.

Parks Victoria are finalising the detailed design of the next stage of the works to commence this year.

Ferry

The Labor State Government promised in the run up to last election that they would "take the lead on a ferry service to Melbourne" and everything we have been involved in since has indicated that they are working on that promise.

October

Mr Paul Little of the Little Group announced his company was working closely with ASX listed SeaLink Travel Group on plans to run catamaran passenger ferry services into Melbourne's Docklands precinct from two western Melbourne locations and the Bellarine Peninsula (Portarlington).

We believe initially his first objective will be to get a ferry service running between Wyndham Harbour (Werribee South) and Collins Landing at Docklands as the new harbour at Wyndham is nearing completion.

SeaLink currently operates a number of ferry services around Australia. SeaLink, with its recent purchase of Transit Systems marine businesses, would make it the largest marine tourism and transport company in Australia. SeaLink's fleet of vessels would increase from 27 to 60 vessels. SeaLink proposes utilising high speed, low wash vessels which have a 400 passenger capacity.

Mr Little said the Andrews Government had been "very supportive" of the idea and planned for a three-month trial of the service early 2016.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

The Bellarine Ferry Group had originally proposed a service to Docklands from the Bellarine but opted for a service to Station Pier because of some operational issues impacting on travel times when utilising the Yarra River. It is believed that the Little Group is working with the State Government to overcome these issues which, if overcome, would be great for Bellarine residents travelling to Melbourne.

The heat had its first impact for the season on trains, with V/Line cancelling seven trains to Geelong on Monday afternoon.

The Age 6 October 2015

2015 November

Portarlington Safe Harbour Project

The first construction element, a new 175 metre section of the pier was completed midyear. The next phase will transform the harbour over the next 18 months by the construction of two rock breakwaters, a new finger jetty, pier improvements and a number of marine industry access upgrades for the pier and harbour.

These actions will deliver better facilities for the aquaculture industry, make the harbour a safe haven for boats on the Bay in times of bad weather and provide the infrastructure for a ferry terminal.

Tenders have been called to deliver these actions and work begins in February 2016.

Bellarine Ferry Project

The Bellarine Ferry Group has been in continual discussions on the introduction of a regular ferry service from the Bellarine to Melbourne with both State Government and private industry.

[Return](#) to calendar

2016

February

Portarlington Safe Harbour

Below is an artist's impression of the completed 1st stage of the project. This stage includes a ferry terminal.

The ferry berth will be a floating berth, prefabricated off site and assembled onsite. Being a floating berth it will rise and fall with the tide changes which in turn reduces the angle of the ferry's exit and entry walkways. The berth will be positioned on the land side of the smaller pier.



Since work commenced the weather has been good, which has allowed non stop activity on the site. The photos displayed below gives an idea of the work being carried out daily on the new pier.



The work has created a lot of interest from the local community and we have been asked a number of questions the answers of which may interest the large number of people we have on our email update list.

Q: *Where do the rocks come from that are being used (estimated 132,000 tonne) to create the walls of the new harbour?*

Answer: They are sourced from farms just west of Geelong.

Q: *What type of rock is being used?*

A: The rock is basalt and it has had its density analysed to ensure it is suitable for use.

Q: *How is the extension of the north wall constructed as the rock required cannot be transported over the existing wall?*

A: A "bridge" is constructed at the end of the new eastern wall over what will be the new harbour entrance to allow the necessary machinery and rocks needed to start work on the northern wall. The work will finish just short of the current pier to allow the mussel boats temporary access to the bay. The "bridge" is then pulled down to gain the new entrance and the new northern extension completed. The equipment is then barged off the wall.

Parks Victoria and its contractors are doing an excellent job.

Bellarine Ferry Project

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

As reported, the Little Group has stated their interest in running a ferry service from Wyndham (Point Cook) to Docklands and a separate service from the Bellarine (Portarlington) to Docklands.

Now that the new Wyndham Harbour is complete, the Little Group are working through the final items to get that service underway. They expect at the latest a ferry will come down from Queensland in May to start trials

2016 March

Portarlington Safe Harbour

The harbour build continues to go well despite the bad weather experienced in the last couple of weeks.

The foundation layer has been laid for the new **Eastern breakwater.**

The footprint of the eastern wall is 270 metres and was constructed with 10 trucks delivering around 40 loads of rocks per day. The temporary rock bridge (right hand side of wall) between the Eastern and Northern breakwater has been completed which allows works to commence on the Northern breakwater. This bridge will be removed as the final stage of building the breakwaters as this area is the new harbour entrance.



Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

Dredging of the existing harbour continues with the side benefit that the dredged sand will be used to renourish the beach to the west of the pier. Approximately 30,000 metres of material will be dredged. Once the area has been dredged the water depth inside the harbour will be approximately three metres at high tide.



Berthing Wharf works have commenced off-site and the procurement of piles and the fabrication of concrete crossheads and decking are underway with an anticipated completion date of early June 2016.



Melbourne beckons

Bellarine Ferry Project

It is great to report that the first of the Port Phillip Ferries has begun trials on Port Phillip. John Rae and Geoff Henderson from the Bellarine Ferry Group were invited to experience a pre launch trip along the Yarra River and out into Port Phillip. The ferry is docked at Victoria Harbour Promenade, Docklands which is close to Etihad Stadium and a short walk to the tram that runs along Bourke St.

Bellarine Times 2 June 2016

Ferry group members trial Melbourne service

BY REBECCA ADAM

TWO members of the Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group have had a trial run on a ferry to Melbourne, the same vessel they envisage will operate daily back home town.

Group secretary Geoff Henderson said that John Rae believed it was necessary to experience the return ferry trip from Wynham to Docklands on the Woodham Explorer, a service recently introduced by businessman Paul Little.

Mr Rae said the vessel was the same heritage styled opening on the front as the group's own, once the hull finishes was complete, and wanted to evaluate how it performed.

"The day was perfect for the test as it was choppy with 1-3 metre waves," Mr Rae said.

"Once we started the wheel the Wynham Explorer speeded at 25 knots and there was no awareness of the choppy seas as we sat in our seats."

Geoff spoke with the Captain and he said that the ferry had previously visited Queensland where it transported mail with no customer discomfort due to the design of the vessel.

"The steering is excellent and during the trip we successfully transported 1000 kg of old motor parts."

"There are 170 throughout the ferry, which was used to store programs and our life."

"The 400 tonne vessel comfortable and one of the benefits of ferry travel is that every passenger has a view."

Mr Rae said he and Geoff spoke with other passengers to establish their reasons for trying the ferry.

"The points they made were comfort of the ride, supported by the water of the ferry which is much less than motor boats or ferries, ease of boarding and docking, no 6, 12, 18, free car parking or Wynham via traffic roads, or crowded trains."

"Turning into Docklands most people were out on the deck, always in being used, to view Melbourne, which looked terrific."

Mr Rae said he and Mr Henderson would continue their work to secure a ferry from Portarlington to Melbourne over the safe harbour.

was complete and thanked Mr Little for both his vision and investment in bringing ferries to Melbourne.

AGDY: The Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group secretary Geoff Henderson, left, and Chair John Rae have visited the return ferry trip from Wynham to Docklands on the Wynham Explorer, the same vessel they envisage will operate on the Portarlington route.

Trial ferry

The day was windy with white caps on the bay. The boat handled the conditions beautifully with minimum movement being felt on board. The ferry is a catamaran, 35 metres in length and has a draft of 1.3 metres and carries 400 passengers with a café and WIFI available for passenger use. Service speed is between 23 to 25 knots with a top speed of 30 knots.

As part of the trials being carried out the ferry will undertake a daily return service between Wynhdam Harbour and Docklands. Other trials are planned for the remainder of May and through June. Attached to this email is an interview conducted by Jon Faine with Paul Little who is the head of the Little Group, which provide full details of the trial currently being conducted. You will hear the importance Paul places on the Portarlington Safe Harbour as the gateway to the Bellarine.

Trial ferry berths at Docklands

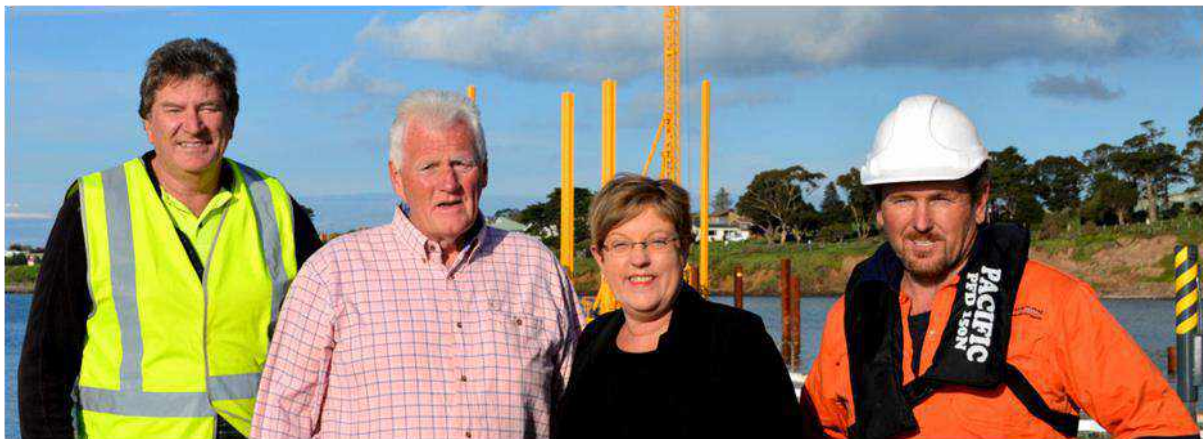


With the new Portarlington Safe Harbour breakwaters due for completion early next year, the new finger pier construction to start in June 2016 and the floating ferry berth completed, we can then successfully trial the ferry on Port Phillip and up the Yarra.

With everything in place you have all the ingredients for a regular ferry service from the Bellarine (Portarlington) to Melbourne CBD.

2016 July

The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Police and Minister for Water was given an inspection of the progress of the pier works.



Shane Hickey, Managing Director, Australian Project Solutions, John Rae, Minister Neville and Paul Johnson, Director, PWJ Constructions

A [Safe Harbour Open Day](#) was a huge success with over 350 attending information sessions and explanation tours.



Harbour open day a winner among piers

PORTARLINTON'S John Rae has described the safe harbour open day at the weekend as a perfect exercise in community consultation and information.

The chair of the Portarlinton Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group estimated about 350 people attended the event, which offered informative tours of the pier and rock site

Mr Rae said all questions were answered by the construction teams and that he wanted to congratulate Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville who has supported the project from day one.

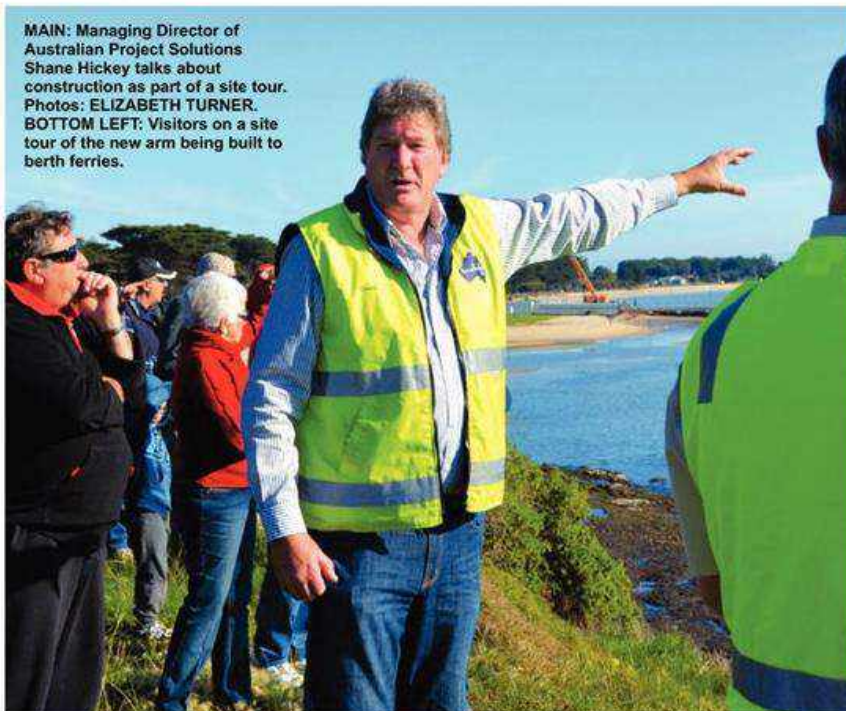
The \$15 million project got under way in February this year and was now over a third complete, with 640-metres of new rock breakwaters built around the harbour to support the mussel industry and local economy.

Ms Neville met with Paul Johnson Constructions last Friday as they start on site with construction of the new commercial berthing jetty now under way following the arrival a piling barge at Portarlinton.

For more information visit parks.vic.gov.au/portarlinton-harbour.



MAIN: Managing Director of Australian Project Solutions Shane Hickey talks about construction as part of a site tour. Photos: ELIZABETH TURNER. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Visitors on a site tour of the new arm being built to berth ferries.



First ferry test runs

Trials were conducted over three days with two days being completely sold out and well over 200 people on the third day. On the back of these numbers Port Phillip Ferries decided to extend the trials to 7 days a week until later in the year.

The local [Geelong press coverage](#) has been excellent, and more exposure [state-wide](#) plus [here](#) and here. Letter drops to every home on the Bellarine are scheduled to ensure every person on the Bellarine is well aware of the trial. It is paramount that the ferry trials succeed to ensure both the ferry operator and the State Government are confident that the Bellarine residents will fully support an ongoing service.



On the first day, there were as many people on the pier to wave the ferry off as there were passengers.

Television and print media were on board.



Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group
VIP's travelled on the first ferry journey



Murray Rance, CEO, Port Phillip Ferries, Paul Little AO, Chairman, Little Group, Bill Shannon, The Shannon Company and Simon Ramsay MP, Member for Western Victoria



View of approach to Melbourne from the wheelhouse



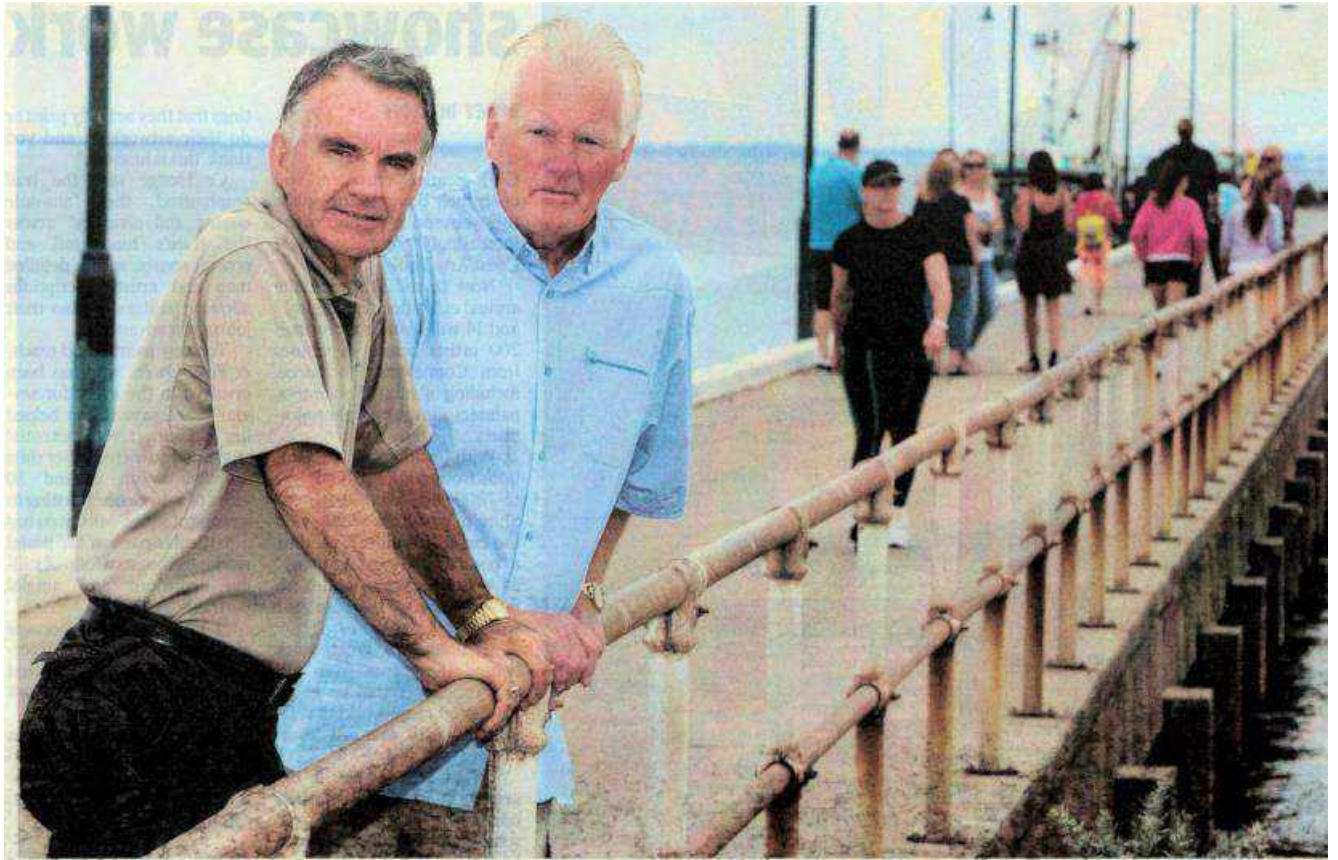
Arriving at Docklands on the first ferry trial: Elaine Rae, Grant Hutchins, reporter from Geelong Advertiser, John Rae

During the trial period the ferry is docking at a temporary berth at the Portarlington pier while the new floating ferry berth is being built. The temporary dock is fine for normal conditions but it can be impacted by strong northerly winds.

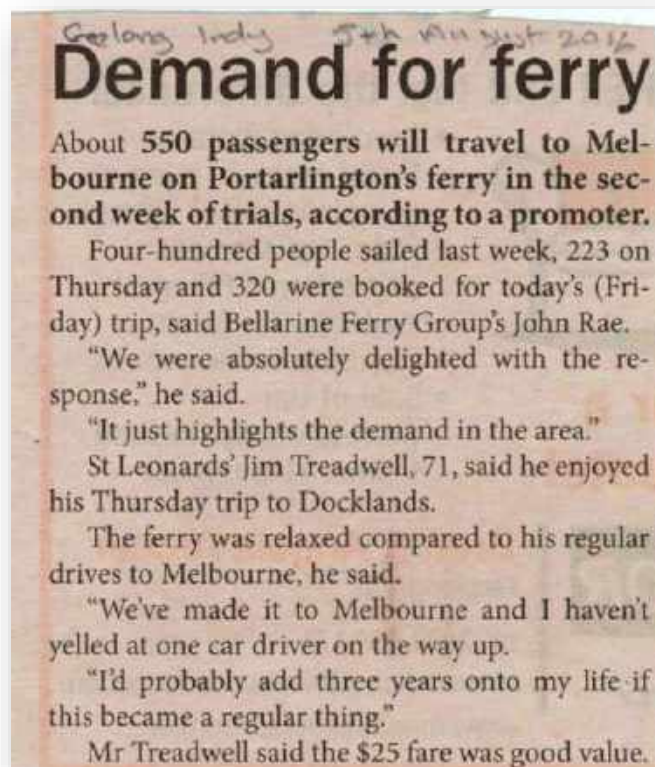
2016 August

Ferry trials begin!

After the successful three runs between Portarlington and Docklands, Port Phillip Ferries will [trial daily services](#) until the end of August.



Potential meets reality: Geoff Henderson and John Rae say it's exciting to see their hard work turn into a reality with the expanded passenger trials



2016 September

The Bellarine Ferry had an initial one day trial in early August and in response to support, is now [being trialled](#) seven days a week until later this year. This is all good news!

Portarlington Safe Harbour

The first stage of the Portarlington Safe Harbour project is in 3 separate builds.

1. The 175 metre new pier designed to allow the mussel farmers to bring heavier vehicles onto the pier to load their mussels. This build is now complete.



2. Build the breakwaters to double the size of the existing harbour which will also make the harbour a Safe Harbour.

The build is going well and will be finished later this year.

3. Build the floating ferry pontoon berth. Install wave panels on the outer pier and provide appropriate fendering and mooring on the new commercial berthing jetty ready for the mussel farmers to move over to when completed.

Work has commenced with the piling "jack-up" barge installing the 83 piles. Now the piles are in place the connections (sleeves) are being constructed so that the precast crossheads and decking can be installed.



The piles are now in place for the new pier which will house the ferry berth.

All works should be completed by July 2017 (subject to weather).

2016 October

We were also on hand for a [good news story](#).



Sylvia Blegg from Indented Head celebrates her 101st birthday on the Portarlington ferry last week, with her brother Don, 96, daughter Yvonne and son-in-law Vin, along with John Rae and Geoff Henderson from the Bellarine Ferry group.

Leaving
Melbourne
behind



2016 November

We have been waiting over 9 years to say these words

The Bellarine Ferry is here to stay!

On Monday, 21 November the Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Police and Minister for Water [announced](#) a deal had been struck with [Port Phillip Ferries](#) that guaranteed the ferry service between Portarlington and Docklands for the [next 3 years](#).



John Rae, MC for the Ministerial announcement



Minister Neville makes announcement

This period will give the ferry service time to build up patronage to ensure a permanent service.

Minister Neville also said that work was underway to raise the speed limits on the Yarra River to an appropriate speed which would slash journey times by up to 15 minutes. She said this was on track to be in place early in the New Year, subject to safety and environmental review.

Port Phillip Ferries chief executive officer Murray Rance, said he was enormously grateful for the support the community had given to the ferry service during the trial period.

The permanent service started on Tuesday 22 November with three services per day between Portarlington and Docklands.

The service started with one ferry but as passenger numbers grow, a second ferry will be added.

Both a hot drink and bike storage facility are being looked at.

The Bellarine Ferry Group sincerely thank

- Lisa Neville for all that she's done to enable this ferry service to become a reality.
- Paul Little for his vision that saw Port Phillip Bay utilized for commuter and tourist travel.

It is now up to us, the citizens of the Bellarine to make sure we utilise the ferry service so it becomes a permanent feature of the Bellarine.



Murray Rance, CEO, Port Phillip Ferries and Minister Neville



Portarlington Safe Harbour

The Breakwater Works: commenced on the 22 February 2016.

The works are progressing very well with 270m of the 'access footprint' of the Eastern Breakwater complete i.e. the foundation. Northern Breakwater also progressing well with approximately 325m (seabed) of the 370m breakwater completed to high tide mark. The contractor is now placing armor rock to the northern and eastern breakwaters to achieve the design profile.



The Pier Berthing Contractor: commenced with the piling 'jack-up' barge delivered on 26 June 2016 and piling commenced on 28 June 2016.

Piling works completed with all 83 piles installed. The Contractor has installed all precast concrete headstocks, making the pile to headstock connections (which involves placement of in-situ concrete to stitch the elements together) and recently has installed all the precast concrete deck panels.

The hardstand area at either end of the finger jetty has recently been poured and railings added to the south side of the pier.





Wave Protection: This tender was advertised on the 17th August 2016 and closed on the 7th September 2016. These works involve the completion of the 'Safe Harbour' wave protection works and is the final element to the creation of the safe harbour.

The key elements that are required to achieve a safe harbour and commercial berthing area at Portarlinton are:

- 100 metres of wave protection structure on the western side to protect the pier from waves from the west, and removal of the inner timber jetty to provide access to the new commercial berths.
- The works on the western wave protection and mooring facilities are expected to commence in later 2016 or early 2017 depending on the approvals process and the procurement timelines which will be established once a contractor is engaged. The existing timber lower landing and the old concrete pier will remain for now.
- A ferry terminal which will be made up of a specially designed floating pontoon. The pontoon will allow for a consistent ramp height for both boarding and exiting from the ferry.

The wave protection structures play an important part especially in bad weather in protecting all the international structures in the Safe Harbour including the ferry pontoon.

2016 December

Portion 2 works, which include mooring facilities, western wave protection and ferry berthing pontoon, were approved by the Parks Victoria Board.

[Return](#) to calendar

2017

February

Portarlington Safe Harbour

Construction of the eastern and northern breakwaters (Portion 3) is continuing ahead of schedule with the temporary harbour entrance closed and the new entrance now open and being used very successfully.

Works prior to closing the Temporary Harbour Entrance

Starting to close the Temporary Entrance



Temporary
entrance closed



The ferry berth pontoon cannot be installed until dredging takes place which should be around midyear.

Contracts have just been signed by the contractors and Parks Victoria CEO. Works are anticipated to commence in March subject to procurement timelines.

PWJ Constructions are presently setting up their site office and are busy establishing the site ready to start works.

Works to upgrade the commercial berths (Portion 1) were completed in December 2016, however they cannot be used until Portion 2 works are complete.

Bellarine Ferry

The acceptance and excitement around the introduction of the ferry continues, not only from the Bellarine residents but also from the other side of the bay.

Numbers are growing all the time. Word has spread in Melbourne and we are seeing more and more groups from such organisations as Probus, bicycle groups, community associations etc using and enjoying the ferry.

The Ferry and Portarlington were featured on POSTCARDS Channel 9 on the 19th March. As well as the ferry the Postcards team visited the Portarlington Mill, Grand Hotel and Advance Mussel Supply.



Screen shot from POSTCARDS: Ferry skipper, Captain Dave May and Alex Rance

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

Port Phillip Ferries have appointed a local person Connie Trathen as their Marketing and Business Coordinator. Connie worked previously at Tourism Greater Geelong so we will see a lot more focus on the ferry both locally, Melbourne and beyond.

Port Phillip Ferries is working with Bellarine organisations to capitalize on the opportunities the ferry presents by offering ferry passengers a range of activities once they disembark at Portarlington.

For example the free courtesy bus service that offers passengers a tour taking in four Bellarine wineries: Scotchmans Hill, Terindah, Bennets and Bellarine Estate has already become a must do for guests arriving by the ferry.

A bus picks up passengers at the pier on the half hour from 11.00am - 5.00pm weekends, public holidays or by prior arrangement. People are delivered and picked up at each winery which means people are free to stay as long as they wish to taste the local wines and enjoy a bite to eat before moving onto the next winery.

If a group of people are coming over on the ferry it is recommended that they call a couple of days before (0400 128 599) to ensure an appropriate size bus is waiting to pick them up.

Another form of transport is by BONGO vehicle. Bongos are electric tricycles that carry 6 passengers. They take passengers on either nominated tours or to a destination of their choosing. The Bongo van can also transport people from the pier to the main street if required. Further details are available at the Portarlington Community Information Booth, Portarlington Rotunda.

Also available at the Information Booth in the Rotunda is a list of 10 must do things when visiting the North Bellarine. Call into the Information for up-to-date local information. The booth is open Friday-Sunday 11.00am - 3.00pm and on major event days.

2017 February

Docklands Move

The ferry is soon to commence docking at a new location within Docklands which is a few hundred meters away from the current location. The ferry will be docking along the Harbour Esplanade which is a lot closer to the free trams and Etihad Stadium. We believe the change will take place in the next few weeks.

The "Location" section on [Port Phillip Ferries website](#) will be changed to show the new docking location. If you have not looked at this page on the Port Phillips Ferries website you should do so as it is an aerial view of docklands and you can see where the ferry docks.

You can also keep up to date by following [Port Phillip Ferries Facebook pages](#).

School Holidays

Kids Cruise ½ price over the school holidays (Mon – Fri only)

Children 3 and under are still free.

There will be "colouring in" on board for the children and "maiden voyage badges" will be handed out (until they run out).

Also Melbourne Star – Observation Wheel have an offer that allows kids to "Fly" for free accompanied by a full paying adult.

This is valid over the entire school holidays. 1 free child per 1 paying adult. Just show your ferry ticket to get the offer. It's not valid along with any other promotions.

The Wheel is situated at Harbour Town and you can catch a free tram from the dock straight to Harbour Town. If you want some gentle exercise you can walk there but with small children it would be better to take the tram.

2017 May

Bellarine Ferry

Port Phillip Ferries have provided us with the following information:

"The last few months have been and gone in a flash as we celebrate our 6 month anniversary travelling between Portarlington and Docklands.

There has been some fabulous autumn weather with a few days so calm that we have been spotting dolphins and penguins in the bay.

Although we are still waiting to pull into the new pier in Portarlington harbour we are enjoying the attention where we dock with the rock wall now open to the public.

Our regular commuters are becoming part of the family with a great bond and friendship forming between them and all of our crew.

We have welcomed a couple more new members to the team, including our new skipper Matt Wardley.

If you have travelled with us recently you will have seen and used our new carbon fibre ramp, and noticed we now disembark via the back deck when in Portarlington.

Once again we would like to thank the community for their ongoing support and encourage you to continue to spread the word to get us through our first Winter trade."

Drinks

We have also been advised that the ability to purchase refreshments and snacks will be available with the addition of a vending machine being installed on the ferry in the coming weeks.

Bellarine Bayside have been holding discussions with Port Phillip Ferries with the aim of exploring a number of options for attracting visitors to the area.

One option includes the offer of a potential package that may include overnight accommodation in a cabin in the Portarlington Holiday Park as part of a trip by ferry to Portarlington.

This and other options to attract visitors to the town and district will continue to be investigated into the future.



Portarlington Safe Harbour

The Breakwater Works are now complete and ramps have been created on both sides of the eastern breakwater so people can still walk along the beach without being interrupted by the new breakwater.

The contractor has finished and left the site. The site clean-up and fence has been reinstated including installation of mulch. Two temporary signs have been installed on the entry to both breakwaters, warning of uneven surface with deep holes.



People can still walk/fish on both breakwaters although the eastern breakwater is only designed and constructed for vehicle traffic.



With the demolition works of the old finger jetty and more recently the western wharf section of the pier head complete, the contractor PWJ Constructions have now recently completed the piling on the 66m x 4.5m western hard stand that will support the wave screens. The pile sleeves are currently being installed with grouting to follow.

Offsite fabrication of all concrete components as well as the pontoon components is also underway.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

This shows the right-hand side of the new finger pier that requires dredging before the ferry can move to its permanent berth.



This photo gives you an idea how long the section of the north wall is.



Parks Victoria have announced that a ranger will be appointed to look after the new Portarlington Safe Harbour and will report to the Parks Victoria office at Queenscliff. The ranger's list of duties includes being responsible for keeping the new asset in good working order, including dredging and other maintenance tasks plus liaising with stakeholders such as the mussel farmers, recreational fisherman, Bellarine Bayside and the ferry operator. Events days would also come under the ranger's list of duties.

2017 August

Portarlington Safe Harbour

Parks Victoria continues its good work on building the Portarlington Safe Harbour.

Western Wharf Wave Protection Works With the western wharf section of the pier head completed, the wave screens have been delivered and installed.

The wave screens for the remainder of the western pier are gradually being delivered to site and installed. It is expected all wave protection works will be completed by late September depending on the weather. Work on the wave screens requires calm weather due to the need for divers to assist during the installation.

Moorings on the north side of new pier (that runs west to east) The fabrication of fenders and walers for the commercial mooring and berthing infrastructure is now complete and subject to weather, the installation works will commence late September 2017. The necessary timber mooring piles have been delivered and are ready for installation. The piling work was delayed to allow for dredging near the old finger jetty area. The dredging in this area is now completed including the removal of 108 old timber piles from the seabed.

Power, water, sewer and fire services These services have now been installed to the pier entrance. All services will be running under the new pier. Works are now expected to be completed in October subject to the weather.

Ferry floating berth The floating ferry berth has been completed off site and now is attached to a barge in the safe harbour waiting for the wave protection work to be completed.

The floating berth access ramp has been delivered. The length of the ramp is designed to enable the ramp to be usable in all stages of the tide. Its width is wide enough to allow wheel chair access.

Dredging While the dredging of sand in the new harbour is complete the removal of a limited amount of rock to provide the necessary depth for the ferry to operate from the new floating terminal is still to happen. All the necessary pre work actions are currently underway.

Bellarine Ferry



Port Phillip Ferries have added a number of new initiatives

1. Experience travel between Portarlington and Geelong via ferry – a relaxed and different view than by road. Passengers from Geelong can also take up a package deal with visits to Scotchmans Hill Winery and Terindah Estate winery for wine tastings and to Terindah Estate a two-course dinner and wines
2. Special deals for Seniors Week, commuters and the September school holidays.

2017 December

Portarlington Safe Harbour

Stage 1 of the [Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan](#) is nearing competition. This stage of the 3 stage Safe Harbour project covered the Maritime Precinct.

Main elements of the Maritime Precinct were to:

- Repair the pier at the western end that needed a new pier structure due to its poor condition.
- Undertake work to create a safe harbour. This was achieved by adding two breakwater walls, one on the north side and one on the eastern side.
- Add a new pier to separate pedestrians walking on the pier from commercial mussel/fishing traffic.
- Add western wave protection panels.
- Construct floating ferry berthing pontoon and landing area.
- Construct new pier to provide addition moorings and commercial boat unloading facility.
- Dredge excess sand from new harbour.
- Add cover plates and hand rails between the new pier and old pier.

Parks Victoria has done an excellent job in building the Safe Harbour. They included public information days to keep the public up to date on progress which was also excellent.

These images show the progress with the finger arm and ferry berthing pontoon.



There is one final action yet to be completed.

Tenders have been prepared to have a contractor dredge one area close to the shore to allow more room for the ferry to manoeuvre on days where there is a strong northerly wind. The area is made up of hard clay and needs a digger on a barge to break it up before it can be removed. It is planned for this action to take place around March 2018.

There is also one further action that was not included in the original project that we feel is needed. We believe that if a clip-on walkway was added to the eastern side of the new pier from the ferry berth to the shore it would improve safety by keeping ferry passengers clear of vehicles driving down the pier. We will continue to work with the appropriate authorities to have this installed.

We believe Portarlington and all other Bellarine residents should be very proud of the new Portarlington Safe Harbour and we are grateful for all their ongoing support.

Bellarine Ferry

First Year November saw the Bellarine Ferry's first year of operation and the passenger numbers continue to grow.

New Service Over the December and January period a new service has been introduced between Portarlington and Geelong on Saturday afternoons. These services have been a great exercise in raising awareness of the ferry within the region.

Permanent Portarlington berth The ferry is now docking at the new floating pontoon in the Portarlington Safe Harbour which besides being closer to the shore for passengers it allows the ferry to berth overnight.

Additional new Ferry A new ferry purposely built for Port Phillip conditions and built by [INCAT](#) for Port Phillip Ferries has arrived. The \$10 million ferry aptly named **Bellarine Express** was [officially launched](#) by The Hon Linda Dessau, Governor of Victoria, on [21 December](#). Also in attendance were:

- The Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Police and Minister for Water. Minister Neville played a major part in making both the Portarlington Safe Harbour and the Bellarine ferry a reality.
- Mr Paul Little, CEO, Little Group, who addressed guests and had the all important bottle of champagne to launch the ferry.



Governor Linda Dessau, and Paul Little at ferry launch

Bellarine Express holds 400 passengers and contains many great features like a café, great seating with a table similar to an aircraft design, WIFI powering points and many other features. The vessel has a higher service speed vs the current ferry and is driven by props, not by jets of water which will give it improved manoeuvrability in the Portarlington Safe Harbour.

The vessel will now conduct sea trials and testing into the new year. There are a few scenarios on the table for where and how the new vessel will be operating, but until these trials are completed, there will no announcements just yet on the future services.

Increased Speed Trials There is a 3 month trial for the current ferry *Capricornian Dancer* to operate at an increased maximum speed of 15 knots on the Yarra River between beacons 23/24 and the West Gate Bridge. Higher potential vessel speeds plus river increased speeds will allow reduced travel times in the future. [Return](#) to calendar

2018

January

Thanks to having a safe harbour and ferry pontoons to embark and disembark passengers, Portarlinton had its first cruise ship visit.

Water depth near Geelong piers is too shallow so Portarlinton will become the destination for cruise ships.



Tenders brought passengers ashore



and buses took them across the Bellarine and Geelong



With so many residents from the northern Bellarine on the pier to witness the ship, it gave us another opportunity to talk about the benefits of the harbour and ferry projects.



John Rae and Geoff Henderson talk to locals at the pier

2018 February

At long last – the [new pier](#) is officially launched.

Port's safe harbour officially opens



Bellarine MP Lisa Neville, Portarlington Safe Harbour president John Rae, left, and vice president Geoff Henderson stand in front of excited supporters. Photos: REBECCA ADAM

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville officially opens the newly completed Portarlington Safe Harbour.

[Berthing allocations](#) are in place.



Portarlington Safe Harbour

6/12/2017
Coordinate System: GCS WGS 1984
Datum: WGS 1984



Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without error (any risk) and therefore disclaims all liability which may arise from you relying on the information. Data source acknowledged to the State Digital Repository. The State of Victoria and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

- Commercial Berth only
- Ferry Berth only
- Anchoring Permitted
- Swimming Only Zone (No Vessels)

- Lateral Mark - Port
- Lateral Mark - Starboard
- Special Mark



2018 March

Portarlington Safe Harbour

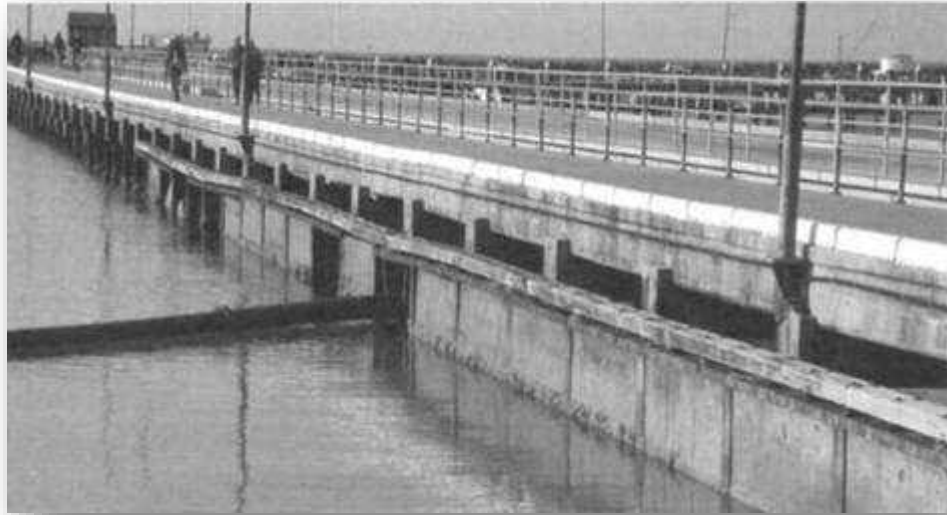
Construction of Sand Movement Groyne

As part of the Portarlington Safe Harbour work, a new groyne needed to be constructed between the new and old pier.

The new groyne is designed to reduce sand movements and wave action and alleviate beach erosion within the harbour.

Parks Victoria scheduled the work to have the minimum disruption to the commercial users and the general public. This was particularly difficult as a long weekend occurred during the construction period.

Old Groyne



New Groyne



Dredging of Hard Material

Parks Victoria has called for tenders to dredge and dispose of up to 6,000 m³ hard material (clay and weathered rock) from shallow waters in the area between the pier and the eastern wall.

Works also include a pre/post construction survey and the installation of temporary navigation markers for the period of dredging. The existing pier will not be used for handling of dredged waste as this material will be removed by barges.

It is expected work will begin sometime in June and the work should take approximately 2 months to complete depending on the weather.

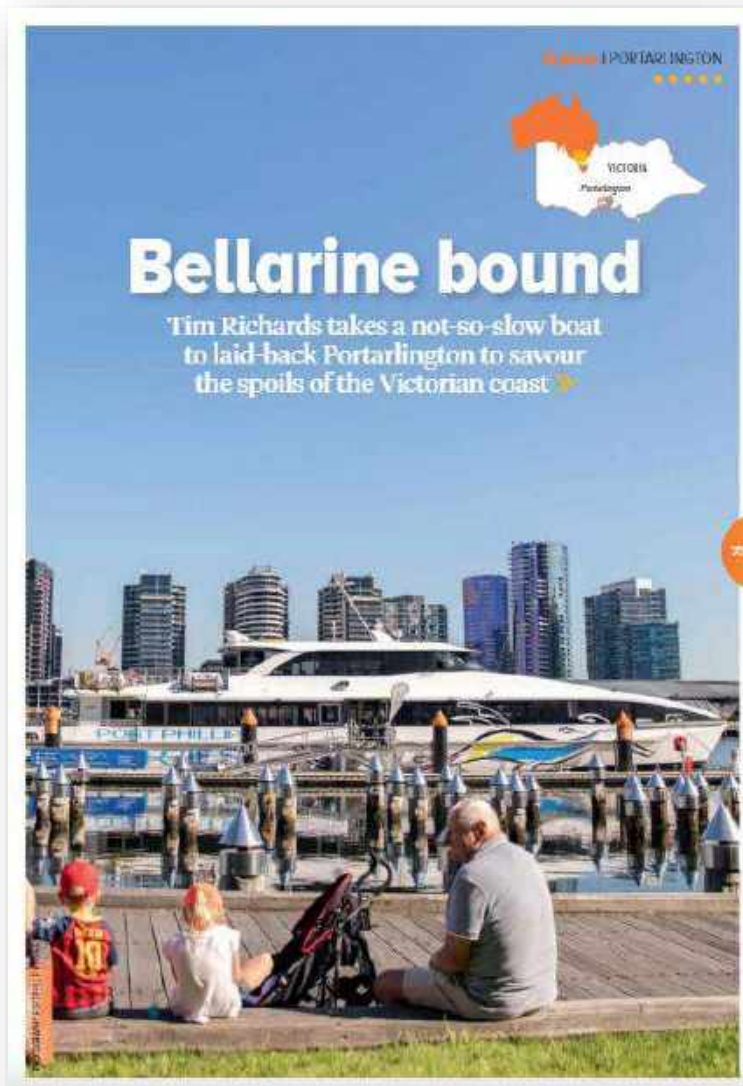
Ferry

Port Phillip Ferries have seen out the end of their second summer with good results in passenger numbers. This Labour Day long weekend saw 300 people come over to the Bellarine on both Saturday and Sunday. That is more than twice the numbers that visited the same time last year.

Large numbers of senior groups continue to visit during the week with sometimes upwards of 150 people visiting on the Tuesday and Thursdays.

The new vessel, the *Bellarine Express*, is being enjoyed by all especially with the new café now in operation. In particular the regular commuters are enjoying a coffee to and from Melbourne and the day trippers both ways enjoy the freedom to purchase a snack or drinks. It certainly is a great value-add to the service. The daily commuters are also noticing an increase in regular numbers and the crew are meeting more and more new residents to the region.

The service is creating a lot of great publicity for the region, including the inclusion in the [February](#) edition of the Jetstar magazine that featured Portarlington. Many internet users, or "on line influencers" as they are referred to in the marketing business, are spreading the word about the service and what there is to do once they arrive at Portarlington. Port Phillip Ferries packaging of the service with the QTrain and other products have also stirred a lot of interest in the media.



Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

In Melbourne, the new docking location has created great interest. The location directly on the tram lines has made the ferry much more visible to capture the passing public's interest.



Port Phillip Ferries featured in the Herald Sun recently around the services announced for Geelong.

The first of these Geelong direct to Melbourne services ran on 25 March for the Geelong vs Melbourne AFL match at the MCG.

They will trial a small number of these services over the football season to gauge if there is enough interest to consider some permanent services on that route. These Geelong trials will operate with the *Bellarine Express* and the *Capricornian Dancer* ferries. Services between Portarlington and Docklands will continue during the trials.

Port Phillip Ferries expect that passenger numbers over the Easter period will be up significantly over last year.



MORE SERVICES ADDED TO FERRY TRIAL

MORNING Melbourne to Geelong passenger ferries will be added to a trial of services between the two cities. Port Phillip Ferries will offer services to Geelong during a two-day trial that will begin later this month.



MORE FREE TRIALS FOR BAY FERRY SERVICE

FREE trial ferry trips between Melbourne and Geelong are being expanded in a push for a permanent service following an "overwhelming response" to commuter trials.



FIRST FREE GEELONG TO MELBOURNE FERRY RIDES BEGIN

FREE ferry services between Melbourne and Geelong will be offered to test the commuter market tomorrow. But will the tests be successful to warrant a permanent service?

2018 June

Geelong Connected Communities and the Committee for Geelong are [both behind](#) a Geelong-Docklands ferry trial.



Talk about a ferry between Geelong and Melbourne has even hit UK based media.

The screenshot shows the top portion of a news article on the Daily Mail Australia website. The page features the 'Daily Mail AUSTRALIA' logo on the left and a 'WIRES' logo on the right. A navigation bar includes links for Home, U.K., U.S., News, World News, Sport, TV&Showbiz, Femail, Health, and Science. Below this is a blue header for 'Wires Home'. The main headline is 'Geelong-Melbourne ferry run under trial'. The byline reads 'By AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATED PRESS'. The publication and update dates are both listed as '07:25 AEST, 25 July 2018'. A row of social media sharing icons (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, Email, and a generic share icon) is present. The article text begins with: 'A new ferry link between Geelong and Melbourne is being trialled, with a private operator offering free transport to gauge response. Port Philip Ferries offered its first free morning and afternoon service on Tuesday on board its 400-seat ferry, with the second trial run expected to go ahead on July 31. "We will also look at parking and other logistics down the track if the services become permanent," the service said on its website, with the trip believed to take about 105 minutes.'

Ferry

How is the ferry going?

It's been great to now have the opportunity to compare a previous year of patronage, and pleasing to see that numbers are up on last year on **all** fronts. Commuter numbers have increased, and although they are not the fastest growing sector, they are the most loyal users of the ferry and do a wonderful job spreading the word to potentially new commuters.

All passengers, including commuters, are pleased to see the huge changes in recent months with the new boat, café commencing and recent liquor licence.

Seniors groups continue to play a large part in Monday to Friday patronage but it's the packaging with other businesses that are most effective.

People are really drawn to having an entire experience mapped out for them, with a one stop shop on [Port Phillip Ferries](#) website. Therefore partnerships with the likes of the Q Train, Terindah Estate and others, are making a big difference to passenger numbers.

Trials for a possible direct Geelong to Melbourne ferry

Port Phillip Ferries will run a two day trial from Geelong in late July 2018. In conjunction with a local business group, Committee for Geelong the trial will gauge the interest in a regular ferry service running between Geelong and Docklands. For a gold coin donation the trial will take ferry passengers on a tour of Corio Bay.

It is believed that to be viable a long-term ferry service would have to attract at least 130 passengers per day.

The target market would be the estimated 17,000 Geelong commuters who currently travel to Melbourne each day. With a trip time of 100 minutes it remains to be seen if a regular ferry service while being 30 to 40 minutes longer is more attractive than sitting in a car on a gridlock highway or travelling to Melbourne via V-Line in a packed train.

As a regular daily service would be direct between Geelong and Docklands there should be no impact on the Portarlington - Docklands service.



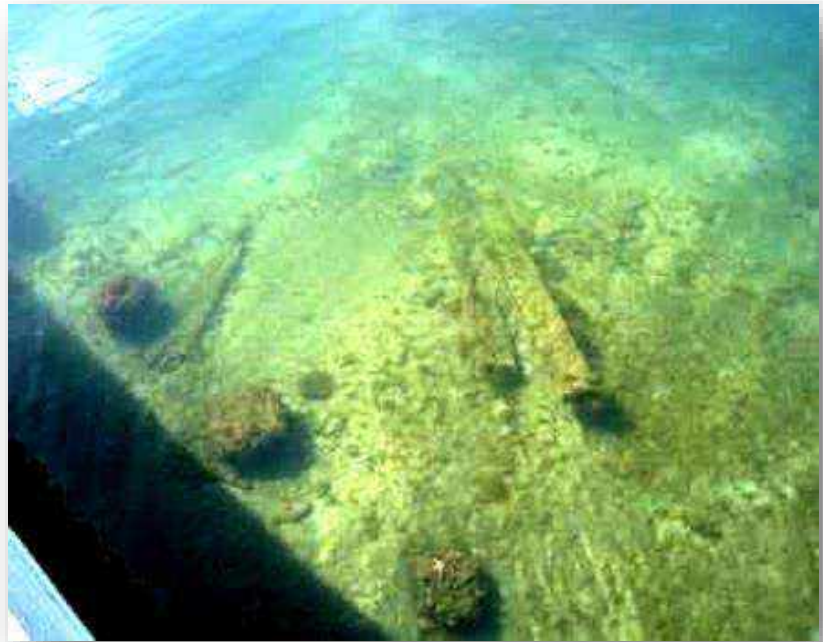
Portarlinton Safe Harbour

Actions have been performed on the north /west corner of the pier to remove the rotting bearers and planks. New foundations and walkway have been added to bring that area up to the standard of the rest of the pier.



Calm Day

During the first week in June, we had one of those magnificent days when the bay was perfectly calm and the sky was perfectly clear. Standing on the new pier, the conditions made it possible to see the remains of prior structures many meters under water



The future of the old pier

Parks Victoria have notified us of the decommissioning of the old Portarlington pier. "Portarlington Pier has been a popular destination for summer holidays, anglers catching fish and a major contributor to the Portarlington economy through commercial fishing and tourism for half a century.

The old Portarlington Pier has reached the end of its practical design life and needs to be permanently closed for public safety. A new replacement pier has already been constructed adjacent to the old pier.



Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

The old Portarlington Pier on the left is now closed for public safety. The new pier on the right will continue to serve the Portarlington community.

Portarlington Harbour is an important recreational and commercial destination. In February 2018 the first stage of works to deliver the [Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan](#) were completed. The project was designed to support the Bellarine Peninsula's growing aquaculture industry and help boost tourism and the local economy.



As the manager of over 40 piers and jetties around Port Phillip and Westernport, Parks Victoria continually monitors the condition of piers across Port Phillip and programs regular maintenance and major works to ensure the continued safety and enjoyment of our bays and waterways.

The old pier was built in the 1970's with a 50-year design life. As the old pier approached the end of its design life, plans to build a new pier were incorporated into long term plans for the safe harbour precinct.

The new Portarlington Pier, which opened in July 2015, was constructed as part of delivering stage one of the [Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan](#).

The new pier at Portarlington has been designed to ensure long term access for pedestrians, commercial fishing, recreational vessels, passenger ferry services and other aquaculture related activity.

Portarlington Pier is monitored regularly and recent inspections by specialist engineers identified that the old pier is no longer safe for pedestrian access.

Prolonged exposure to saltwater has caused the steel reinforcement to rust which slowly undermines the concrete and weakens the structure.

The inspections found elements of the ageing structure have deteriorated to the point that concrete has started to break away from steel reinforcements and fall into the water.

With a closure now in place, the public and commercial users of the pier will now need to use the new pier.

Parks Victoria has commenced planning to eventually decommission and remove the old pier and will provide further community updates as these plan progress.

2018 August

Great news – if re-elected, the Andrews Labor Government [will fund](#) a covered walkway along the pier to the ferry berths.

Labor pledges more than \$5.5m to Bellarine projects

BY REBECCA ADAM

A RE-ELECTED Andrews Labor Government has pledged to inject more than \$5.5 million into two Bellarine projects.

During a visit to the Bellarine on

Friday, Premier Daniel Andrews announced that if re-elected in November he would deliver \$5 million towards stage two of the Drysdale Sports Precinct, and invest \$550,000 to build a covered walkway from the beachfront to the ferry berths on Portarlinton Pier.

Ms Neville also said the new covered walkway in Portarlinton would make sure ferry passengers stayed dry and safe as they walked along the 190-metre long pier.

For more, see page 11.

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2022

October

Covered Walkway

At long last, the final piece in the puzzle!

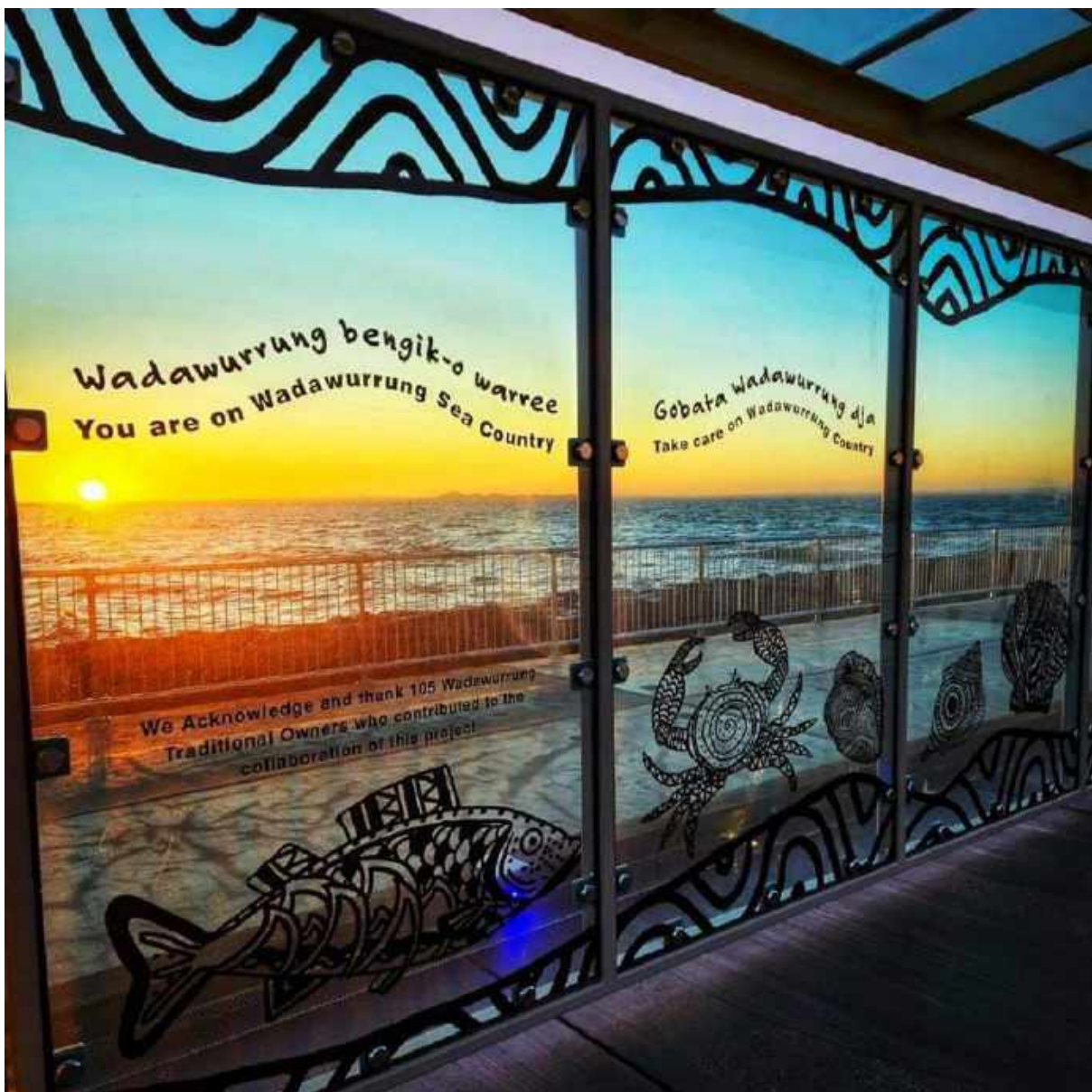
The covered walkway along the pier to the ferry berth is in place.

The final piece for the offshore component of the [Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan](#) is completed.

It started in [2018](#) with the Andrews Labor Government announcing the building of the covered walkway.

Hon Lisa Neville MP, Member for Bellarine, Minister for Police and Minister for Water officially opened the walkway on a beautiful afternoon.

[Premier Daniel Andrews](#) endorsed this development and the Wadawurrung Welcome visitors will receive.



More information about the design and construction work

Custom Metal Imagery

In what has turned out to be one of the larger-scale executions of the Perforated Metal process in Australia, [Custom Metal Imagery](#) were contracted to partner with Parks Victoria to custom-fabricate panels along a 120m long covered walkway into Portarlington Harbour

Part of the \$9.6 million redevelopment of Portarlington Pier, the walkway has been designed as a gallery installation of local Traditional Owners' artwork, as it takes passengers along the impressive metal and glass structure from the shore to the ferry terminal.

The Wadawurrung people's stories of place, water and journey are faithfully replicated in fine detail as a stunning example of what can be achieved in Perforated Metal architecture.

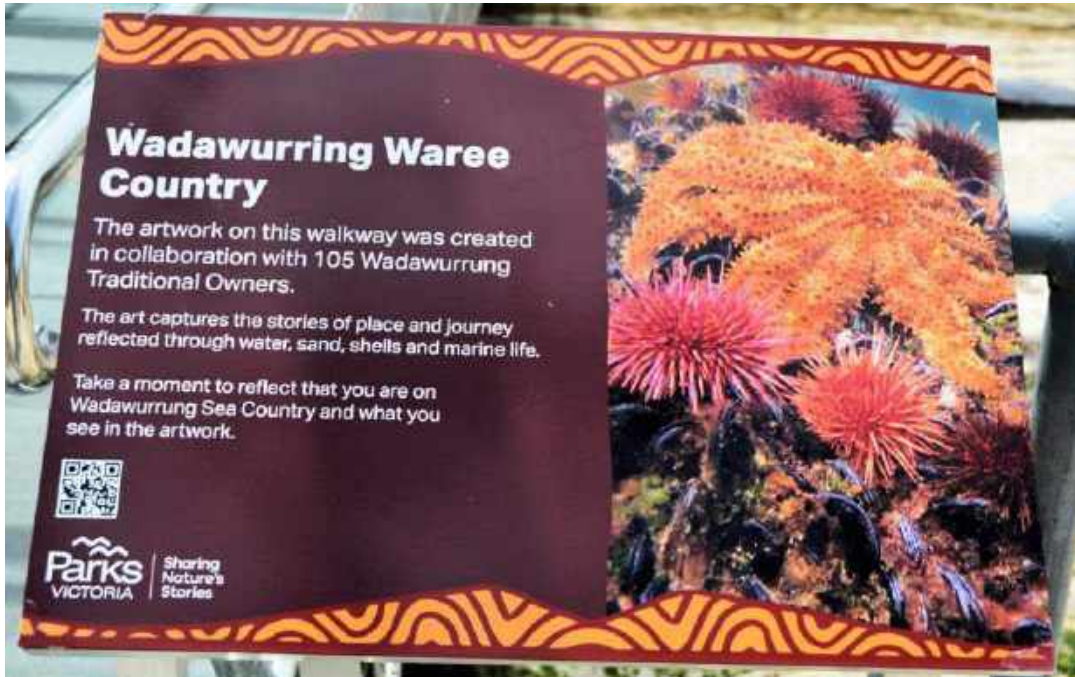


[AW Maritime](#) designed the covered walkway

Parks Victoria recently announced the completion of a covered walkway at Portarlington, designed by AW Maritime and constructed by PW Johnson Constructions. The walkway celebrates the area's culture and surrounds and includes a 120-metre-long mural telling the stories of the local Wadawurrung Traditional Owners. Celebrating a sense of being on Wadawurrung Country, the designs capture stories of place, water and journey.



Welcome to the walkway



A celebration as Geoff Henderson and John Rae are joined by Lisa Neville and sign-off on behalf of all the volunteers who supported the development of a safe harbour and commuter ferry for Portarlinton



Thankyou Lisa for travelling on this journey with us

Geoff and John

Thank-you for reading the history of our community volunteer project

Geoff Henderson and John Rae

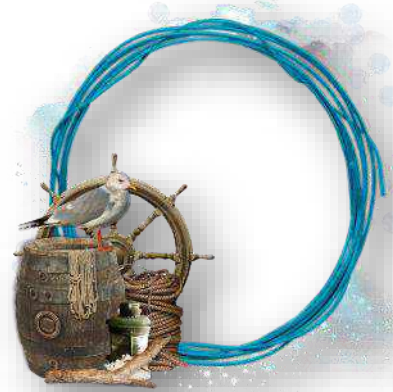
For more information, please contact Geoff

bellarineferry@gmail.com

39 The Esplanade

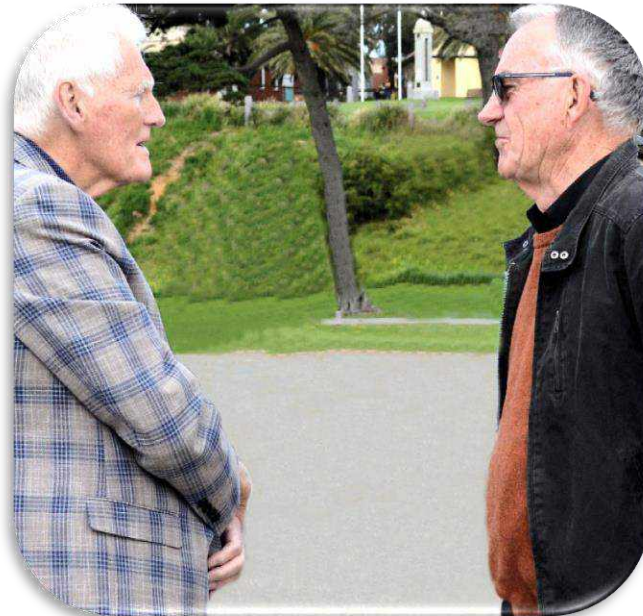
PORTARLINGTON VIC AUSTRALIA 3223

(03) 5259 2481



Please note: many images used are subject to copyright

Please contact Geoff for possible use



Thankyou John and Geoff for your dedication to a safe harbour to everyone who depends on in it for work and refuge

Thankyou for championing and staying the distance so folk can raise a family in country Victoria and have a safe and relaxing journey to work in Melbourne

Document compiled by Elizabeth Turner

[Return](#) to calendar

Sustainability Plan to DPCD July 2009
Portarlington Safe Harbour Group

The Community Opportunity Workshop that quantified community aspirations identified the construction of a safe harbour as a primary project for the CBI. Residents wished to have targeted community input into the Parks Victoria multi-million dollar development.

The Portarlington Safe Harbour Group has supported community information sessions and facilitated the distribution and feedback to Parks Victoria on the proposed design during the development of the draft plan phase. On occasions the group provided a 'sounding board' role and gave suggestions and direct feedback to Parks Victoria. The group did not gain representation on the Victorian Government Safe Harbour Steering Committee, despite representing Portarlington as a key stakeholder.

The Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan is with the Victorian Government for consideration with expected pronouncement in the next few months. It is anticipated that the group will have a role with Parks Victoria in the release and subsequent activities.

Achievements

- Recognised as the primary contact group by Parks Victoria for local safe harbour input and local communications.
- Coordinated local information sessions for community participation with Parks Victoria.
- Pending release of the final Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan. It is anticipated that the group will have a role with Parks Victoria in the release and subsequent activities.

Sustainability of the project

Ongoing options for the Portarlington Safe Harbour group will become clear once the Safe Harbour Master Plan is released. Given the substantial community support for a safe harbour, it is imperative that a focal point remains in Portarlington to channel community contributions, queries and concerns to Parks Victoria.

As a recognised project under the Victorian Government sponsored community building initiative, the project is provided with a status that gives credibility to the project aims and aspirations and therefore some leverage with Parks Victoria. Without such status, it is unclear if the project can continue to provide an important community role.

Continue

Sustainability Plan to DPCD July 2009

Bellarine Ferry Group

This project received the highest priority from the Community Opportunity Workshop.

A previous ferry service to Melbourne offered a quicker, safer and environmentally friendly commute to Melbourne than public and private transport however ceased due to the limited business acumen of the ferry company. The community have overwhelmingly supported the work of the project group and are excited that efforts are being made to restore a commuter ferry service.

The group has achieved major gains with Parks Victoria and two mooring and berthing points for 300 passenger capacity ferries will be included in the final Portarlinton Safe Harbour Master Plan. The group has hosted potential ferry providers who have been impressed with the comprehensiveness of their research, service design and costings. The group are recognised and the primary source for

The group has held discussions with Maunsell Company who were commissioned by the Department of Transport to undertake a high level analysis of the potential viability of Port Phillip ferry commuter services. The study found that a ferry service from Portarlinton to Melbourne would be potentially viable from a travel time perspective; the direct route would be significantly quicker than existing transport options for commuters from the Bellarine Peninsula and would not compete with existing rail services from Geelong.

As a result of the group's work, two ferry berths will be included in the final Portarlinton Safe Harbour Master Plan.

A recent state government funded consultation (\$50,000) has invited team input into the design of a Bellarine survey to gauge potential usage. The group will also address a range of community and business organisations in conjunction with the survey.

The group continues to be the primary contact for all information and consultations regarding a commuter ferry service, at the local and state government levels.

Continue

Achievements

- Provided data specifications into the Portarlinton Safe Harbour Master Plan for the mooring and berthing requirements for a ferry.
- Conducted discussions with Major Projects Victoria over the possible use of a ferry terminal at the finger location of Station Pier.
- Input into the Maunsell Consultation with the City of Greater Geelong for assessment of ferries on the bay – Portarlinton determined as the only feasible site.
- Successfully completed an extensive investigation into the feasibility of a daily commuter ferry service between the Bellarine Peninsula (Portarlinton) and Melbourne.
- Successfully upgraded draft Portarlinton Safe Harbour Master Plan (Parks Victoria) to include both docking and mooring provision for two 300 capacity ferries.
- Liaised with safe harbour designers to ensure the final master plan was user-friendly for daily ferry operations, for example entrance to face east, ferry terminal close to shoreline, straight on approach to docking area, adequate water depth etc.
- Held numerous public information sessions for Bellarine residents on the progress of the project.
- Acknowledged information source for ferry development for Geelong and Bellarine media.
- Successfully lobbied various State Government departments to conduct investigations into the potential of a daily ferry operation.
- At the request of State Government the group provided base assumption data for consultant currently conducting a survey into the estimated passenger usage for a daily service.
- Hosted on-site visits for potential ferry operators and connecting transport support operators.
- Prepared a PowerPoint presentation on the project to promote commuter benefits to Bellarine community groups.
- Received a \$1,000 grant from the Bellarine Community Bank (Bendigo Bank) for presentation material to support further work on the projects.

Sustainability of the project

The project has been driven by the enthusiasm and skills of the team members who come from diverse professional backgrounds. The predominately retired team members have had the ability to draw on their personal resources to drive the project, including interstate travel and many commutes to Melbourne for meetings with State Government authorities and commercial enterprises.

The CBI auspice, as with the Portarlinton Safe Harbour project, has provided validity for the work of the project with government and commercial enterprises. It is unclear whether the project can be sustained without such leverage if it is solely based on the resources of community volunteers.

Given the authority with which the project team are held within government and the private sector, it is essential for the work of the group to continue. Two critical outstanding functions are: ability to work with potential ferry operators to identify and address operational issues and service promotion to ensure a smooth introduction; and feasibility of a service prior to construction of a safe harbour



Bellarine Times

Tuesday 8 April 2008
VOL 1. No 2

COVERING THE BELLARINE PENINSULA AND SURF COAST
www.bellarinetimes.com.au

FREE newspaper -
published weekly

Commuter ferry a step closer

By Mark Farrugia

THE draft master plan for a new harbour at Portarlington will include a berth for a future ferry to Melbourne.

This was confirmed yesterday by Parks Victoria's strategic parks and marine relations manager Elaine Carbines.

"There will certainly be space designated for a future ferry that could service a Portarlington to Melbourne route. I am not saying there will be a ferry at Portarlington, but the draft plan for the safe harbour will include

space for one," Carbines said.

The draft master plan, currently being prepared by consultants Meinhardt Infrastructure and Environment, was due for completion at the end of March but is reportedly still some weeks away.

Confirmation that a ferry berth will be included in the project is a major victory for the Bellarine Ferry Group, a community interest group that has been lobbying for ferry space at Portarlington for some time.

The group was formed last year as part of the state government's Community Business

Initiative programme.

"This has been a community-driven push and is a major victory for residents of the Bellarine. Having a ferry berth in place creates the possibility of opening up the bay for public transport and getting vehicles off the road," said the group's treasurer Geoff Henderson.

"Commuters from the Peninsula to Melbourne are the key to a ferry's viability. Tourist services may run during the day and on weekends, but we've been pushing for a berth that will accommodate a commuter ferry, rather than solely a tourist service."

In recent months, the Bellarine Ferry Group has met with local shipping experts regarding the harbour project. The group has also met with Major Projects Victoria regarding size restrictions on vessels at Station Pier in Port Melbourne, as well as representatives of the City of Port Phillip in relation to shipping movements.

When released, the draft master plan for the Portarlington harbour will be open for public comment for four weeks and public information sessions will be held. A final master plan will then be forwarded to the state government for funding consideration.



CRUISING across the bay to Melbourne by ferry could soon be an option for Bellarine commuters wanting to avoid congested road and rail routes.

Plans for a daily commuter ferry service between Portarlington and Melbourne are on track, despite the delayed release of the state government's Portarlington Safe Harbour Plan.

John Rae is secretary of the Bellarine Ferry Group, a group of community members who are driving the ferry service proposal. Rae said that while Parks Victoria had confirmed that a ferry berth was included in the plan, they were hoping for further details when the plan was released.

"Our anticipation is that the plan will be released at the end of August. We have invited Member for Western Victoria Gail Tierney onto our

waiting for a reply at this stage. She has given us fabulous support for the ferry proposal and is assisting us in our endeavours to undertake a feasibility study," said Rae.

He said the group was currently seeking funds to have a feasibility study carried out across the Bellarine Peninsula to establish how many people travelled daily to Melbourne.

"We are currently talking to both government and a commercial company regarding gaining the funds for that purpose. The feasibility study is vital for us to complete, so we can get a real picture of the potential for the ferry service," he said.

Key to the ferry proposal is the provision and timing of a berthing facility at Portarlington.

"One of the reasons the last ferry failed was because there were no adequate berthing facilities

Continue

available at Portarlington. We absolutely need that berth and we are thrilled that it is included in the Safe Harbour Plan. This eliminates the uncertainty of the service. Reliability is crucial to consumer confidence,” Rae said.

The Bellarine Ferry Group intends to send a representative to Brisbane and Sydney to investigate the ferry services to these two cities. The plan is for the Bellarine ferry to run a commuter service three times a day, during both the morning and evening peak periods, with the possibility of additional tourist services. It is anticipated that the service itself would be put out to tender by the state government.

The anticipated travel time between Portarlington and Station Pier is 42 minutes, with a two minute walk to the light rail and a 12 minute ride to the Melbourne CBD. This compares to an hour and 45

minutes to two hours by road in peak hour.

One manufacturer of a vessel suitable for the commuter ferry service is planning to test the bay waters soon.

Gary Ashton of Hastings-based Mariah Hovercraft Australia said they were currently building a large hovercraft for export and planned to trial their vessels in the bay before Christmas. He said the hovercraft could certainly operate as a ferry on Port Phillip Bay and cater for the route from Portarlington to Melbourne.

“It’s a 20 metre craft – an extremely large vessel which seats 80 to 100 people and can operate in all weather,” he said.

In the meantime, Rae said a ferry service might be introduced as part of the Portarlington Mussel Festival in January 2009, which attracts up to 15,000 people.

[Return](#)

Tuesday 26 August 2008

| coast | community | environment |

news **3**

'Musseling' in on the ferry tale ending

By Martelle Love

PORTARLINGTON could become the state's mussel capital and a major tourist attraction if a proposal to introduce a festival ferry service across the bay from Melbourne for the annual Portarlington Mussel Festival goes ahead.

Jenny Macaulay from festival organisers, Port Arts Network, said a lot of people traditionally come from Melbourne for the January event. She is now in discussions with the Bellarine Ferry Group about the possibility of providing a ferry service for the day.

"I suggested it would assist us and them and could work quite well. From a tourism perspective, a ferry would be great promotion for our festival and it would be great for the ferry group to promote the potential of the ferry service," she said.

Macaulay said the free, community festival provided the opportunity to promote community activities, music, visual arts, the mussels, wine, cheese and all the Bellarine had to offer.

"Portarlington is a great destination for people to trip down for the day, eat a pile of mussels or take home a pile of mussels and enjoy the country feel of a little fishing village so close to home," she said.

Bellarine Ferry Group secretary John Rae said the group's chairman, Grant Hutchins, was currently investigating the location of suitable vessels and operators that would be available for that day. It is anticipated the ferry would depart from Station Pier at Port Melbourne.

"We as a committee are interested to see how it operates on the day. People will get a taste of not just the famous Portarlington mussels, but also the experience of travelling by ferry between

Melbourne and Portarlington," he said.

Mussel farmer Lance Wiffen of Sea Bounty will be selling fresh mussels, oysters and prawns from the wharf on the day of the festival. He said the ferry option would be "fantastic".

"The only problem would be wharf space. We haven't got a safe harbour yet and it can be difficult on a rough day to berth alongside the pier. That could diminish or restrict the number of boats able to dock at the wharf, but at that time of year there's a good chance the weather will be fine," he said.

Parks Victoria is currently conducting a feasibility study into ferries operating on the bay.

Meanwhile, Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville said work had begun on the second stage of the Portarlington Pier upgrade which will strengthen the pier approach. The work follows on from

strengthening works to increase the pier's load capacity, which is important for the mussel farming industry.

Neville has also encouraged residents and users of Portarlington Harbour to take part in a community consultation process on work Parks Victoria is undertaking to plan for a safe harbour at Portarlington.

"The draft master plan will incorporate the development of new, or the refurbishment of existing infrastructure to meet the increased demand for commercial and recreational boating and promote the town as a place for yachts and boats to safely dock overnight," Neville said.

"I encourage residents and stakeholders to take part in the community consultation process that will take place upon the release of the draft master plan."

Harbour plan applauded by locals

By Martelle Love

THE draft master plan for the Portarlington safe harbour, released last week by Parks Victoria, has been warmly welcomed by the Bellarine community.

Member of the Bellarine Bayside foreshore committee of management have congratulated Parks Victoria on the release of the plan, with chairman Peter Kenny commenting that it "brings to the heart of Portarlington, the flair and zing that the town needs and deserves".

The committee's chief executive officer, Tim Page-Walker, agreed saying Portarlington's foreshore and harbour needs a major facelift and the draft master plan was a tremendous start.

Secretary of the Bellarine Ferry Group, Geoff Henderson, said everyone was "rapt" with the plan, which has provided for two ferries with the capacity to carry 300 passengers each. He said this had brought a Bellarine to Melbourne commuter ferry service another step closer.

With the ferry proposal moving ahead, Henderson said they

visualise having a cross-peninsula ferry bus service to enable commuters to use the service without parking at Portarlington for the day.

Mussel farmer Lance Wiffen of Sea Bounty said from his perspective, the draft plan was "fantastic".

"The separate place for the ferry operations and commercial side of business, which will give the public access without having to mingle with commercial operations, is great," he said.

With more boat berthing facilities included, Wiffen said there will be a lot of berths available for visitors who could stop and enjoy Portarlington for the day.

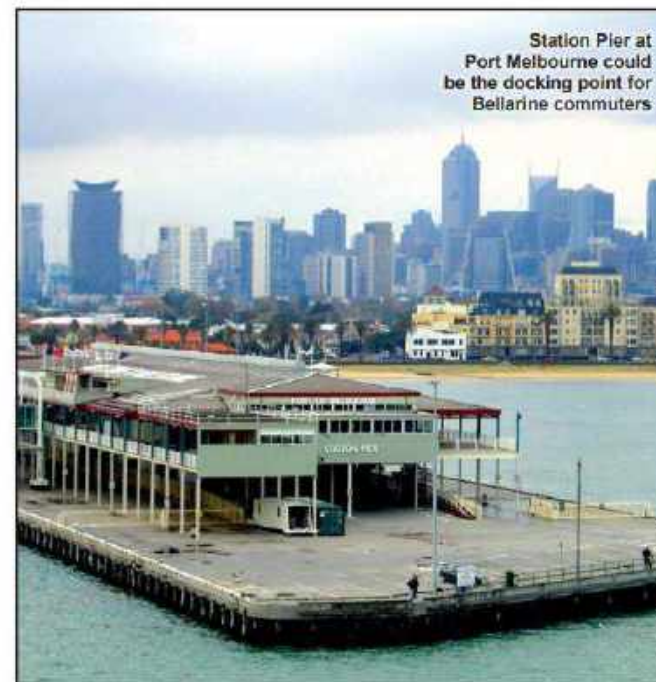
Portarlington Community Association president Monica Hayes said the residents had waited for the harbour for a long time and it was "way overdue". The association will hold an extraordinary meeting on 23 September to discuss its response to the draft plan.

Grand Hotel Portarlington co-owner and Bellarine Ferry Group chairman, Grant Hutchins, described the development as a

"key potential economic driver" for the town and the Bellarine peninsula.

"The key to its success, ongoing relevance and usability is the establishment of the

commuter ferry service, with its success dependent on attracting comparable fare and diesel subsidies to rail to ensure its competitive status as a transport option," he said.



Station Pier at Port Melbourne could be the docking point for Bellarine commuters

Tuesday 10 March 2009

| coast | community | environment |

Ferry figures don't add up

BY MARTELLE LOVE

THE BELLARINE Ferry Group has questioned State Government figures into proposed commuter ferry services on Port Phillip bay.

Recently recent figures from the government suggest the cost of purchasing a ferry to service a route from Portarlington to Melbourne would be \$7million.

Ferry group treasurer, Geoff Henderson, said this figure is more than \$2million above a quote they have received.

"One of the queries we have got is that we have a firm quote for under \$5million for the boat, which makes a significant difference to the cost," Henderson said.

"If we had that corrected, it would be significant. We would like to sit down with the consultant and try to clarify it, and we are trying to organise that at the moment."

In response to costing, a Department of Transport

spokesperson said "the consultant report on proposed commuter ferry services prepared for the Victorian Transport Plan was a high-level desktop study that provided indicative costings only".

Henderson, however, is confident the report findings mean the ferry service is a step closer to being part of the Portarlington Safe Harbour, which he said has the place for two 300-capacity ferries in the plan.

"The consultant's report says Portarlington is the better option than Geelong. It's the first time we've had a government report really support the proposed route, which is good," he said.

"It always helps your case, because it is not just a community group, but a government-sponsored report saying it is potentially viable.

"We believe that it is up for costing now and ready for budget submission for the upcoming financial year with the state



Bellarine Ferry Group members John Rae and Geoff Henderson.

government, and then I think it would be a two or three year project.

"And we would be interested in talking to Parks Victoria and the Department of Transport to do something in the interim because there is such a demand and requirement for it."

The government report estimates travel time from Portarlington to Spencer Street at 76 minutes, although Henderson said the ferry group believed the time would be 70 minutes with the light rail service synchronised with the ferry timetable.



100-room hotel plan denied after community up THUMBS UP

JESSICA CRAVEN

LOCAL residents have given the thumbs up to the Portarlinton Safe Harbour plan which was launched by the State Government this week.

A multi-storey hotel mooted for the Portarlinton foreshore in the draft proposal has been taken off the table after the Portarlinton Bowls Club signed a new lease.

The controversial plan attracted strong community opposition but the new contract will deny developers a chance to build a 100-room hotel on the site for at least another nine years.

Portarlinton Community Association president John Turner said he was pleased that the revised plans reflected community sentiment.

"Community input and comments to the steering community have

obviously been taken on board and that's one positive," he said.

Mr Turner said the improvements to the town square and the ferry berths were also good news for the town.

"The intention initially for the ferry group was to ensure there was provisions for berths within the safe harbour plan and we have that," he said.

"It doesn't mean we are going to have a ferry, there is still a lot of other work to be done but it is a great step."

Portarlinton resident Peter Cowden said he was very happy the hotel had been taken off the agenda.

"I'm concerned the bowling club has only been given a reprieve for nine years because we don't know what will happen after that," he said.

"Like a lot of people here, I don't want to see Crown land taken over for commercial purposes."

The plan includes capacity for a ferry service and development of a town square, closure of Pier St to vehicles and creation of a path network.

The proposal also includes room for up to 100 recreational boating berths and waterfront shops and restaurants.

Bellarine Ferry Group secretary John Rae said he thought the plan was fantastic.

"I think the community made the decision that they didn't want a hotel at this stage but it may be something we re-think as it all unfolds and we get more and more tourists visiting the town," he said.

The State Government will now consider a business case and funding models for the project, including public/private partnership.

The plan stipulates the harbour is to be built in stages over 10 years.



Peter Cowden

November 2009 Bellarine Times

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PLAN REVEALED

Bellarine Times Nov 3 2009

Major boost for Portarlington community with announcement of the Safe Harbour Plan

ALISON MARTIN

PORTARLINGTON'S Safe Harbour Plan will accommodate mussel farmers, a commuter ferry, community facilities and provide a major tourism boost for the Bellarine.

The question for harbour users now is when each stage of the 10-year plan will be implemented?

The plan was officially presented to the community by Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings late last week and received a positive response from the community and key stakeholders.

The Portarlington Bowls Club site – earmarked for a hotel in the original plan draft – will be retained by the local bowlers for the next few years, in response to club concerns.

Sea Bounty mussel farmer Lance Wiffen said the government had listened to the local fishing and aquaculture industry, providing commercial berths in the same area as the existing berths, away from recreational boats.

He said it was now important for the plan to be implemented as soon as possible to ensure new facilities replace the ageing pier.

Portarlington Community Development Association chair and Bellarine Ferry group spokesperson John Rae agreed, explaining that while the 10-year plan was exciting, he was “eagerly waiting for the day when works begin”.

He was “delighted” that two ferry berths had been included in

the new Safe Harbour Plan, which would provide great tourism opportunities for the town.

“This will drive investment momentum even further and we will see more accommodation of a certain class and level go ahead in Portarlington,” Rae said.

He also praised the work of Parks Victoria officer and former MP, Elaine Carbines, who had been integral in communications between community and government.

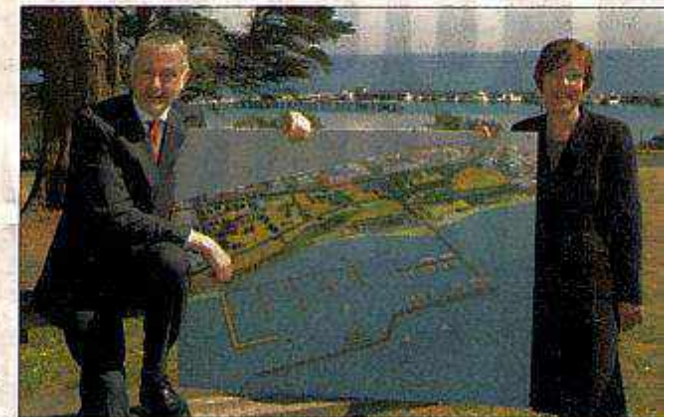
In presenting the harbour plan, Jennings said the government understood the importance of the harbour to the people of Portarlington.

“To go with the state-of-the-art safe working harbour, on land there will be improvements to the foreshore environment that will provide a first-class recreational and tourism experience for residents and visitors,” he said.

“On-land works include development of a town square, closure of Pier Street to vehicles, creation of a path network, rationalisation of car parking, tree planting and the development of new small-scale commercial business opportunities fronting the harbour.

“These upgrades and new facilities will provide a boost for the local economy through building works and tourism, both of which will create jobs for the region.”

Member for Bellarine, Lisa Neville, said the local community had made a fantastic contribution to the plans and are helping to shape the look and feel of their area, with 1,230 submissions received.



Gavin Jennings and Lisa Neville at the unveiling of the Portarlington Safe Harbour Plan.

The plan has been led by Parks Victoria in consultation with the City of Greater Geelong, Bellarine Bayside Foreshore Committee of Management, Tourism Victoria, Department of Primary Industries, Department of Sustainability and Environment, and Marine Safety Victoria. The final plan is available on the Parks Victoria website at www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

8 | GEELONG ADVERTISER, TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2011

Harbour upgrade 'urgent'

CARMEL CHRISTENSEN

PORTARLINGTON'S famous mussel industry is under threat with the town's harbour needing a desperate upgrade, according to growers.

They are urging the State Government to recommit to the \$58 million safe harbour project, that they say will ensure the future of the mussel industry.

Temporary works on the pier were carried out two years ago to prolong its life for an extra five years.

But mussel grower Lance Wiffen said uncertainty over the structure's long-term safety was jeopardising the industry's growth.

"We're already a couple of years down the track since the first lot of works were done, we've only got three years left," he said.

"It's inevitable this pier is going to break down on past reports and, if money is not spent, then the pier is going to be downgraded.

"If I went out to buy another vessel I don't know where I'd be able to house it."

A Safe Harbour Master Plan - which also included provision for a Portarlington to Melbourne ferry service - was released in October 2009.

It was expected to be completed over 10 years but received no financial backing from either party in the lead-up to Novem-

ber's election.

"We're now focusing on the safe harbour rather than the ferry," said Bellarine Ferry Group secretary John Rae. "We have three businesses looking at the ferry but none of that can operate until the first stage of the harbour is built."

Parks Victoria acting general manager Bays and Maritime division, Richard O'Byrne, said the project - a joint venture with the City of Greater Geelong and Bellarine Bayside - remained a long-term vision.

"The three agencies will implement the plan over a 10-year period subject to funding," he said.

NATIONAL

Portarlington ferry plan

22 July 2008 — 12:00am



STATE Government plans for a ferry terminal at Portarlington have boosted hopes of a cross-bay service within two years.

The ferry berth is part of a \$30 million plan for the harbour, expected to be released next month.

A spokesman for the Portarlington Ferry Committee, John Rae, said he had already spoken to four investors about a service from Portarlington to Port Melbourne.

"We've been told that there is a ferry berth in the plans, so things are moving," he said. He said the service could be up and running within two years. The plans include a 35-metre ferry berth, which Mr Rae said would accommodate a ferry carrying 300 passengers.

"They've also agreed to install fuelling facilities," he said.

The ferry group believes the trip to Port Melbourne would take 42 minutes, and would cater for the growing population on the Bellarine Peninsula.

It would not be a tourist ferry, and would make three trips to Melbourne in the morning and three trips back in the evening.

With trains from Geelong already overstretched, Mr Rae said, this was a real alternative.

PAUL MILLAR

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October 2012 Geelong Advertiser



HELLFISH REASONS: Victoria's largest mussel grower Lance Wilfen says it's time to develop Portarlington's aquaculture industry.

Port marine dream

OM BENNETT

A \$250 million plan to develop a world-class aquaculture industry in Portarlington has been revealed.

The proposal would create hundreds of jobs and includes a major safety upgrade and repairs to the town's pier and the creation of a 100-boat marina.

It also details the construction of a commercial spat hatchery, a seafood processing plant and an educational centre.

The project is being coordinated by the Committee for Bellarine, which is pulling together a consortium of local aquaculture industry leaders and international financiers.

Preliminary details were presented to MLC for West-

Continue

THE \$250M PROPOSAL

- A MAJOR refit and safety upgrade of Portarlinton Pier
- 100-BERTH marina

- SPAT hatchery
- SEAFOOD processing plant
- EDUCATIONAL and research centre

ern Victoria David O'Brien late this week.

A spokesman for Mr O'Brien described the plans as "very encouraging".

"It is early stages, but it looks extremely promising," he said. "We need to flesh out the detail but Mr O'Brien supports an appraisal (of the plan) at senior ministerial level."

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville said the proposal needs to be examined properly and

promptly by the Government and the community.

"It is worthy of serious consideration at a high level of government," Ms Neville said. "There is overwhelming support for the upgrading of the Portarlinton Pier, it is important to the local mussel industry."

Among those already involved in the consortium is Victoria's largest mussel grower, Lance Wiffen.

"The critical factor in the

expansion of local aquaculture is the (poor) state of the Portarlinton Pier," Mr Wiffen said.

"It is the biggest single impediment to growth."

Mr Wiffen said there are 14 aquaculture leaseholds in Pinnacle Channel in Port Phillip soon to be made available by the State Government.

"These leaseholds will need to be serviced by additional boats but at the moment there's nowhere to moor them," he said.

"You can't run an aquaculture industry without boats."

Committee for Bellarine executive director Tom O'Connor said the project is vital to the development of the Bellarine's fledgling aquaculture industry.

"We foresee the creation of

between 200 and 300 direct and indirect long-term jobs," he said, adding that the proposed development would occur in three stages.

Phase one would involve the reclamation of part of foreshore so that a dedicated lane could be created for vehicles needing to access pier and the boats directly

It would also see an extensive upgrade of the Portarlinton Pier and the extension of the northern seawall.

Dredging would be carried out to allow larger vessels use the facility.

Mr O'Connor said the proposal needed government operation and approval. "I have requests to meet Planning Minister Matthew C and will be seeking discussions with Ports Minister Denis Napthine," he said.

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Why won't Melburnians take a punt and get out on the bay?

By Suzy Freeman-Greene

12 May 2012—3:00am

MELBOURNE looks different approached by water. Cormorants fly low. The West Gate might be origami. And the city, seen from the Docklands end, seems strange and new.

I caught a tourist ferry from Williamstown to Southbank this week. I saw cars lined up on docks like toys and waterfront townhouses that could have been airlifted from Noosa. But the most incredible thing was the lack of watercraft encountered on our hour-long dawdle. The only other boat I saw moving was a second, overpriced tourist ferry.



The view of Melbourne, as seen from Williamstown.

It was midday on a Wednesday, hardly a busy time. Still, the water's emptiness seemed to mirror all the windows shimmering above it.

Continue ...

Waterside property is prized here now in a very Sydney way - though, happily, I'm yet to see agents flogging "glimpses". "The ultimate waterfront address," gloats a Yarra's Edge billboard.

"Uninterrupted bayside views," croons a sign elsewhere. There's lots of gazing at water going on. But where are the commuter ferries linking one watery place to another? And why does Docklands so lack dock-like activities?

This week, a report on public spaces at Docklands found there were, bizarrely, few opportunities to "directly engage" with water there. When I popped down, I saw plenty of luxury boats parked at marinas but not much else connected to water.

There are lots of glass towers reflecting each other; countless eateries and a few moored party boats but the mood is more mall than maritime. It was a relief to find one beanie-clad retiree from Fawkner fishing for bream and trevally from his camp chair.

Docklands Association president Roger Gardner says fishing is discouraged because the water is polluted and "you can't swim in it". There is, he says, a Docklands Dragon Boat club but no yacht club. He thinks the area sorely needs a regular ferry to bring people in by water. Unfortunately, the last small ferry operator went out of business, he says. And the man who ran gondola trips has moved on.

The state government has just announced a \$300,000 study on the feasibility of running ferries from Melbourne's west to the CBD. It will consider privately run ferries stopping at Werribee South, Point Cook, Altona and Williamstown, possibly ending at Docklands.

Critics say improving rail services is a more urgent need. They also question whether a ferry can be as fast as land transport. Such a ferry plan should not be an excuse for neglecting rail lines. But it's still an idea worth investigating. We've had a whirlpool of ferry pitches made over the years. Isn't it time one got up?

Another ferry plan, however, is already on the drawing board. For five years, the Bellarine Ferry Group has lobbied for a fast ferry to run from Portarlinton to Port Melbourne. This ferry could take just 45 minutes and transport 900 commuters a day.

A \$57 million safe harbour had been planned for Portarlinton and the first stage of it is needed to enable ferries to berth there. The group says Ports Minister Denis Napthine has ordered a cost-benefit analysis of the harbour project. But it is disappointed that the Portarlinton proposal - already deemed viable in a Parks Victoria report - has been excluded from the new ferry study.

- C I reckon when you travel by water, you feel lighter inside. You're in a more natural environment. Sydney and Brisbane have shown ferries can work.

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As the lobbying and the studying continue here though, anyone wanting to catch a boat from Williamstown to the city will pay \$15 for the privilege. And there isn't even a daily ferry running from St Kilda.

Money, it seems, is the perennial stumbling block here. But is culture a factor, too? Do Melburnians, deep down, regard getting around by ferry as a poncy, Sydneyish sort of pastime? "I don't understand the reluctance to operate ferries here," laments John Rae, president of the Bellarine group.

Around the bay, there are loads of salty activities from sailing to sea scouts to snorkelling. Still, if you're not a boating or fishing type you have to go out of your way to see the city from the sea. Are we still catching up with this developer-led push towards water? In January, this newspaper reported that more than 100,000 hectares of port waters relied for fire protection on two aluminium boats fitted with pump hoses, and two inflatable dinghies.

One ray of sunshine is the Westgate Punt. This nifty, red bike ferry takes peak hour cyclists across the Yarra from Spotswood to Port Melbourne. The other day, a rainbow split the sky as I stepped on. We passed under the belly of the West Gate, where traffic crawled along, and crossed in about four minutes.

The punt's weekday service was cancelled six years ago. But after intense public lobbying and extra government funds, it reopened last year. The punt is so simple I can hardly believe it exists. It's a beautiful idea that floated.

Suzy Freeman-Greene is a senior writer.

March 2013 Herald Sun

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Higher speeds push for Yarra part of ferry link plan for city's west and CBD

John Masanauskas, HeraldSun
March 18, 2013 9:36pm

Herald Sun

Search 

A PLAN for Sydney-style ferry services linking the city's west and the CBD is a step closer after a positive feasibility study.

A trip between Werribee South and Docklands on a big catamaran could take 50 minutes if speed restrictions on the Yarra were eased.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy said all forms of transport had to be considered to keep rapidly growing Melbourne liveable.

"A viable commuter ferry service is possible and, importantly, would be able to offer commuters increased comfort, potential access to wi-fi internet and the ability to purchase refreshments," Mr Guy said.

He commissioned the \$300,000 study after announcing last year that transport solutions were needed to deal with issues such as West Gate gridlock.

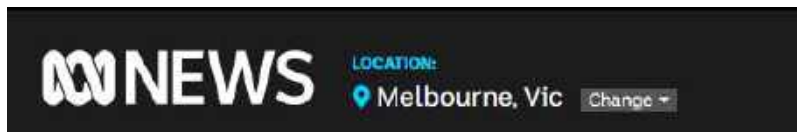
The preliminary report, by Ernst & Young, found privately run ferry services could work between Docklands and stops at Williamstown, Altona, Point Cook, Werribee South and Portarlinton.

But the report said trip times competitive with cars and rail could be achieved only if ferries had higher speed limits on the Yarra than the current 6-10 knots per hour.

A ferry travelling at a maximum of 30 knots in the bay and 15 knots on the Yarra would cover Werribee South to Docklands in 50 minutes and Portarlinton to the city in 70 minutes.

But a service to Geelong would take up to two hours and was not viable, the study found.

Mr Guy said that the study found that almost a third of workers living in Point Cook and about a quarter in Altona and Williamstown travelled to the CBD for jobs.



Ferry service hopes to reduce road congestion

Updated 20 Mar 2013, 7:12am

The State Government has received a preliminary report that has found it would be feasible to run a ferry service on Port Phillip Bay.

Services would run from Portarlinton to Docklands with stops in Werribee, Williamstown, Altona and Point Cook.

A final report on the routes and the infrastructure costs of setting up the service is not expected until mid-year.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy says a ferry service would utilise the bay.

"There are no traffic jams on Port Phillip Bay, there is nothing better than being able to relax while going to work on a boat with wifi together with some refreshments," he said.

The Public Transport Users Association though has questioned the wisdom behind the plan.

Association spokesman Tony Morton has questioned whether the money would be better spent improving Melbourne's train services.

"It's not really going to do much in terms of the total transport task in Melbourne unless it can actually carry large numbers of passengers," he said.

One train line typically carries about 10,000 people per hour into Melbourne.

Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews has criticised the proposal and says there are better ways to tackle road congestion.

"There are some bigger pieces of infrastructure, transport and otherwise that this government ought to be focussed on," he said.



PHOTO: The Public Transport Users Association says the money would be better spent on train services than on ferry services. (ABC News)



Napthine Government wants private ferry not beach for Docklands

A FERRY terminal, not a beach, would suit the Docklands waterfront, says the Napthine Government.

JOHN PEARSON/AGF

HeraldSun • FEBRUARY 14, 2014 10:14AM



Our reporter the photographer David G. Hines/Portarlinton Docklands, as suggested in a report commissioned by Places Victoria. Picture: Mark Wilson. Source: News.com.au

A FERRY terminal, not a beach, would suit the Docklands waterfront, says the Napthine Government.

But the Government would like to see a public pool built next to the precinct's new library.

Planning Minister Matthew Guy rejected the idea of an urban beach to enliven Harbour Esplanade, as suggested in a report commissioned by state authority Places Victoria.

"It would be a silly idea, the water's static, (it) would be a great spot to be our ferry terminal into the future," he said.

It seems that the Government is favouring the introduction of privately-run commuter ferry services, with final studies to be completed within weeks.

Services would run between the city and places like Williamstown, Point Cook, Altona, Werribee South and Portarlinton.

Officially opening the new intersection of Bourke and Collins streets at Victoria Harbour yesterday, Mr Guy revealed that construction of a nearby pedestrian and cyclist bridge honouring Jim Styne was months behind schedule and would probably open by May.

"We're keen to get it open, it's a key piece of infrastructure between Docklands and the CBD," he said.

Mr Guy said he also wanted to see a public pool open next to the nearly completed library at Victoria Harbour's Dock Square, but there were no funds yet.

Claire Johnston, from Victoria Harbour developer Lend Lease, said her firm would look at pool options in consultation with Places Victoria and the City of Melbourne.

Lord Mayor Robert Doyle said that the unusual intersection of Bourke and Collins streets at Docklands was Melbourne's version of New York's Broadway and Fifth Ave.

"What we are putting at this very important intersection is a whole range of community infrastructure ... the Melbourne answer to iconic streets meeting is a place for people to meet, for people to congregate and I think that's a wonderful step forward for the development of our city," he said.

April 2014 Geelong Advertiser

Geelong Advertiser

\$15m pledge for Portarlington harbour

- by: *Anthea Cannon*
- From: *Geelong Advertiser*
- April 07, 2014 3:55PM



Opposition leader Daniel Andrews promises \$15m for the Portarlington Safe Harbour if his party wins the election. Pictured from left: MP Lisa Neville, Geoff Henderson (Portarlington Ferry and Safe Harbour Group), Opposition leader Daniel Andrews and John Rea (Portarlington Ferry and Safe Harbour Group). Photo: GLENN FERGUSON
Source: News Limited

A COMMUTER ferry service to Melbourne is on the cards thanks to a \$15 million Labor commitment to the long-awaited Portarlington Safe Harbour project.

The *Geelong Advertiser* can reveal that, if the Opposition wins government in November, it will fund the first stage of the \$58 million G21 priority project.

Stage 1 will deliver a new pier, ferry berth, berths to grow the aquaculture industry, refuelling services and the extension of the breakwater.

But while Labor leader Daniel Andrews has committed to having the project started with his first budget, he would not be drawn on when Stage 1 would be finished.

Mr Andrews said there was "healthy interest" from the private sector to complete the remaining works on the 2010 masterplan and run the ferry to Station Pier.

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He said the ferry could deliver workers to connecting tram services in 48 minutes.

The works will deliver 100 jobs during the build.

"This is good for jobs, good for tourism, good for Portarlinton, good for the Bellarine," Mr Andrews said.

"(A ferry is) feasible, it's viable, it can be done, but it will never happen unless we get a government that's willing to back the Bellarine Peninsula and provide the \$15 million for the first stage."

About 12 mussel boats use the pier, which is at maximum capacity. The new pier will allow an oyster and abalone industry to grow and the blue mussels industry to expand.

"We need to make sure we've got the proper infrastructure so jobs can grow over time," Mr Andrews said.

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville said the project had the green light from all government agencies and was critical to the region's future.

"This really should be the centre of the seafood industry of Victoria," Ms Neville said.

G21 chief executive Elaine Carbines said the organisation was thrilled the "dilapidated" pier would be redeveloped.

"This will make the harbour safer and recognise the aquaculture industry, which is already very significant," Ms Carbines said.

She said a ferry service would be used by many residents on the Bellarine.

Portarlinton Safe Harbour and Ferry Group treasurer Geoff Henderson said the group had been working on making the plan a reality for more than five years.

Mr Henderson said 400 community members put the ferry as the No. 1 project for the town, followed by the harbour.

"By road it takes two hours, so the ferry would cut that in half," secretary John Rae said.

"There are no roads to build, not rails to buckle, the only cost are the ferries, but it would have to be part of the public transport network."

www.geelongadvertiser.com.au/news/geelong/m-pledge-for-portarlinton-harbour/story-fnjuhovy-1226877187495

Ferries in year, says Port body

By JOHN VAN KLAVEREN

PORTARLINGTON could have its ferry service to Melbourne operating from the middle of next year, according to the town's safe harbour and ferry group.

President John Rae said a recent \$3 million go ahead for upgrade works on Portarlington Pier was a positive sign for the proposed ferry service.

"From talks with Parks Victoria senior management, who are responsible for the work, the project includes provision for piles that would provide the base for floating pontoons for ferry berths.

"In theory, this would allow a ferry service to operate from mid next year while the safe harbour was being built around it."

The *Independent* reported earlier this month that a new 175 metre-long, 4.5 metre-wide pier would be built alongside the existing pier. State Government has sought tenders to build the pier.

Mr Rae said the group would make the safe harbour and ferry service into an election issue.

"There's been no indication of further funding pledge for the safe harbour and ferry from State Government but that may occur during the election.

"We're hoping for further announcements in the campaign, matching the ALP pledge of \$15 million for stage one.

"It will be a huge election issue and the current government has a bit to catch up on."

Mr Rae said the group would



ELECTION ISSUE: Ferry group members John Rae and Geoff Henderson on Portarlington Pier.

initiate another round of public meetings on the issue as well as letterbox drops to voters.

"We'll become involved in campaigning at the beginning of August. We have already held 120 public meetings presenting the ferry and harbour case to various groups.

"We'll go back to each one and prepare material pointing out

the score between the parties."

Mr Rae said the "vital" project would offer a 45-minute trip to Port Melbourne where it would connect with a 12-minute light rail ride to central Melbourne.

The group understood that the Government was examining exemptions for ferries to a Yarra River speed limit, allowing them to dock at Docklands, he said.

October 2014 Geelong Advertiser

Geelong
Advertiser



📷 Bellarine MP Lisa Neville and the opposition's Public Transport spokeswoman Jill Hennessey announce support for a study into a Portarlington ferry service. Picture: Leanne Kelly

GEELONG

Labor offers viability study for Portarlington ferry terminal

Greg Dundas, Geelong Advertiser

October 7, 2014 9:45am



COMMUTERS will travel from Portarlington into the heart of Melbourne in just one hour if the town can keep its passenger ferry proposal afloat.

Labor has breathed new life into the ferry plan, promising to commission a viability study if it wins next month's election to complement the \$15 million it has already promised to kickstart the town's safe harbour development.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Ferry Group chairman John Rae said the announcement was a "great step forward" after seven years of campaigning for a government-backed commuter ferry.

Continue

The group's own plan suggests at least 900 passengers would ferry to Port Melbourne each weekday if three morning and evening peak-hour services were run across Port Phillip.

The 44km direct journey would take about 50 minutes, leaving commuters with a short light rail ride into the centre of Melbourne.



 A catamaran similar to the style proposed for the Portarlington-Melbourne ferry terminal.

Mr Rae said local studies had forecast Bellarine Peninsula residents would be strong supporters of the ferry service, as it now often took them almost two hours to drive from their homes into the city during peak times.

Opposition Public Transport spokesman Jill Hennessy said — if successful on November 29 — Labor would instruct the Department of Transport of Planning and Infrastructure to work with potential ferry providers to examine the interest in and cost of the proposed new stream of public transport.

“Ultimately this will be a decision for Government, but it’s potential providers that can look at what’s a viable business case,” she said.

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“The end game here is about trying to provide more direct public transport, leveraging off the opportunity of the safe harbour project.”

Labor’s Bellarine MP Lisa Neville promised \$15 million for stage one of the \$58 million safe harbour project in April, and the Government later provided \$3 million for a pier upgrade.

With ferry berths included in stage one, Ms Neville said the study must happen promptly, so that ferry options can be considered by the Government.

Mr Rae said Ms Hennessy’s involvement was pivotal, as it signified the possibility of the ferry service being considered — and subsidised as — public transport.

“We’ve always said — and this is really important — that it has to be part of the public transport system, receiving the same benefits of trains and buses,” he said.

“This is the most forward step we’ve made; to get a Shadow Minister for Transport involved. Tourism always wanted to talk to us, but they don’t have to pay for it. The people who will have to pay for it are transport.”

Portarlington Pier upgrade promises safe harbour Now for a ferry service

NICOLE MILLS

THE Portarlington Pier upgrade will kickstart the search for a ferry operator willing to run a commuter service from the Bellarine Peninsula to Melbourne.

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville said the Government was providing the infrastructure and would work with private operators to try and get a service up and running.

"This has been a long term aspiration of the community and many years ago there was an attempt to have a ferry operate and it all sort of fell in a heap," she said.

"One of the barriers is having a safe berthing area for a ferry. Under the previous arrangement they had to berth back in Port Melbourne.

"This is really about saying we'll provide the infrastructure, let's see if we've got an operator who can make it viable."

Her comments came at the official opening of a \$3 million section of the pier.

The new 175m section improves access and vehicle load limits to help the local aquaculture industry and is the first stage in the total \$15 million redevelopment.



BIG PLANS: MP Lisa Neville opens stage one of the Portarlington Pier project with Parks Victoria chairman Andrew Fairley, left, and Cr Lindsay Ellis.

PICTURES: ALISON WYNO

The next stage will deliver more facilities to grow the mussel, oyster and scallop industries and provide the infrastructure needed for a future ferry.

Ms Neville said preliminary works would start before summer

with the bulk of the work after the peak tourist season.

"It means that we don't interrupt the really busy period," she said.

The project is expected to be completed within 18 months.



July 2016 Geelong Advertiser

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GEELONG

Ferry trial: Portarlington to Melbourne trip to take 90 minutes and cost about \$25 return

Claire Martin and Jemma Ryan, Geelong Advertiser

July 21, 2016 2:00am



AFTER years of lobbying from Bellarine locals, a passenger ferry trial from Portarlington to Melbourne will start next Friday.

The trip is tipped to take about 90 minutes and cost about \$25 return.

The service will be operated by Port Phillip Ferries, the privately run passenger ferry service that this year began a service between Wyndham Harbour near Werribee and Victoria Harbour at Docklands.

Port Phillip Ferries operations director Murray Rance said the trial service would probably run mid-morning.

“It will run from Portarlington to Docklands and return. People will be invited to register their interest and we’ll provide some information on the website,” he said.

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“The feedback from the local community down there has been very strong so we’re actually responding to them.

“(Bellarine MP Lisa) Neville, prior to changing portfolio, asked us if we would run the trial and we’re doing that.”

Mr Rance said if the trial was successful, the company would consider scheduling more test runs, but in order for it to succeed people needed to “jump on board”.

“It needs the people to support it — given the lobbying we’ve see it’s a real opportunity for success,” he said.

“We get the feeling for locals versus the trains and the fact that we can get to Docklands in 88 minutes, it will be a good offering. We’re working on the speed in the Yarra (River) and if it’s successful we’d like to think we can enter in discussions with relevant authorities to take up to 15 minutes off the time.”

Ms Neville said the trial was a significant step.

“As local member I am very supportive of a future ferry service to Melbourne and of course the State Government has committed \$15 million for the current construction of the Portarlinton Safe Harbour that includes provision for a future ferry,” she said.

“It is exciting to see trials taking place and I look forward to PPF’s feedback to government in the coming weeks.”

The company recently had to cut fares for the Wyndham Harbour and Victoria Harbour service because of low passenger numbers.

Mr Rance said they would get feedback from those who attended the July trial and relay that to the government.

“Within the next two to three weeks we’ll be having a discussion with the government on how things are progressing.”

July 2016 The Age

THE AGE

Bellarine abuzz as Portarlington to Melbourne ferry gets set for maiden voyage

By Adam Carey, Transport Reporter

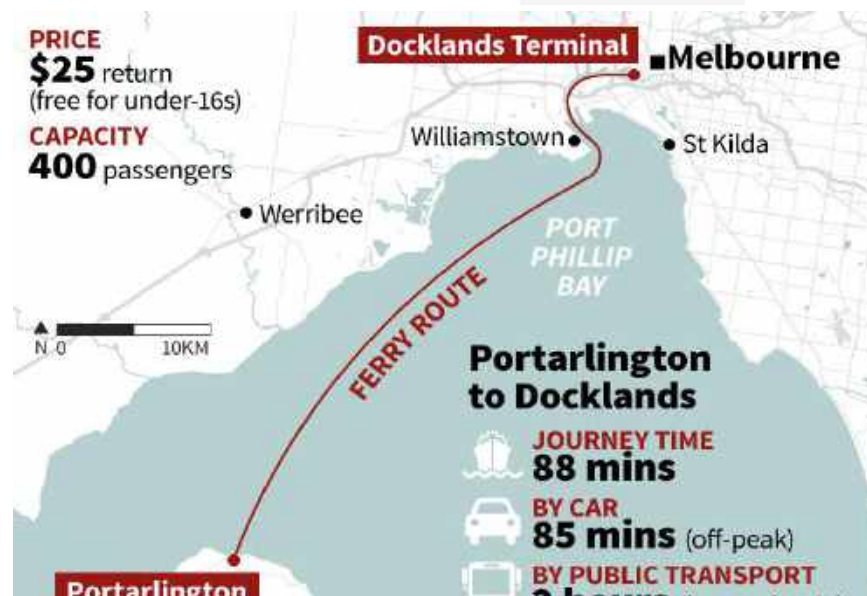
Updated 27 July 2016 — 7:29pm, first published at 4:04pm

Could a regular passenger ferry between Portarlington and Docklands become a reality?

Judging by the enthusiasm with which people on the Bellarine Peninsula have taken the chance to ride on Friday's trial service, the answer is yes.



Portarlington residents Jenny Edmanson, Geoff Henderson and his wife Marle say locals are excited by the prospect of a new ferry link to Melbourne.
Photo: Eddie Jim



Continue

Tickets for the one-off return trip sold out within 14 hours when they went on sale this week, organisers say, raising hopes that there is enough demand to make a regular service viable.

A crowd of 400 people will meet at Portarlington's new, \$15 million safe harbour on Friday morning

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The Portarlington ferry's maiden voyage is the culmination of nine years' work for John Rae and Geoff Henderson, two retirees who live on the Bellarine Peninsula and can see a real hunger among locals for the service.

Mr Rae said he believed the case for a ferry between Portarlington and Melbourne was stronger than the Wyndham offering, because there are few options on the "public transport-starved" Bellarine Peninsula.

"Ferries, when they are up against other public transport, struggle," Mr Rae said. "A ferry will be slower on water than a train if they are both leaving at the same time and covering the same distance."

The 88-minute journey time across the bay is competitive with driving and easily beats the two-hour bus-train combination.

It will be quicker still, at an estimated 73 minutes, if Port Phillip Ferries can convince the Port of Melbourne to lift the speed limit on the Yarra River.

The ferry will travel across the bay at 25 knots, slow to 10 knots when it reaches the mouth of the Yarra, then drop to just five knots when it passes beneath the West Gate Bridge, the same speed limit boats must keep to on Albert Park Lake.

Nick Easy, the Port of Melbourne's chief executive, said the corporation would not raise the limit until it was satisfied it is safe to do so.

"Port Phillip Ferries understand that Port of Melbourne Corporation will not consider any changes to speed limits in the Yarra River until a detailed risk assessment is undertaken which is their responsibility to complete," he said.

Bellarine residents, meanwhile, are preparing for an on-water celebration on Friday.

Jenny Edmanson, who runs the Portarlington post office, said the town was abuzz.

"There is a lot excitement about the prospect of having a different mode of transport and I think it would be great for Portarlington, but not only Portarlington, people from Ocean Grove and Queenscliff and all round the Bellarine," she said.

RELATED ARTICLE



Sun rises on Melbourne's first

July 2016 Geelong Advertiser

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Claire Martin, Geelong Advertiser
July 29, 2016 3:36pm



The first ferry trip from Portarlington.

GEELONG

First Portarlington ferry trip creates wave of enthusiasm

HUNDREDS of people turned up to wave off the first ferry trial between Portarlington and Docklands in Melbourne on Friday morning.

At 10.30am on the dot the ferry set off from Portarlington pier for the first time and it was smooth sailing all the way to Melbourne.

Local resident Doug Stephens said the whole town had been really excited.

“We’ve been campaigning for it for years and we really wanted to get on board the first trial but they ran out tickets so quickly,” Mr Stephens said.

Continue



Many well wishers were on hand to farewell the trial run of the Portarlinton-Docklands Ferry.
Picture: Alison Wynd

“I came down to check what the car park situation was like because we were a bit worried about that.”

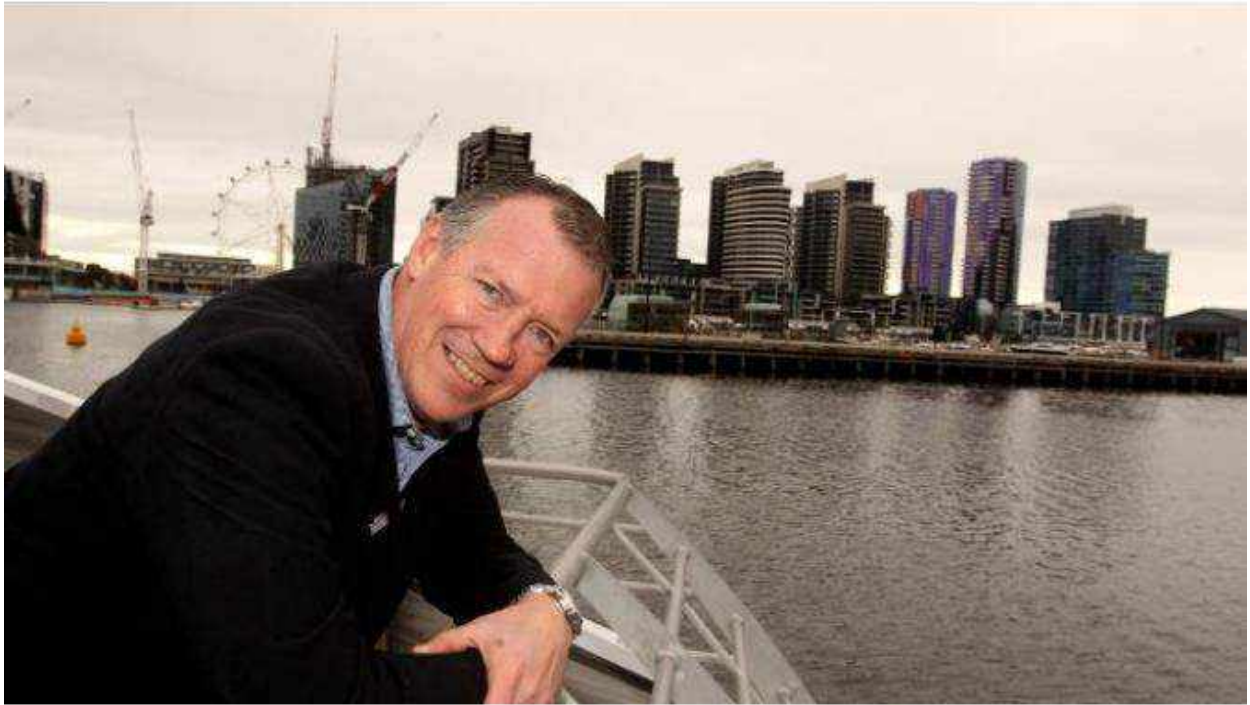
Mr Stephens said there was talk of redeveloping the car park next to the bowls club if the trial was successful.

More than 300 people were on the ferry when it set off, some sat inside taking advantage of the free wifi and heating while others took photos outside on the back deck.

Karen Bourke, another Portarlinton resident, said she was lucky to have got tickets.

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 Port Phillip Ferries boss Murray Rance is happy to head into Docklands. Picture: Alison Wynd

“It’s incredibly exciting, it opens up so many career opportunities for young people and families,” she said.

“Being able to commute to the city via ferry instead of the two hours it would take otherwise is such a step in the right direction.”

“Even just getting 30 per cent of those cars of road to Melbourne would be a huge advantage.”

The ferry travelled at 25 knots for most of the trip but slowed down to about 10 knots once it hit the river mouth.

Ferry master Jack Downie said the conditions were perfect for trial and he was very happy with the trial run.

July 2016 ABC News

ABC NEWS

LOCATION:

Melbourne, Vic

Change ▾

Portarlinton ferry service to Melbourne begins trial period

By Joanna Crothers

Posted 29 Jul 2016, 3:34pm



PHOTO: The trial service will run until the end of August. (ABC News: Joanna Crothers)

A ferry service from Portarlinton to Melbourne has set sail on its maiden voyage, almost a decade after people on the Bellarine Peninsula started campaigning for it.

Almost 400 passengers were sent off with waves and cheers goodbye from dozens of locals, as the ferry left Portarlinton.

Port Phillip Ferries is trialling the service until the end of August, to see if making a permanent daily trip is viable.

Paul Little, chairman of the Little Group, which runs Port Phillip Ferries, said the benefits for those commuting from Portarlinton would be huge.

"Those that do commute now by essentially bussing to Geelong and then train up to Melbourne - the service completes very favourably both on time and cost," he said.

Continue

A return ticket would cost around \$25, and Mr Little said the service was ideal for people who wanted the trip into work to be a little different.

"We're not trying to compete with trains," he said.

John Rae, chairman of the Portarlington Safe Harbour and Ferry Group, said he had been waiting for the day the trail would start.

"I couldn't believe the people standing on the pier waving goodbye like we were on a cruise ship," he said.

"The benefits for the Bellarine would be enormous."

Mr Rae said he hoped the service would operate daily.

"The whole of the Bellarine only has buses. So all those people that we've had group meetings with have told us they'd drive to Portarlington to use it," he said.

Locals 'never thought they'd see the day'



PHOTO: A large crowd gathered to farewell the ferry on its first journey. (ABC News: Joanna Crothers)

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Port Phillip Ferries also run a service from Werribee to Melbourne.

But the trial has been disappointing, with only a handful of people taking up the daily service.

"It's under pressure in terms of its commercial viability. The numbers have been disappointing," Mr Little said.

Enthusiasm for the service to boost tourism on the Bellarine was widespread on the journey into Melbourne.

Portarlington local Lorraine Andrew said she never thought she would see the day the service was running.

"I went to one of the very first meetings they ever talked about doing this," she said.

“It'll be good for the people that want to commute to work and bring tourism into Portarlington, for sure.”

Sue Jager said the 88-minute ride was smooth, despite some wind.

"It was gorgeous. I can't wait for them to make it a regular event because it really needs to be," she said.

ABC NEWS

LOCATION:

Melbourne, Vic

[Change](#)

Portarlington ferry service to Melbourne to become regular fixture

By [Cameron Best](#)

Posted 21 Nov 2016, 12:11pm

A commuter ferry service across Port Phillip Bay between Portarlington and Melbourne will become a regular fixture.

A trial earlier this year proved successful, with hundreds of people making the trip to Docklands, securing the service for the next three years.

But a similar trial of the route between Wyndham Harbour near Werribee and Docklands attracted just a handful of passengers and that service has been shelved.

The 90-minute trip across Port Phillip Bay on the fast ferry rivals the drive from Portarlington to Melbourne in light traffic and opens the Bellarine Peninsula to tourism potential.

A regular ferry service had long been a dream for locals John Rae and Geoff Henderson, who lead the Portarlington Safe Harbour and Ferry Group, and the trial was well supported by the community.

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville said the service would continue to grow.

"Some of the initial work through the trial is a bit of a change in the schedule to better meet the needs of peak commuters as well as a bit of a change in the schedule to encourage and promote the use of the ferry for tourism purposes as well," she told 774 ABC Melbourne.

Work is continuing at the Portarlington harbour to provide permanent ferry berths and fully enclose the harbour, which would allow for more flexible ferry scheduling.

The ferry operator, Port Phillip Ferries, is understood to be investigating other potential routes from the eastern side of the bay into Melbourne.



PHOTO: The trial service began in August and has now been extended. (ABC News: Joanna Crothers)

RELATED STORY: [Trial begins for Portarlington ferry service to Melbourne](#)

RELATED STORY: [Ferry trial for Melbourne's west to begin in May](#)

January 2015 Geelong Advertiser

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A concept drawing of the new Portarlington Pier showing the existing pier on the left, and the new one running alongside on the right.

GEELONG

Construction to begin on \$3 million Portarlington pier, boosting local mussel industry

NICOLE MILLS, Geelong Advertiser

January 26, 2015 12:00am



PORTARLINGTON'S mussel industry is set to benefit when construction starts on a new \$3 million pier in the seaside town.

Environment Minister Lisa Neville said construction on the 175m long and 4.5m wide pier would start next month.

Continue

The pier is the first structure to be built as part of stage one of the Portarlinton Safe Harbour development.

The new structure will support increased vehicle load limits and separate pedestrians from cars, allowing the aquaculture industry to increase productivity.

It will be built alongside the existing smaller pier which will be retained for pedestrian and recreational fishing use.

Ms Neville said the harbour was an important development that would support industry on the Bellarine Peninsula.

“I have worked with the community for over six years to get this project off the ground,” Ms Neville said.

“I’m so proud that work is commencing in the first 100 days of the Andrews Labor Government, as promised.”



Minister for Environment Lisa Neville.

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Pedestrians and the aquaculture industry will still be able to use the existing pier throughout construction, except for a few short term closures for safety reasons when equipment is being moved around the area.

Moolap's Coen Precast has won the concreting contract with more local jobs expected during the rest of stage one.

"The project will support local jobs during construction and it will anchor the bay's thriving aquaculture industry to the Bellarine Peninsula," Ms Neville said.

The pier is expected to be completed by mid-2015.

\$15 million has already been pledged to complete stage one of the Portarlinton Safe Harbour master plan but \$35 million is still needed to implement stage two.

The master plan includes designs for up to 45 commercial berths, up to 100 recreational berths, refuelling facilities and the ability to accommodate a possible future ferry service to Melbourne.



FERRY A BONUS FOR COMMUTERS

KYLE POLLARD

COMMUTER ferry based out of Portarlington would help more than 2000 Bellarine people get to work in Melbourne every day, a project supporter believes.

Bellarine Ferry Group secretary John Rae said census statistics had shown more than 2000 locals were making the commute to Melbourne daily by road and rail.

Mr Rae said a commuter ferry based out of Portarlington would strip almost an hour of travel time off for people wanting to reach the Melbourne CBD. The comment came following a Bellarine wide information campaign by the Ferry Group, which has been fighting for the project for more than two years.

"We've met with the Portarlington Community Association, the Barwon Heads Community Association and we've

got another discussion coming up with Ocean Grove," Mr Rae said.

"The support so far has been fantastic and Parks Victoria has been conducting surveys at the moment to get an idea of what people think."

Parks Victoria's Elaine Carbines said the Demand Study had been commissioned with help from the City of Greater Geelong, Transport Victoria and Tourism Victoria.

"There's been a couple of focus groups already and telephone surveys so we hope we can find out a little bit more from those," Ms Carbines said.

"There is a provision for a ferry berth in the Portarlington Safe Harbour draft plan if the project is given the all clear."

The Bellarine Ferry Group last night held an information session at the Ocean Grove Community Association Forum.

February 2018 Bellarine Times

Port's safe harbour officially opens



Bellarine MP Lisa Neville, Portarlington Safe Harbour president John Rae, left, and vice president Geoff Henderson stand in front of excited supporters. Photos: REBECCA ADAM



Bellarine MP Lisa Neville officially opens the newly completed Portarlington Safe Harbour.

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THE newly completed Portarlinton Safe Harbour has officially opened, paving the way for more boats to dock at the pier, and more visitors to the Bellarine.

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville was delighted to cut the ribbon to the \$15 million project that has improved recreational and commercial boat access to the pier.

“Already these works have seen increased visitation to the pier, allowing more people to enjoy this beautiful spot,” Ms Neville said.

Portarlinton Business Development Association President John Rae said the Portarlinton community

was thrilled to see the project completed, which was due to the efforts of many people, the two contractors, as well as project manager Parks Victoria and Bellarine Bayside.

“Then there is our local member Lisa Neville who has been amazing with her drive and support of the project which ensured funding was available and any problems that occurred were solved quickly,” Mr Rae said.

Major infrastructure upgrades included two rock breakwaters to the east and north of the pier, a new

190-metre long concrete commercial berthing area and 27 commercial berths serviced with water and electricity.

The harbour will bolster the region’s aquaculture industry, promote tourism and accelerate economic growth across the Bellarine Peninsula.

And the Bellarine is now easier to explore than ever before, with people able to head down from Docklands to Portarlinton on the Port Phillip Ferry, which connects the heart of the Melbourne to the Bellarine.

New pier adds mussel to Port's safe harbour

BY REBECCA LAUNER

BELLARINE MP Lisa Neville has opened Portarlington's upgraded pier in a boost for the local mussel and aquaculture industries.

The new 175-metre pier section is the first of the upgrades delivered under the \$15 million Portarlington Safe Harbour development.

The works, which started in

February, improve access and vehicle load limits for mussel and aquaculture businesses and their workers.

Last Friday, Ms Neville also announced the next step in the \$15 million project, which is set to transform the harbour during the next two and a half years.

She said Parks Victoria was finalising, through consultation, the detailed design of the next stage

of the works to commence this year.

The next stage of the works will deliver better facilities to grow the aquaculture industry and provide the infrastructure necessary for a future ferry.

Parks Victoria will work closely with the community to ensure continued access to the harbour throughout the project and minimal disruption caused by the works.

Ms Neville said she was proud to open the first stage of works, which built a strong foundation for the delivery of the full \$15 million Safe Harbour commitment by December 2017.

"Parks Victoria has done a great job delivering these works for the Bellarine Peninsula - on time and on budget," Ms Neville said.

"A priority for the project is to ensure the harbour can continue to operate throughout the works.

"I'm committed to keeping the Bellarine community well informed and involved in this important project which will create a brighter future for Portarlington."

John Rae, from the Portarlington Ferry and Safe Harbour Group, said he was "absolutely delighted" with Ms Neville's announcement and wanted to thank her for all her support over the years.

"The ferry is now the closest it has ever been in years," Mr Rae said.



Parks Victoria chair Andrew Fairley and Geelong councillor Lindsay Ellis point out elements of the new pier to Lisa Neville.

April 2014 Bellarine Times

Bellarine Times

Port power

Rebecca Launer April 10 2014



Pictured: Portarlington Safe Harbour and Ferry Group treasurer Geoff Henderson, Portarlington Business Development Association president John Rae, Bellarine MP Lisa Neville and state Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews are thinking big about the future of Portarlington's harbour.

Labor promises \$15 million for stage one of Portarlington Safe Harbour

Labour's pledge of \$15 million to build stage one of the Portarlington Safe Harbour is just the latest of a string of exciting milestones for the seaside town.

Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews and Bellarine MP Lisa Neville announced on Monday that if elected in November, Labor would fund the first stage of the \$58 million G21 priority project.

Mr Andrews said the funding would deliver a new pier, ferry berth, berths for the aquaculture industry, services for refuelling and pumping out and extension of the current breakwater.

He said the project would also create up to a 100 new jobs for construction.

"The Geelong region is losing jobs – this project will create them."

Ms Neville said the new pier would allow an oyster and abalone industry to grow and the blue mussels industry to expand, while a ferry service would boost local tourism.

"For over six years I have worked closely with the community to see this project realised. I am thrilled that this commitment will get this critical regional project under way."

Portarlington Business Development Association president John Rae said he was "absolutely thrilled" about the announcement.

"This will be terrific for the traders in the town and will open many more opportunities for business and also for the community as they will now have direct transport to Melbourne as part of the existing transport system."

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Mr Rae said the announcement was the latest good news for the town, following the opening of the town's Woolworth's store in November last year, works recently starting on an eight-bowser petrol station with six car wash bays, and construction set to begin on a new retirement village in June.

The United Petroleum station at Portarlington Industrial Park, on the corner of Tower and Portarlington-Queenscliff roads, is expected to be finished in September, while stage one of Portarlington Village in Mercer Street, which includes about 15 houses, is planned for completion in early 2015. The retirement village is set to include about 100 houses when all stages are finished.

Portarlington Golf Club has also just lodged the first stage of its \$7 million masterplan with the City of Greater Geelong.

Stage one, which will cost \$700,000, involves rebuilding and extending the club's kitchen and a new men's toilet facility. The works are expected to be finished in August.

"The good news just keeps continuing," Mr Rae said.

"Portarlington is well on its way to becoming more self-sufficient."

Meanwhile, about 300 residents both young and old made sure their message was heard loud and clear at the weekend when they protested against the sale of Ann Nichol House.

www.surfcoasttimes.com.au/news/community/2014/04/10/port-power/#.U0Yuzk2KBaQ

The Port Report

\$15 Million For Pier!!!

New Pier....New Berths.... New Jobs

Daniel Andrews, Labor Leader of the Opposition, along with Lisa Neville MLA Member for Bellarine, announced last week that a Labor Government, if elected in November, will provide in its 2015 May budget \$15 million for Stage One of the Portarlinton Safe Harbour Project. The funding would be made in a complete grant for the development of a new pier and new berths. It would follow on from the concept work which was completed four years ago but has since received no attention from the Napthine Government.

"For four years the Napthine Government has been sitting on its hands, ignoring the needs of the aquaculture and tourist industries, and the needs of the Bellarine residents and visitors. We will waste no time in getting Stage One of this project off the ground," Mr Andrews said. Lisa Neville said she knows the frustration felt by the Bellarine community in the absence of progress.

"The Safe Harbour development would satisfy the need of so many Victorians It would allow Portarlinton to become the centre of the seafood industry in Victoria," she said. "The concept of a ferry service between Portarlinton and Melbourne would also come closer to reality."



Cr Lindsay Ellis, Member of Bellarine Lisa Neville, Leader of the Opposition Daniel Andrews, John Rae and Geoff Henderson at the announcement

Warning over rail fail pain

Updated Saturday, 7 April, 2012 by www.geelongadvertiser.com.au | [Victorian Rail News](#)

THE state's new public transport regulatory body has given V/Line a rap over the knuckles for its handling of Tuesday's power failure which left thousands of Geelong train commuters stranded for up to five hours.

The debacle, caused by a failure of a high voltage underground power line which left the entire line from Werribee to Geelong paralysed, was the first crisis for the not-yet week-old Public Transport Victoria (PTV).

Chief executive Ian Dobbs told the Geelong Advertiser he was extremely disappointed with the delays experienced by 4250 V/Line passengers.

"Although the cause of the disruption was outside of V/Line's direct control, the concerning thing was the response to the situation was very poor and they know that," Mr Dobbs said.

"From our perspective, we are very keen in the future to make sure that when things do inevitably happen, they get dealt with efficiently, and we keep people up to date and that clearly didn't happen on Tuesday night."

While some trains made it into stations along the Geelong line following the power failure, three trains were left stranded between stations, with hundreds of passengers trapped on board for nearly five hours.

As late as Thursday afternoon, V/Line crews were still trying to locate the exact point along the line where the 25-year-old power cable failed, narrowing the area down to a 1km stretch near Little River.

It is not known whether the cable failed because of its age or whether it had been cut.

Mr Dobbs said the cable, which runs alongside the track, wasn't thought to be a critical piece of infrastructure.

"Twenty-five years is not a long time in the context of the industry we operate, we constantly have to update infrastructure but sometimes it's difficult to predict which parts of infrastructure are more vulnerable than others," he said.

"There are lessons to be learned from this, about how V/Line handles this situation in the future and provides timely and accurate information to people on site."

cameron.best@geelongadvertiser.com.au

Signal fault stops Geelong trains

| April 10th, 2012

The Geelong Advertiser

Related Links

TRAIN services on the Geelong line have been brought to a halt, leaving passengers stranded for the second time in a week.

A signal fault has stopped Melbourne-bound trains at Geelong while services headed to Geelong from Melbourne were halted at Werribee about noon.

Buses were being brought in to ferry stranded passengers between the two cities, until the fault could be fixed.

Hundreds of frustrated passengers at Geelong Central station were trying to get a seat on the road coaches, which were struggling to keep up with demand.

More than 60 buses have been brought in to offer express services to Melbourne and longer trips that stopped at all suburban stations, leading to longer travel times for people through the peak-hour period.

V/Line spokeswoman Claire Steele said engineers at the scene, in the same Little River - North Shore area where a signal fault last week caused passengers to be stranded inside carriages for up to five hours, had identified a transformer fault and were working to fix the problem.

Last week's paralysis was caused by the failure of a high voltage underground power line and left three trains stranded between Little River and North Shore, trapping hundreds of people on board.

Charles Thompson, 91, had already been forced to stand from Winchelsea to Geelong when he then had to cart his luggage and push through the throng to get aboard the express buses to Melbourne.

“It is just awful. They couldn't even run a brothel (V/Line).”

Geelong rail woes set to continue

Andy Park

April 11, 2012

The Geelong Advertiser

More chaos on the Geelong line is expected this morning.

THE fault that put thousands of V/Line's Geelong line passengers on replacement buses during peak hour last night will affect commuters this morning, with up to 80 coaches to ferry people to the city.

V/Line issued a service update last night reading, "Buses will replace all trains on the Geelong line until 11am [today]."

Adding to commuters' woes yesterday were five malfunctioning boom gates in the Geelong-Lara area. The signal fault, which was the same fault that resulted in 800 passengers being stranded aboard a stationary train for about five hours last week, occurred about 12.20pm yesterday.

V/Line spokeswoman Clare Steele said the same cable was responsible for this morning's continuing service cancellation and yesterday's boom-gate malfunction.

"The cable snapped and we got a fix for it by using a different transformer, which in turn broke," Ms Steele said.

V/Line last night would not guarantee the fault would be fixed for normal services to return for today's morning peak hour. "Even if we are able to fix it overnight, all our trains won't be in position and that's why we are putting on more than 80 buses to Southern Cross Station," Ms Steele said.

'Passengers should add 20 to 30 minutes to their journey to allow for road traffic.'

At least another 80 buses replaced last night's outbound commute as engineers tried to fix the problem.

No room to move on packed Geelong trains

Peter Begg April 25th, 2012

GEELONG peak-time V/Line services are fast approaching 100 per cent capacity with no plans for new trains to meet further growth of 170 per cent by 2021.

Of the five express trains from Geelong to Southern Cross Station before 9am on weekdays, two of them are 100 per cent full, and another two are 96 and 97 per cent full.

Of the five commuter express trains, only the earliest at 6.19am has much space.

The state auditor-general warned earlier this year that patronage on V/Line trains is expected to more than double by 2020/21, after doubling from 6.4 million passengers to 13.5 million in the past five years.

However, there are no current orders for extra trains and none have been promised.

A V/Line spokesman said he was hopeful there might be something in this year's state Budget, with the carrier believed to have been lobbying strongly for more trains.

The spokesman said they would not know what was in the Budget until it is made public next Tuesday.

Public Transport Users Association spokesman Tim Petersen said yesterday the patronage on the Geelong line would continue to expand and there needed to be a plan for dealing with capacity.

"At the moment there doesn't seem to be one, at least there is no publicly released plan of how they are going to deal with it, and it's a big concern for all users and the PTUA," he said.

"I guess it could be a number of things they could look at longer trains, and that might mean that some of the smaller stations won't have the platforms length to take every carriage, but that happens on a number of country stations elsewhere on the network already.

"They could even look at developing some new rolling stock they might need to, given the large number of people on some of these commuting lines, they might need to start looking at even double-deckers trains on the Geelong line.

"It's one of those things that should be in the mix.

"It might be that double-decker trains are better for the long distance lines where everyone really expects to have a seat when you're talking about travelling such a long way over such a long period of time."

Mr Petersen said people obviously preferred the express services, and V/Line might have to look at running more express services.

Information Sheet



BELLARINE FERRY AND PORTARLINGTON SAFE HARBOUR

The Portarlington Community Association aims to progress projects that residents believe are important for the community. A commuter ferry to Melbourne was nominated as the communities highest priority. It means people can live on the Bellarine and commute for work or education. Before the service can start we need a structure that can accommodate it and that's stage One of the Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan.

OUR VISION

To have a reliable and efficient commuter ferry service between the Bellarine and Melbourne.

WHAT A FERRY OFFERS

A direct journey between the Bellarine and Melbourne. A commuter ferry will be:

- Regular – morning and evening schedules to fit with work hours and services during the day.
- Reliable – can run in all types of weather.
- Comfortable – everyone has a seat.
- Integrated – one ticket for the entire journey.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR

A ferry needs a suitable berth to pick up and drop off passengers. So far the following actions have happened:

Portarlington: The Victorian government has funded Stage one of the Portarlington Safe Harbour Master Plan. Stage one of three stages has berthing facilities for two commuter ferries. Work began in 2015 and will be completed in 2017.

Stage one also is essential for the renowned Port Phillip mussel farming industry that relies on Portarlington's infrastructure to survive.

Melbourne: Docklands and Station Pier are two possible destinations being investigated.

HOW WE WANT IT TO WORK

Buy a ticket and jump on a bus to Portarlington. Catch the ferry to Melbourne, which is all part of the public transport system.

Public buses run direct to the ferry from Queenscliff/Point Lonsdale, St Leonards/Indented Head, Barwon Heads/Ocean Grove, Clifton Springs/Drysdale and Leopold.

Weekends and during the day – the ferry will bring visitors to the Bellarine.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE BELLARINE

Opens up education: students can travel for tertiary studies and still live at home. Quickest option for students and cheapest option for families.

Opens up employment: more choice for school leavers and mums and dads without having to relocate the family.

Boost for business: tourism is essential to retain our many small and family businesses.

More infrastructure and services: larger towns attract a bigger share of government spending.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

John Rae: (03) 5259 1015

Geoff Henderson: (03) 5259 2481

www.bellarineferry.yolasite.com

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Commuter Ferry Myths

It's too rough to operate – it can get foggy and can't run

An all-weather service

All commercial marine vessels are equipped with sophisticated electronic devices for safe travel in all weather conditions.

The ferry will take about 45 minutes and up to 50 minutes in inclement weather.

You won't experience traffic jams, road closures, train cancellations and you will have a seat - a 300 seat ferry can only carry 300 passengers.

Too expensive to travel

Public transport subsidy

Ferries are a basic part of subsidised public transport in Australia and overseas.

People living on the Bellarine can benefit from the same subsidised commuter services that exist for others who have to travel for work or education by tram, bus or train.

Commuter parking will deny access to the beach and pier

Most will travel by bus

Buses will bring the majority of commuters to the ferry because it's part of the ticket so it's cheaper and easier.

Additional parking will be provided a short distance from the ferry terminal.

It will change the nature of the town

What's old is new again

Portarlington was a tourist destination with the SS Edina bringing visitors from Melbourne for just on 60 years until 1938. A ferry between Melbourne and Portarlington is a return to this important transport mode. The difference is a focus on commuters which reflects the significant population growth on the Bellarine over the last 77 years.

No-one will use it

Government survey indicates strong support

A state government survey identified strong support from day one. People from Melbourne and elsewhere have said they will relocate to the Bellarine once the service is operating.



THURSDAY NOVEMBER 24 2016 NEWS 05

State deal guarantees service will stay for at least another three years

Ferry tales do come true

CLAIRE MARTIN

THE Portarlington ferry is here to stay but leaders are calling on the community to support the project to keep things sailing smoothly.

The State Government announced a deal on Monday morning that guarantees the ferry service to Melbourne's Docklands will run for at least the next three years, and outlined a new commuter schedule that starts today.

Port Phillip Ferries operations manager Murray Rance said it was down to the community to keep it going.

"We need commuters," he said.

"It's very simple, there's no science to it, you get people on board, people sitting on the seats and people experiencing it.

"We think there's wonderful tourism opportunities on this side of the bay and there's also the opportunity for people to go experience a show in Melbourne, have lunch and come back in a relaxed environment."

Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville said the next stage would be keeping the service viable and connecting it with tourism destinations.

"Now that the ferry is permanent, how do you make sure there's a bus there to wineries? Or one of the things they're looking at is whether they can have bikes on board because we know the Bellarine rail trail is one of the most popular bike tracks around the state," she said.

"That's one of the focuses and now that we know it's permanent we can start doing that."

She said the funding was a modest amount but would keep the ferry secure.

"It's enough to enable the service to be sustainable really ... it needed to be able to be turned around so the Port Phillip (Ferries) group wasn't losing money and of course we're doing the \$15 million safe harbour project," she said.

Ms Neville's announcement, made on board the ferry while it was docked at Portarlington pier, was met with cheers from locals.

"This ferry is now going to be permanent for at least three years," she said.

FERRY TIMETABLE

Portarlington to Docklands:
 Monday 7am, 11.45am, 7.15pm
Tuesday & Thursday
 7am, 3.30pm, 7.15pm
Wednesday & Friday
 7am, 11.15am, 7.15pm
Saturday & Sunday
 9am, 4pm, 7.30pm

Docklands to Portarlington:
Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
 5.15am, 10am, 5.30pm
Wednesday & Friday
 5.15am, 9.30am, 5.30pm
Saturday & Sunday
 7.15am, 11.45am, 5.45pm

Times are subject to change – for updates and ticketing information visit the website at portphilipferries.com.au



On board: Geoff Henderson, Murray Rance, Bellarine MP Lisa Neville and John Rye at the announcement. Picture: PETER RISTEVSKI

Bellarine Times 4th August 2016

news

More ferry trials from Port to come



THE Port Phillip Ferries team has announced two more passenger trials between Portarlington and Docklands for today (Thursday) and tomorrow.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group chair John Rae said 367 people boarded the first passenger ferry trial last Friday, which was a fantastic day for Portarlington and the Bellarine.

"The biggest thrill was seeing the 150 people waving us off," Mr Rae said.

"It was like we were going on a cruise to Fiji or something."

Mr Rae said the buzz on board the ferry, which business owner Paul Little also joined, was amazing.

"After hearing us talking about it for four years it finally occurred - a ferry arrived at Portarlington.

"Some passengers celebrated with champagne."

He said the passenger ferry ride was very smooth, and seeing buildings from a different angle during entry into Docklands was spectacular.

"We believe that this Portarlington ferry passenger trial represents a significant step forward in realising the potential to operate a passenger ferry service out of the Bellarine Peninsula on a regular basis," a Port Phillip Ferries spokesman said.

Head to portphilipferries.com.au/portarlington-trial for more information about the coming trials.

Bellarine Tourism's Connie Trathen with partner Matt. Photo: MICHAEL CHAMBERS

Ferry moves closer

BY JESSICA BENTON

PORTARLINGTON'S hopes of establishing a ferry to Melbourne have moved a step closer with Parks Victoria allocating space for the service at the town's harbour.

Parks Victoria strategic relations manager Elaine Carbine said the ferry berth had been included in a draft master plan for a \$30 million redevelopment of the harbour.

"During the community consultation it became very clear that many people would like to see provision for a ferry service incorporated in the safe harbour project," she said.

"We informed Bellarine Ferry Group last week that the draft plan will show space for a future ferry service."

However, Ms Carbine said the berth was no guarantee an operator would eventually run a ferry.

"This project is about redesigning the harbour. While it will provide space for a future ferry service, it will not deliver the service itself," she said.

"There are lots of issues that need to be resolved in terms of providing a ferry service and that's not a Parks Victoria responsibility. The main thing is to make sure there'll be space in the harbour for any future ferry service."

Ms Carbine said Parks Victoria

was preparing the draft master plan for public comment.

Parks Victoria would take submissions then send them with the plan to Environment Minister Gavin Jennings for approval.

Bellarine Ferry Group secretary John Rae said the organisation was thrilled about inclusion of a ferry berth in the plan.

Mr Rae said potential ferry operators had shown interest in the harbour redevelopment.

"We've had six varying degrees of interest from both local and interstate ferry operators," he said.

"They've all approached us but we don't see it as our job to organise this, as the Government will call for tenders down the track."

Mr Rae said the group had met Station Pier operators in Melbourne to discuss a commuter ferry from Portarlington.

"We're proposing a commuter ferry, not a tourist ferry, which

will cater for up to 1000 people," he said.

"It's expected the service will run three trips in the morning and three at night.

"The travel time will be about 42 minutes and will link up with the light-rail service in central Melbourne."

Mr Rae said the redeveloped harbour would also have potential for a tourist ferry services if operators considered it viable.


June 2018 Geelong Indy


Geelong Indy

GREATER GEELONG

Lobby to cover cost of 'free' ferry rides in trial

01 June 2018 8:56 AM .

 Like 16 people like this. Be the first of your friends.

 16

By Luke Voogt

A local community group has urged residents to climb aboard a free trial of a Geelong-Melbourne ferry in July.

A successful trial would give the city a "very important" travel alternative, according to Geelong Connected Communities executive Pat Murnane.

"We think it's terrific for Geelong," he said.

"We've been a car-dependent city in the past and transport options are something Geelong really needs to explore into the future."

The non-profit group joined several local businesses, government bodies and community organisations pledging support as partners of the trial this week.

Mr Murnane declined to state the amount his organisation would contribute to the trial.


But Geelong Connected Communities would disclose the amount at a later date for "transparency", he said.

"Our involvement is to provide the option for the community."

Mr Murnane, also a Geelong councillor, encouraged residents to see if the service worked for them.

"It would be fantastic for people to actually experience what the trial will offer," he said.

"Just be adventurous, go on the trial and see if it fits your lifestyle."



ALL ABOARD: Port Phillip Ferries will run a free service from Geelong to Docklands in late July.

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The trials would help determine the future of permanent high-speed ferry services, said Committee for Geelong chief Rebecca Casson.

"The Committee for Geelong is very pleased to have signed this agreement with Port Phillip Ferries," she said.

"We believe (that) Geelong commuters will definitely welcome and embrace this new way of travelling to work."

Ms Casson said the committee funded the trial but she declined to reveal the cost because of "commercial in confidence" issues.

She also declined to detail individual partners' contributions but said they would include promotion, financial support and encouraging employees to use the service.

Port Phillip Ferries will run the two trial services from central Geelong to Docklands in late July.

The ferry had free Wi-Fi, chargers, small meeting tables and refreshments on board, Ms Casson said.

Port Phillip Ferries chief executive officer Murray Rance welcomed support for the trial.

"Port Phillip Ferries look forward to creating opportunities not only for daily commuters, but also the leisure and business markets," he said.

"We are confident we can add value to people's lives via this service, as we have already witnessed within the Bellarine Peninsula community."

Passengers could book a free ticket for the trial at Port Phillip Ferries' website in coming weeks, the company announced.

The company will collect a gold coin donation from passengers to go to a local charity.

The trip from Geelong to Docklands took about one hour and 40 minutes, a company spokesperson said.

Demand grows for transport service from Portarlington to Melbourne

Ferry important issue

TONY PRYTZ

SUPPORTERS of the campaign to get a ferry service between Portarlington and Port Melbourne hope the coming state election will bring the political will to support the service.

Bellarine Ferry Group secretary John Rae said a recent public meeting attended by Opposition transport spokesman Terry Mulder overwhelmingly endorsed the idea.

Mr Rae said some criticisms of the plan were unjustified.

"We have never said the service would pay for itself," he said. "What we say is that we think it should be treated like any other public transport service like the railways. No one says the railways have to make a money."

Mr Rae said the group backing the project had no financial stake in the project.

"There is one business person in our group, the rest of us are retired people who just think it is good thing for the area," he said. "We are lobbying for it but we do not want to operate the service."

geelongadvertiser.com.au

Do we need a ferry service to Melbourne? Let us know your view.

"We want the Government to put it out to tender like any other transport service. There are buses running around the peninsula that don't make money. Public transport is always subsidised."

Mr Rae said the first thing that needed to happen was for the State Government to fund the \$55 million safe harbour project for Portarlington.

"Then the service could be put out for tender," he said.

Mr Rae said Mr Mulder had given an undertaking to try and get the Liberal Party to adopt the service as policy in the coming state election.

Liberal candidate for Bellarine Kurt Reiter said the meeting showed overwhelming support for the scheme. "People were saying we would use this service," he said.

Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville could not be contacted for comment yesterday.

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT FERRY MEETING PROVIDES OVERWHELMING SUPPORT

On June 9th over 300 people crowded Parks Hall in support for the provision of a ferry from Portarlington. The meeting was called by the Liberal candidate for Bellarine, Mr Kurt Reiter.

Mr Reiter had been canvassing the Bellarine and received strong support for the proposal, but wanted to assess if there was an overwhelming public support.

This was demonstrated by the number attending the forum. As a result, he was going to seek to include this proposal as part of the Liberal Party policy platform. Mr Reiter received only two letters of objections, but the objectors did not wish to participate in the forum.

Mr Reiter believed that this was a visionary project which could contribute significantly to not only to Portarlington but to the whole of the Peninsula. He invited the Bellarine Ferry Group to present to the very large forum the reasons for the ferry. The group stated that their vision was to have a reliable, efficient and comfortable commuter ferry service between the Bellarine and Melbourne.

The volunteer group had spent enormous hours in research, discussions with ferry operators, builders, government agencies, marine engineers and architects.

They have also spoken to many groups throughout the Bellarine. The major content of their presentation took the form of questions that people have asked over this time. It was stated that it is not the intention of the Bellarine Ferry group to run or have any financial interest in such a proposal. All group members live on the Bellarine Peninsula and seek no pecuniary interest in such a service. Their presentation was professionally delivered and addressed the issues of:

The concern that parking will take up space thus denying people to access the beach and pier was also addressed. It was pointed out that in the new Safe Harbour Master plan it had provided for 650 car spaces.

Discussions with the City of Greater Geelong had also been supportive and they would look to provide additional parking outside the Safe Harbour to cater for the demand. Discussions had been held with McHarry's Bus Lines and they were also encouraging in that they saw no problem of providing feeder and pick up services to link into the ferry service.

It's too rough and dangerous to operate

The group was able to demonstrate that the selection of an appropriate vessel to suit the conditions would enable it to operate effectively all year round. They

were able to draw upon the Queenscliff—Sorrento Ferry's twenty-three years of operation of which they have never missed a schedule due to bad weather. Also drawing upon other ferry services, such as the Manly service, demonstrates that our bay conditions would never be as severe as the Sydney harbour.

The little negative comments put out by the very few distractors saying that it won't work were also shown to be false

The lessons from the past have shown that it will be able to operate because it is provided with a Safe Harbour (which the government has committed to build). This enables it to be reliable; the provision of an appropriate vessel will enable it to be safe and comfortable. Most importantly as part of the Melbourne subsidised transport system it will provide fares in line with the Geelong rail system

The question of being too expensive was also revealed as a myth. As fares would be part of the existing public transport system and be able to be used on trains/buses & trams as current V/Line tickets do. All fares will be subsidised on the same basis as existing public transport system is. E.g. trams, trains and buses.

The concern that it would have a major impact that would change the nature of the town was also covered.

It was pointed out that the town is already changing. e.g. Arlington Rise, the retirement village, a new supermarket, Old Duke upgrade. However in many areas town services are reducing – loss of petrol stations, doctors from health service, hardware, cafés and restaurants continually closing. The ferry would attract more permanent residents which in turn would help to ensure that these services are also attracted to the town. From research it has been found that a ferry service would bring more employment/economic development.

One question that some have used to detract support was that it would be too expensive to build. Again it is easy to demonstrate that very little expenditure will be required compared to other avenues of travel to Melbourne. As the berthing and mooring facilities already exist at Station Pier, no further additional costs would be involved. The berthing and mooring facilities are to be built into Stage 1 of the promised Safe Harbour, so no additional costs are involved. The vessel can be either Bought/leased by operator – no cost to State Government. The only cost may be the provision by the operator to provide a waiting room and ticket office at the Portarlington end.



Kurt Reiter with Hon. Dennis Napthine, Shadow Minister for Ports

The question of time saving was also addressed. The drive time to Melbourne is 120 min (if you are lucky). The drive/train to Melbourne is 115 Min. The total time by ferry/tram to Melbourne CBD, Swanston Street is 70minutes. By any measurement this is a considerable time saving. But this also includes a seat and a relaxing journey.

Detractors claim that nobody will use it. Well the last experience in 2004 demonstrated a demand. The potential user survey indicates demand and all research indicates that a regular, reliable, safe and comfortable service will attract wide support. It is not just an analysis of ABS data to determine figures, As the Ferry group pointed out, build it and they will come. A ferry would not just provide a complementary transit system servicing both the commuter and tourist markets but be a major factor in bringing services, infrastructure and balancing the demographic on the Bellarine.

Importantly it would enable current and future residents' access to Melbourne for a wider range of employment, education family connections. It would also be a major factor in addressing the current social isolation, exclusion that currently exists.

The meeting closed by Mr Mulder, Shadow Transport Minister, giving a commitment to the people that they would seriously consider this as a Liberal policy platform as the forum had demonstrated overwhelming community support.

August 2016 Bellarine Times

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Bellarine Times

Commuter ferry service from Port to start today

Front Page August 11th

FERRY HAPPY

BY REBECCA ADAM

AFTER nine years in the making, a trial daily commuter ferry service will begin today between Portarlington and Docklands.

Port Phillip Ferries chief executive officer Murray Rance confirmed on Tuesday that the ferry would run daily until the end of August, when the service would be re-evaluated.

“The more people that get on board the ferry, the more chance it will become a permanent fixture,” Mr Rance said.

“We are very excited about this trial and very appreciative of the support we have received from the Bellarine community.”

The trial commuter ferry service will leave Portarlington this morning (Thursday) at 7am and arrive at Docklands at 8.30am.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group chair John Rae said he and Geoff Henderson met last week with Port Phillip Ferries executives, including businessman Paul Little, who were keen to see a

commute development route begin from Portarlington.

“We are delighted with the support from Port Phillip Ferries to begin the route, which I think was an easier decision for them after seeing how successful the trials were that ran over three days and attracted more than 900 passengers,” Mr Rae said.

“This verified the points we had been telling them and has given them the confidence to continue with a regular commuter service.”

He said the first passenger trial on July

29 attracted 367 passengers, while the August 4 and August 5 trials attracted 220 and 376, respectively.

“It will take time to build up the commuter service but it will also give people the opportunity to spend a full day in Melbourne and then return.

“This new option of public transport will give people living on the Bellarine the chance to travel in comfort, with wifi, and they won’t be caught in the car in traffic or standing up in a train.”

He said the service would also attract

Melbourne people to the Bellarine end of the route, who may want to visit the region’s wineries, restaurants and beaches.

Mr Rae and Mr Henderson have worked for nine years to secure a ferry from Portarlington to Docklands, and thanked Mr Little for both his vision and investment in bringing ferries to Melbourne.

Mr Rance asked potential passengers to visit the Port Phillip Ferries website at portphillipferries.com.au for more schedules and pricing.

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Parks Victoria to host safe harbour open day

BY REBECCA ADAM

PORTARLINGTON locals are invited to meet the building teams transforming their town's safe harbour this weekend.

Parks Victoria will host an open day this Saturday at Parks Hall on Newcombe Street to answer any questions people might have about the Portarlington Safe Harbour project.

Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville said the \$15 million project got underway in February this year and was now more than a third complete, with 640 metres of new rock breakwaters built around the harbour to support the mussel

industry and local economy.

Ms Neville said Australian Project Solutions had already built the foundations for the 270 metres of the new eastern breakwater and had made great progress on 200 metres of the extended northern breakwater that would eventually reach 370 metres around the harbour.

She said deliveries of rock to the breakwater construction site would slow over the coming winter months, with works now focused on laying rock from a large stockpile at the base of the foreshore cliff.

Ms Neville will meet with PW Johnson Constructions on Friday (tomorrow) as they start

on site, with construction of the new commercial berthing jetty underway following the arrival a piling barge at Portarlington.

"It is great to see the strong progress on both breakwaters and now the new commercial jetty," Ms Neville said.

"I'm proud that Geelong's own Moolap-based Coen Precast picked up the concreting works for the new 190-metre commercial jetty that is about to be installed."

PW Johnson Construction and Australian Project Solutions will be joining Parks Victoria's project team at the Bay View Room, Parks Hall on Saturday from 11am to 1pm.

"If you have any questions about the project and its progress please pop in for a visit and enjoy a sausage sizzle, being run by our local CFA brigade, and tours of the construction sites being held at 11.30am and 12.30pm," Ms Neville said.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group chair John Rae said he was very impressed with how open and transparent Parks Victoria had been throughout the entire planning and building process, and that Saturday would be a wonderful opportunity for the people of Portarlington to come and see what had been happening at the site.

For more information on the project, visit parks.vic.gov.au/portarlington-harbour.

September 2006 Geelong Independent

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<http://www.stamewsgroup.com.au/indy/geelong/7/story/26498.html>

Geelong Independent

Storm shows harbour 'unsafe': boat owner. Call for breakwater

Alex de Vos

Share|

29th September 2006 11:34:46 AM

A WEEKEND storm that caused "significant" damage to boats moored at Portarlington harbour has led to calls to fast track a project to make the port safe.

Local boat owner Michael Byers said steel chains at the back of his boat snapped under pressure of the waves, allowing it to smash into another boat.

The Bureau of Meteorology reported gale force wind on Port Phillip Bay on the weekend gusting up to 87 kilometres an hour.

"It's caused some significant damage," he said.

"The quickest and easiest way to stop this from happening would be to install a wall to create a wave break during bad weather," Mr Byers said.

During adverse weather and under the conditions of the harbour Mr Byers said it was getting to the stage where people couldn't physically get onto their boats.

"Something needs to be done now because it's only a matter of time before someone gets hurt," he said.

Mr Byers said if Parks Victoria wanted to encourage boating enthusiasts to use the harbour it needed to consider weather conditions.

He said the harbour had been "a huge issue" for a long time and someone needed to be held accountable for the damage.

"Parks Victoria is neglecting its duty of care by allowing this to happen and needs to do what it has to, to make that harbour safe," Mr Byers said.

The Bellarine Peninsula's chief ranger Steve Macphee agreed there was a need for a breakwater but said it would be a long time before one was installed.

"We're a long way off having a safe harbour but it is being addressed in the Portarlington Safe Harbour study.

"All boat owners know the risks of having their boat on the inner finger and know they are susceptible to the weather," Mr Macphee said.

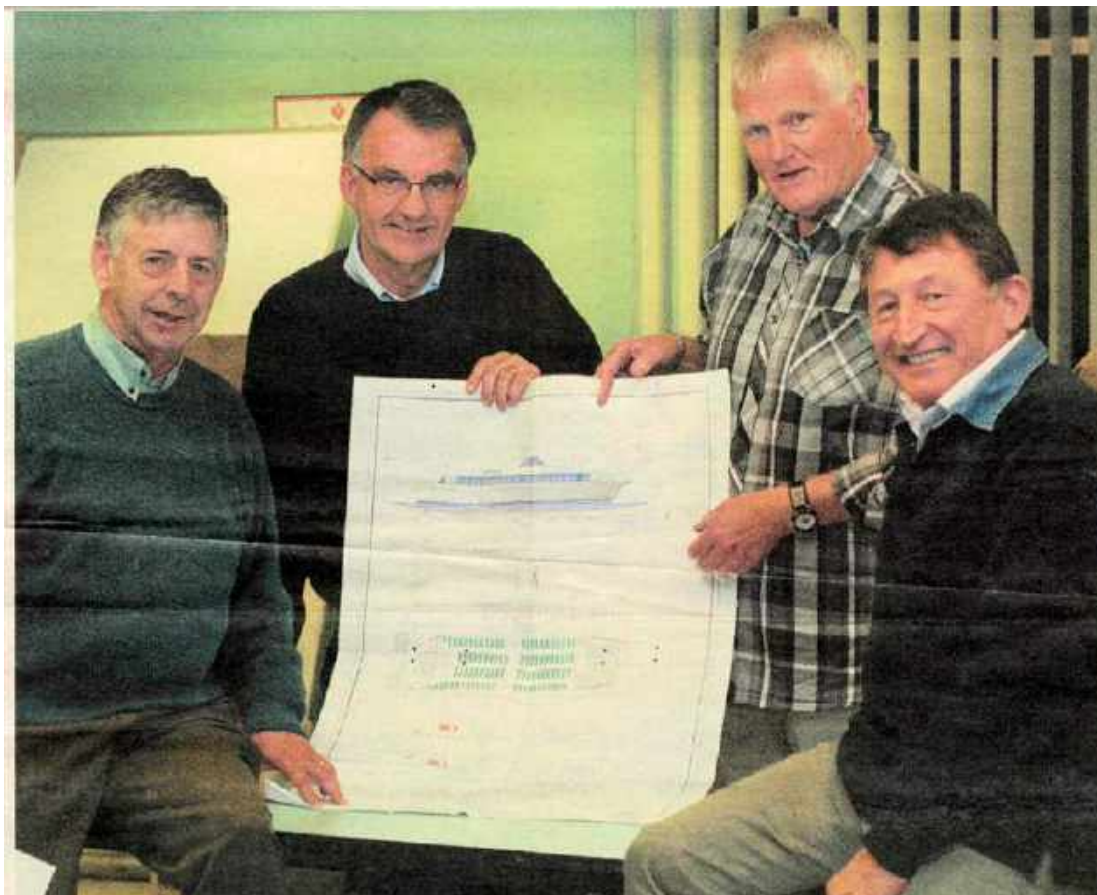
Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville also backed the call for a breakwater and said it would be included in the Portarlington Safe Harbour Project.

"There will be a breakwater that will be installed as part of the project to provide a safe refuge for boats," Ms Neville said.

September 2009 Ocean Grove Voice

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Peter Hibbert, of Bellarine Connections (public transport), John Rae, secretary and Geoff Henderson, treasurer, of the ferry group, and John Fendyk, chairman of Ocean Grove Community Association.

Ferry group share vision with Grove community association

MEMBERS of a group bidding to launch a Bellarine to Port Melbourne ferry shared their vision with members of Ocean Grove Community Association at their September meeting.

The group's secretary John Rae, and treasurer Geoff Henderson, outlined the plan for 40 minute trips from Portarlinton on board one of two 300 capacity ferries.

In their plan the ferries would run three trips every morning and three trips every afternoon, seven days a

week.

They also envisage that the scheme would include a bus service on the Bellarine end and that would link the ferry with the light rail service in Melbourne.

The main points re-iterated were that it had to be reliable and the cost would need to be comparable to the train service.

To make that possible the ferry would have to be subsidised by the State in the same way as the trains, argued the representatives.

In its favour, Portarlinton is the closest Bellarine town to Melbourne and it is getting a new safe harbour.

The meeting was told that an estimated 1,200 Melbourne bound commuters live on the Bellarine.

With the subsidy the proponents say the cost should be about \$18 return.

They suggest that the first year could attract 100-200 passengers per journey and it would be running to capacity by the second year.

May 2010 The Echo

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20 | ECHO, Thursday, May 13, 2010

Ferry of frustration

THERE needs to be an investigation into the progress of the proposed safe harbour at Portarlington.

I'm afraid the research conducted was that of Price Waterhouse Coopers, back in 2000, when the idea was first devised.

The population around this area has grown significantly since that time and the community has become rather fed up with the lack of progress.

There are a lot of people holding on to the hope that this project commences much sooner than later.

If the plan is to implement works within a 10-year period, some of those people may not even be around to enjoy it – the same people who have already been waiting a decade.

There is also the matter of the proposed ferry service from station pier.

This doesn't just affect the people of Portarlington – it affects surrounding communities of Port Phillip and the City of Melbourne.

The ferry service will prove a must and would enable Melbourne to finally compete with Sydney.

Then there would be the added bonus for locals of being able to finally consider commuting to the city, which could open up more and better opportunities for those concerned with the lack of local job options.

This ferry should be the priority while we wait for the rest of the development.

- It seems demand is a deciding factor when allocating funds from the national or state budgets.

Yet how is this going to be resolved when access to Portarlington and the entire Bellarine region is so restricted by how long it takes to get there and the fact that it needs to be marketed?

Unless Parks Victoria or a branch of local government decide to invest a little time and effort into a marketing scheme to notify public of the possibilities that stand before them, I will be forced personally to act on behalf of all locals and interested parties by taking my research and stories to the media.

The more we are ignored, the louder I will become.

The lack of funding from the budget is no excuse.

Queenscliff had its marina built within four years and the urgency was nowhere near that of Portarlington.

It's not just a concern for the aquaculture and

tourism industries – it is a concern for all those who live, work and travel in Australia.

The more people know about this venture, the more people will realise the potential and the demand will grow considerably.

So much so that the Government will be forced to recognise and acknowledge just how much benefit will come of this proposal.

- Ben Henderson-Tyson,
St Kilda

TheSenior News

Group fights for Bellarine ferry

by DAVID KING

JOHN Rae's passion and knowledge is obvious from the moment you meet him.

The 63-year-old retired sales and marketing manager doesn't waste words or prevaricate. Ask him about his passion and he'll give you a straight and detailed answer without pause.

And the thing he's most passionate about is getting a ferry service running between his home town of Portarlington and Melbourne.

Portarlington is the closest point to Melbourne on the western side of Port Phillip Bay. From the foreshore, you can look north-east and see the skyscrapers roughly half an hour's travelling distance across the bay.

Yet residents of the town and the surrounding Bellarine Peninsula are forced to travel nearly two hours by to reach it via Geelong.

As secretary of the community-based Bellarine Ferry Group, John has spoken to people all over the peninsula and concluded there's a very real need for a ferry, even though pre-

vious attempts at running such a service have failed.

"At the Portarlington Community Building Initiative meeting in March 2007, the number one project people wanted to get going was the ferry service," he said.

"We've been out to Ocean Grove, Drysdale, Queenscliff and Clifton Springs, and had over 1000 submissions from people saying they want a ferry service on the peninsula. It's not just for Portarlington but for everyone on the Bellarine."

John said City of Greater Geelong statistics indicated an average of 5000 people travelled from the peninsula to Melbourne via Geelong each week day.

"If we could get the ferry service going, we estimate we could get about 600 cars off the road and ease congestion on the Geelong-Melbourne trains," he said.

But not everyone is convinced.

Geelong Chamber of Commerce executive director Lawrie Miller said although he thought the ferry was a great idea, he didn't believe there

would be sufficient traffic to make the service financially viable.

"Previous attempts at running a ferry service from Portarlington to Melbourne have left the operators broke," he said.

But John argues that previous attempts failed partly because of poor local marketing and because there were no safe all-weather berthing facilities in Portarlington.

"There were times when it was too rough for the ferry to dock at the existing pier," he said. "That's why we pushed hard to get a ferry berth included in the Safe Harbour plan."

A ferry berth has since been officially included in the Parks Victoria-initiated Portarlington Safe Harbour plan. The next step is to get local and State Governments behind the ferry service itself.

"We want the ferry to be part of the public transport infrastructure," John said. "That way we believe it can be financially viable - if the government tenders and subsidises the service the same way it does with buses, trains, and light rail."



ON CAMPAIGN TRAIL - John Rae and group treasurer Geoff Henderson at Portarlington Pier.

Taxpayer support essential

A STUDY commissioned by the State Government found that a peak hour ferry service from Portarlington to Melbourne was potentially viable but would need taxpayer support.

The study - part of research conducted for the Government's latest transport plan found the ferry journey would take 76 minutes.

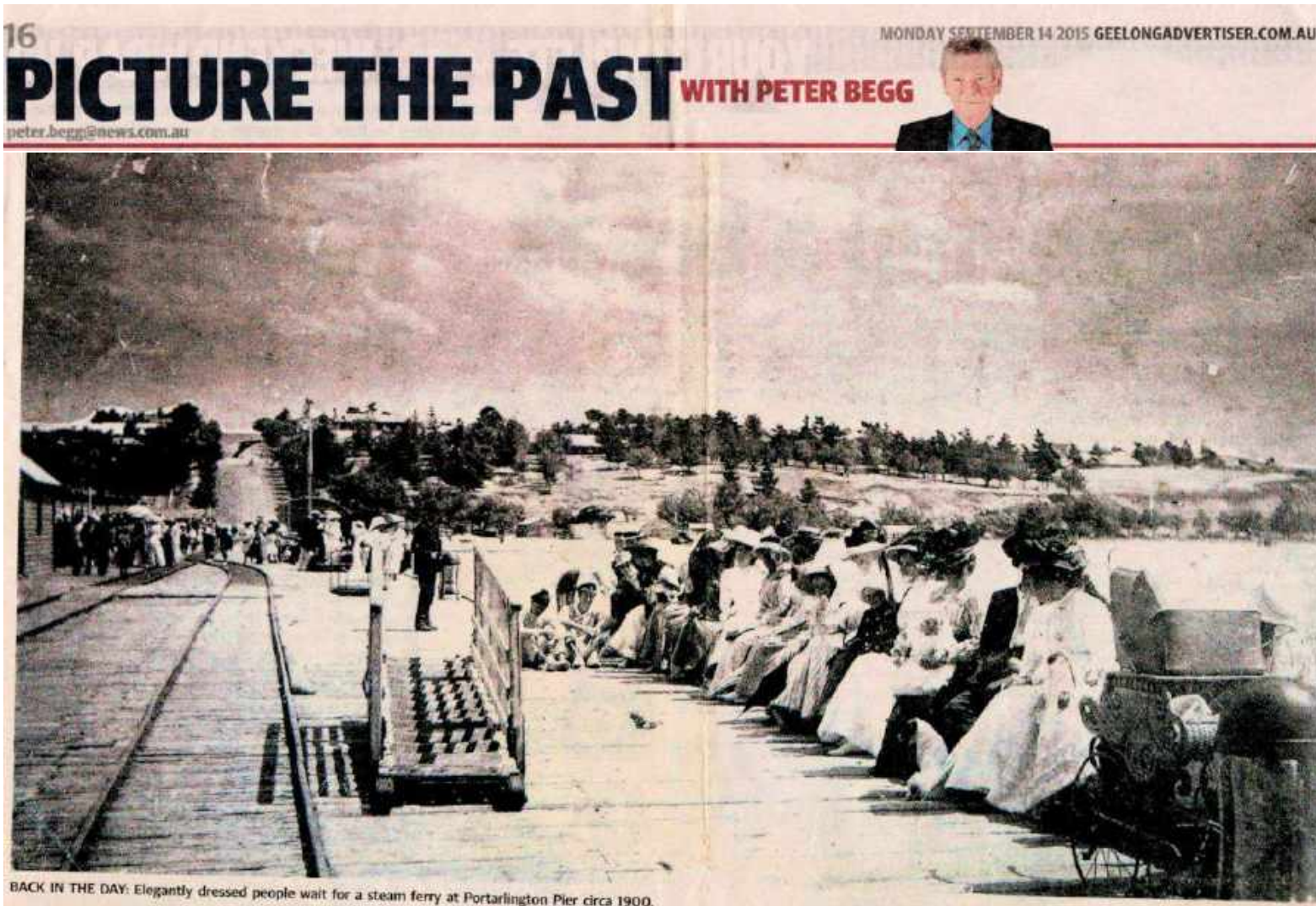
But the ferry would cost \$7 million to buy and around \$7000 a day to operate while earning a

projected income of just over \$5000 a day at full capacity.

It also found a commuter ferry from Geelong to Melbourne would take longer than the 45-minute trip by train and struggle to win market share.

The Government has indicated it would consider including a Portarlington-Melbourne ferry service as part of the public transport infrastructure if there were enough people to use it.

September 2015 Geelong Advertiser



Continue

They're ferry well dressed

Golden era of bay steamers recalled

TODAY'S main picture comes from the recently unearthed Holmes Collection — an image we dubbed "Waiting for the Bay Steamer at Portarlinton Pier circa 1900".

Can you imagine going to the sort of trouble these amazingly dressed Victorians have obviously gone to for an excursion to say to Geelong or Melbourne.

The bay steamers entered the business of running trips between Geelong and Melbourne, with stops at Portarlinton, from as early as 1841, when the first of their ilk, the *Aphrasia*, was first employed.

Aphrasia ran a regular

passenger service on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for two years until competition saw her alter the days of sailing.

She was withdrawn from service at the end of 1853, being replaced by the *Duncan Hoyle*.

By 1853 the bay steamers included the *Vesta*, *Keera*, *Victoria* and *Melbourne*. The paddle-steamer *Citizen* entered the bay trade a few days before Christmas in 1854.

The best-known of the bay steamers was the *Edina*, which started making daily trips between Geelong and Melbourne in 1880.

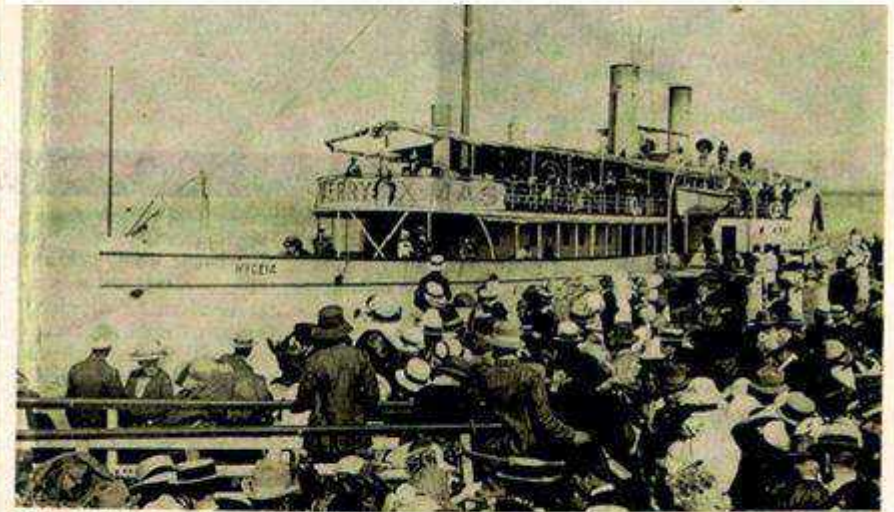
But while the *Edina* was the

longest serving of the bay steamers, it was something of an ugly duckling compared to the likes of the *Coogee*, the *Courier*, the *Excelsior* and the *Ozone*.

The period from 1880 to 1930 was the golden era of the bay ferries. The journey to Melbourne took about 3½ hours and generally included a stop at Portarlinton.

The *Edina* made her final trip from Moorabool St Wharf to Melbourne on June 29, 1938.

The bay steamers operated from Moorabool Street Wharf, which at one time boasted a substantial two-storey booking office and waiting rooms.



People wait to board the steam ferry the *Hygeia*.

THURSDAY JUNE 5 2014

NEWS 03

Pier upgrade to pave the way

GREG DUNDAS

PORTARLINGTON will get a new pier and upgrades to the existing structure after the State Government provided \$3 million for the project yesterday.

The much-needed works will increase load limits, improve access for mussel, oyster and scallop farmers and pedestrians.

Standing 175m long and 4.5m wide, the new pier will be built beside the existing pier and has been designed to withstand 50 years of wear and tear.

Project manager Parks Vic-

toria called for tenders for the project yesterday.

The pier is the centrepiece of plans in Portarlington for a \$58 million safe harbour and ferry terminal.

Stage one of that project is expected to cost \$27 million, with a ferry commute to Port Melbourne estimated to take 42 minutes.

The Labor Opposition has promised to provide \$15 million for that project if it wins this year's election, but Ports Minister David Hodggett said his announcement yesterday was guaranteed funding and negotiations on the bigger vision were still happening.



Ports Minister David Hodggett, Ron Nelson, Cr Lindsay Ellis, Bill Jackson from Parks Victoria and Chris Rose survey the site for the new Portarlington Pier. Picture: GREG DUNDAS

"We will partner with the City of Greater Geelong to work on a masterplan for the

boating facilities to support the aquaculture industry that is so important down here," Mr Hodggett said.

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Ferry Group chairman John Rae said the work on the pier was important towards the bigger project.

"We hope this is the start of stage one of the safe harbour, which would include two ferry berths for people to transport from here to Melbourne in half the time it now takes them by road.

"We look forward to further announcements from the Liberal Party as the (election) campaign unfolds."

City of Greater Geelong Coryule ward councillor Lindsay Ellis welcomed the works on the pier.

"The Portarlington mussel industry plays a vital role in the region's economy by providing jobs and income for the many families who choose to live on the Bellarine Peninsula," he said.

"I look forward to working with Minister Hodggett and his government in the immediate future to further support our important aquaculture industry and provide a safe haven for boating as well as encourage tourism to this beautiful part of Victoria."

THURSDAY JULY 30 2015

Port Pier paves way for ferry

NICOLE MILLS

THE Portarlington Pier upgrade will kickstart the search for a ferry operator willing to run a commuter service from the Bellarine Peninsula to Melbourne.

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville said the State Government was providing the infrastructure and would work with private operators to try and get a service up and running.

"This has been a long-term aspiration of the community and many years ago,

there was an attempt to have a ferry operate and it all sort of fell in a heap," Ms Neville said.

"One of the barriers is having a safe berthing area for a ferry. Under the previous arrangement, they had to berth back in Port Melbourne.

"This is really about saying, we'll provide the infrastructure - let's see if we've got an operator who can make it viable."

Her comments came at the opening of a \$3 million section of the pier.

The new, 175m section improves access and vehicle load limits to help the local aquaculture industry and is the first stage in the total \$15 million redevelopment.

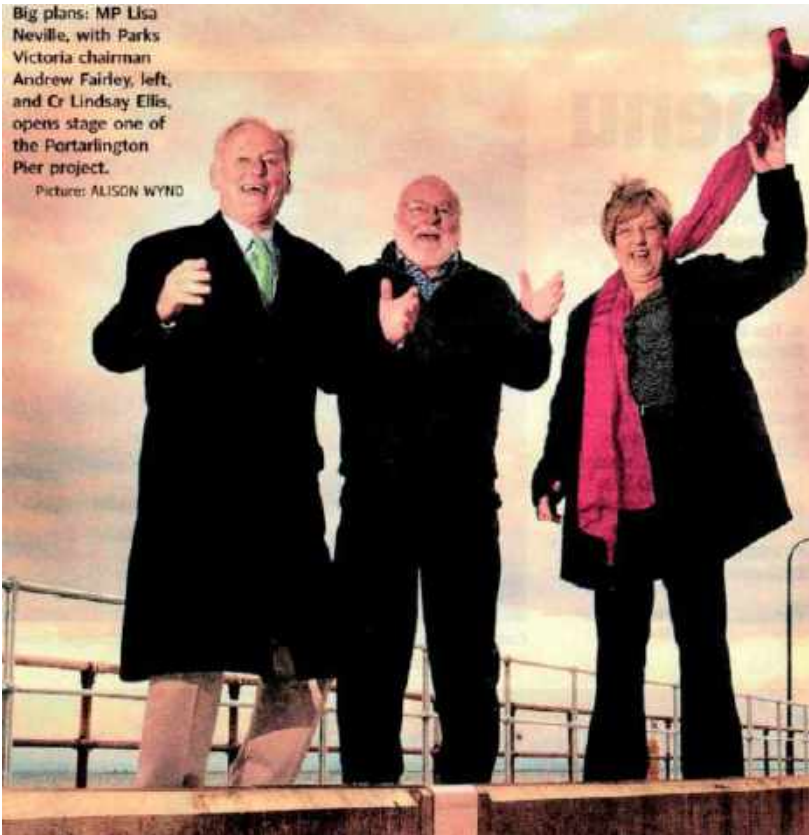
The next stage will deliver more facilities to grow the mussel, oyster and scallop industries and provide the infrastructure for a future ferry.

Ms Neville said preliminary works would start before summer, with the bulk of the work after the peak tourist season.

The project is expected to be finished within 18 months.



Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group



Ferry fulfils Sylvia's 101st birthday wish

BY REBECCA ADAM

INDENTED Head identity Sylvia Blegg celebrated her 101st birthday in style last week, with a trip on the Portarlington ferry.

Sylvia's wish came true after her daughter Yvonne and son-in-law Vin contacted Port Phillip Ferries operations manager Jamie Ruscoe to see if their mother could make the birthday trip, along with her 96-year-old brother Don, who is blind.

Last Wednesday, John Rae and Geoff Henderson from the Bellarine Ferry group met Sylvia and her family at Portarlington pier before Parks Victoria opened the boom gate and they boarded the 7am ferry.

The family were met by Jamie at Docklands,

who presented Sylvia with a beautiful bunch of flowers.

They then went and enjoyed a "birthday breakfast" at Docklands before returning to Portarlington at noon.

The group was very excited and thanked the ferry crew for looking after them on the trip and Sylvia was showing everyone her birthday flowers as they walked down the Portarlington pier to their car.

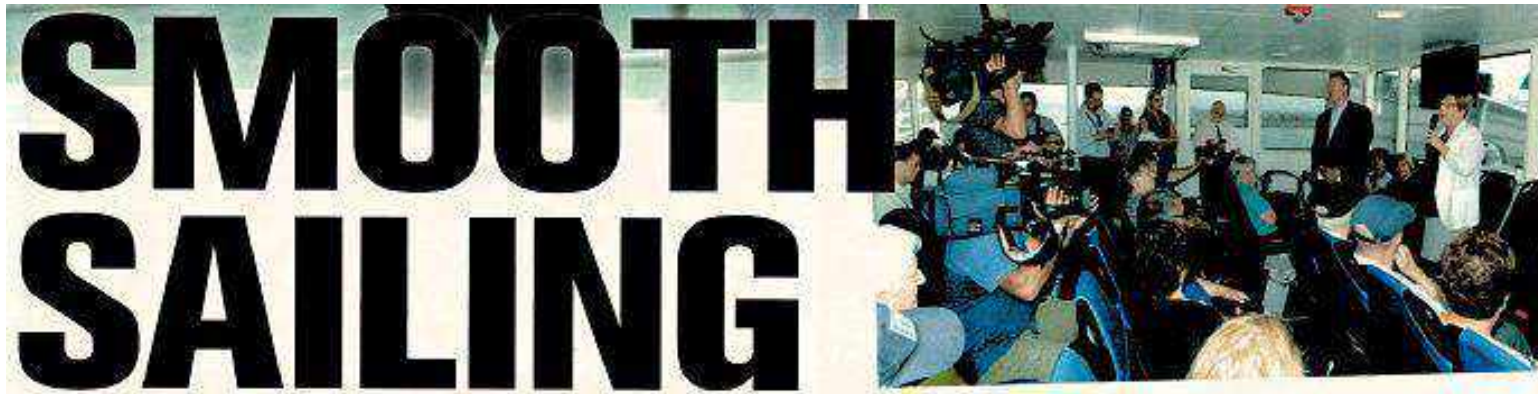
The Bellarine Ferry group would like to thank Port Phillip Ferries for their generosity as they offered to refund the ferry tickets – Vin later contacted the ferry group and asked that the refund for the four tickets be donated to the Cancer Council.

November 2016 Bellarine Times



Continue

[Return](#)



Port's big plans

JESSICA CRAVEN

A FERRY berth, restaurant and a 100-room hotel are set to be included in a \$30 million harbour to be built at Portarlington.

Parks Victoria has also flagged a potential two-storey commercial development on the beachfront, which could include an art gallery, information centre, a fish cooperative and cafe.

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville yesterday released the draft Portarlington safe harbour plan for public comment.

She said the safe harbour plan would aim to service Portarlington's growing aquaculture industry and enhance tourism for the township.

"The draft plan provides for the revitalisation of the foreshore parkland and provides for strong links between the heart of Portarlington and the waterfront, with the proposed creation of a safe harbour," Ms Neville said.

"The impact of climate change on the bays, which will cause



LOOKING AHEAD: Bellarine MP Lisa Neville and Parks Victoria deputy CEO Gerard O'Neil yesterday. Photo: BRAD WILSON

increasingly frequent severe storms, requires a strategic approach to improve safety, better protect community assets and meet growing demand for boating."

A berth for a commuter ferry service has also been included in the plan.

Bellarine Ferry Group chairman Geoff Henderson said the ferry service was

strongly supported by the Portarlington community but that the ferry had to be commuter-based to be successful.

Two commercial operators have tried to launch a ferry service from Portarlington and failed.

"The first thing is to make sure that we get enough support in the month that we have to make comment so we'd

be encouraging people to note that in their submissions," he said.

"Then we'll look at a feasibility study to progress it while the Government considers the whole plan."

The harbour will also include a refuelling berth and a town square with views of the bay.

Portarlington Community Association spokeswoman Monica

Hayes said she believed that overall, the master plan looked good.

"There may be some minor things that need tweaking but the plan seems to reflect the conversations we have had with consultants," she said.

Bellarine Bayside chairman Peter Kenny said the plan was a good balance between foreshore and environmental protection and

appropriate development.

"The draft Portarlington Safe Harbour master plan brings to the heart of Portarlington the flair and zing that the town needs and deserves," he said.

It is not clear yet whether the development will involve a public/private partnership, similar to the upgrade of Queenscliff Harbour.

Former Geelong Labor MP Elaine Carabine, who is head of the project as Parks Victoria's manager of strategic ports and marine relations, said no funding model had been proposed as yet.

People are invited to meet with the project team to discuss the draft plan on Saturday from 10am-3pm in the Bayview Room, Parks Hall, Portarlington.

Comment on the draft plan must be made by October 3.

For further information, contact the Parks Victoria information centre on 131 963 or to download a copy of the plan.

LINK parkweb.vic.gov.au

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group

September 2008 The Independent

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Port plan backed

BY JESSICA BENTON

PORTARLINGTON'S community association has given thumbs up to draft plans for redevelopment of the town's harbour.

But ward councillor Tom O'Connor has warned the plan could anger community groups facing relocation to make way for the redevelopment.

The Parks Victoria plan includes a proposed 100-room hotel, two ferry berths, a beach-front café, extra berths for commercial and recreational boats and a town square on Portarlington's foreshore.

Portarlington Community Association president Monica Hayes said the plan was promising.

"Generally it looks good," she said.

"It flows with the streetscape ideas that have been developed over several years with City of Greater Geelong and hopefully it'll be a win-win situation all round."

Ms Hayes said it made sense to incorporate built environments but commercial development should not be expanded further.

"There's rationalisation for built environments to be included but I don't think there's room for more commercial development.

"A lot of people were fairly nervous about this initially but hopefully by limiting development down there the main retailers will get the benefits of the new harbour area.

"The whole idea is not to detract from the town but to draw people up to the town centre. If people arrive by water hopefully they'll be enticed to come up the hill to visit the shops, restaurants and cafes.

"We don't have the population or visitor numbers to sustain another area of commercial development."

Cr O'Connor warned the proposed foreshore development could force relocation of community facilities including the town's bowls club, CFA and Scouts group.

"They'll be issues that have got to be addressed with a long-term view," he said.

"I can understand that plenty of people will have issues with

whether these facilities should be relocated but we have to consider what we want Portarlington to be in 10 to 15 years time. The possible relocations will make way for what's to come in the future."

Cr O'Connor said a proposed rooftop bowls club "made a hell of a lot of sense".

"This could be a unique bowls facility. Imagine the views from up there," he said.

"People will want to come just to bowl on a rooftop."

Cr O'Connor agreed the plan must ensure the foreshore was not "overloaded" with commercial development.

"You've got to be very careful about what's included in terms of commercial development," he said.

"This doesn't mean we should-

n't have a few cafes down there but it just needs to be well thought out."

Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville unveiled the Parks Victoria plan this week for public comment.

"The draft plan provides for the revitalisation of the foreshore parkland and provides for strong links between the heart of Portarlington and the waterfront, with the proposed creation of a safe harbour," Ms Neville said.

Portarlington Bowls Club and Scouts group refused to comment on the plan.

Parks Victoria will run a community consultation meeting with the project team from 10am to 3pm tomorrow at Portarlington's Parks Hall.

Towns 'surveyed on ferry support'

BY JESSICA BENTON

A COMPANY is quizzing Bellarine Peninsula commuters about whether they would support a ferry service to Melbourne.

Bellarine Ferry Group and Parks Victoria have commissioned Ipsos to compile the survey of commuters for a proposed ferry service between Portarlington and Port Melbourne's Station Pier.

Ferry group secretary John Rae said the company had polled focus groups from Portarlington and Ocean Grove.

"The survey aims to establish interest from people who work in Melbourne and live on the Bellarine Peninsula in using the ferry," Mr Rae said.

"They were questioned and had discussions on various topics, including frequency of services, prices and type of vessel."

Mr Rae said the company would now "reassess the process" to decide whether to adjust the survey for gauging support for the service in five other Bellarine Peninsula towns.

The company could also do away with the surveys depending on the process of the assessment, he said.

"Another option may be to mail the surveys to residents," Mr Rae said.

Identifying the commuters who would be interested in a service running to the heart of Melbourne was a challenge for the survey company, he said.

"One of the difficulties is that they are trying to identify commuters from the Bellarine Peninsula to Melbourne but if a commuter works in, say, Cheltenham, the ferry wouldn't work for them."

Mr Rae said the company was scheduled to complete the surveys by October.

Ferry "stakeholders" would then review the results, he said.

The *Independent* reported in May, 2008, that Portarlington's hopes of securing a ferry to Melbourne had moved closer after Parks Victoria allocated space for the service in a proposed redevelopment of the town's harbour.

Parks Victoria strategic relations manager Elaine Carbins told the *Independent* the ferry berth had been included in a draft master plan for a \$30 million project.

Parks Victoria is yet to release its draft



Seeking support: Ferry group members John Rae and Geoff Henderson brave rough weather at Portarlington's harbour this

September 2010 Going Solar



Transport Newsletter #173

21/9/10

Researching into, and reviewing comment on, Sustainable Transport

Portarlinton Ferry Evaluation (Part 1)

"Parks Victoria, on behalf of an inter agency committee, led a planning process during 2008/9 to develop a Master Plan for the redevelopment of the Portarlinton Safe Harbour. ... The local community and stakeholders were extensively engaged throughout the planning process. The main issue for the community was the perceived need for a commuter ferry service from Portarlinton to Melbourne. Accordingly, a Passenger Demand study for a ferry service from Portarlinton to Station Pier Port Melbourne was commissioned to determine in particular the likelihood of use and willingness to pay for a service. Key findings are summarised as follows.

"The adult population of the Bellarine Peninsula is forecast to increase by 21% between 2006 and 2016, and 59% by 2031. This growth is likely to lead to increasing demand for travel around the region and to Melbourne. The long distance that needs to be covered by land to Melbourne may make fast ferry services across Port Phillip Bay to Port Melbourne a potentially viable alternative. This research seeks to estimate the current latent demand for such a service, with a particular focus on the commuter market that would underpin morning and evening demand.

"The growth in demand for commuter transport services from the Bellarine Peninsula to Melbourne, including any future ferry service, will be affected by the proportion of residents that is of working age, by the availability of employment and by the existence and capacity of alternative transport options, including private vehicle transport. This research has found that Bellarine residents are dissatisfied with current access to Melbourne at peak times, due to considerable pressure on the public transport services and to congested roads.

"Ipsos has conducted primary research with representative samples of Bellarine Peninsula residents, to assess likely demand for the proposed ferry service, in particular from commuters. Further research, with Victorian adults, was conducted to estimate potential visitor demand for the Melbourne to Portarlinton ferry service. It needs to be understood that visitor demand is harder to estimate, because, putting aside issues of practicality, it is unlikely that the necessary high levels of awareness and salience of the ferry service could be achieved cost-effectively among Victorian adults, in order to harness this source of latent demand.

"The research has found that Bellarine residents take an estimated 28,200 trips to Melbourne each week. Of these, between 15,000 and 16,000 trips per week are taken for work or paid employment. This corresponds to approximately 3,000 trips taken to Melbourne by Bellarine residents for work or paid employment on a 'normal' July Tuesday in 2009. This estimate however is significantly higher than the adjusted 2,400 estimate based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006).

{Continued in #174}

Ref: Portarlinton to Melbourne Ferry Service,

Parks Victoria, DoT, DPCD, Tourism Victoria and City of Greater Geelong, June 2010

http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/resources/mresources/port-arlington/Portarlinton_Ferry_Report_June2010.pdf

Comment

Back in 2005, puzzled as to why Victoria was not utilising ferries on Port Phillip Bay for commuters, tourism, incidental travel, and freight, I proposed an investigation into ferry services. I therefore welcome this 2010 report while make the following observations:

- The community has perceived a need for a commuter ferry service.
- The study only looks at the Bellarine Peninsula to Port Melbourne corridor rather than demand for other places around the bay.
- Such a ferry service would not compete with, but rather complement, the existing modes of public transport (along with taxis, carshare, cycling and walking). My research indicates that ferries would provide a much desired alternative transit mode but would also add passengers to the existing public transport network.

Stephen Ingrouille, 17/9/10

Going Solar Major Projects, Transport, Sustainable House, Renewable Energy Systems 3
 60L The Green Building Carlton, Victoria, Australia (03) 9348 1000 www.goingsolar.com.au/transport
 © Going Solar 2010 E&OE Contact: Stephen Ingrouille 0432 390 018 steve@goingsolar.com.au

Continued



Portarlington Ferry Evaluation (Part 2)

"The raw estimate of 'latent demand' by Bellarine commuters for work or employment purposes on the proposed ferry service is 1,800 return trips per weekday, given a \$30 return fare, inclusive of public transport connections in Melbourne. This raw estimate is based on stated preferences (i.e. survey responses) and needs to be deflated due to several factors:

- *Some people (e.g. trades people) need to carry equipment or samples.*
- *Others travel between worksites in Melbourne.*
- *Some work in parts of the city that are not readily accessed from Port Melbourne by public transport.*
- *Some workers need to travel outside the likely operating hours of the proposed ferry service.*
- *Others feel unsafe on public transport.*

"Therefore, it is necessary to exclude from the estimate those whose work type, work location or hours require that they have access to a private vehicle or who, for reasons of perceived safety, prefer to avoid public transport. This capping process lowers the estimate to 800 return trips per day, still based on a \$30 fare.

Further, it is reasonable, in the experience of the authors with studies of this type, to assume that only 50% of this demand would actually be captured by the service, due to issues of awareness, convenience, practicality and timing. Thus, the best estimate of the likely level of demand for a commuter ferry service is 400 commuter return trips per day. ...

"There also appears to be demand for a ferry service from Portarlington to Melbourne from residents of the Bellarine Peninsula visiting Melbourne for a range of personal, leisure and social reasons, which has been estimated in the representative telephone survey conducted in August 2009 by Ipsos [the research company]. These potential trips would generally be outside peak travel periods. Ipsos estimates that around 13,000 trips are taken each week to Melbourne by Bellarine residents to visit friends and relatives, for sporting events, entertainment, personal appointments, social activities, shopping and study or education.

"Using a similar process to that outlined above in respect of demand from commuters, Ipsos estimates that the size of the potential non-commuter market on the Bellarine Peninsula for a ferry service between Portarlington and Port Melbourne is approximately 500 travellers per average day, again based on a \$30 return fare, inclusive of public transport connections in Melbourne. ... Any travel by accompanying children would represent an additional source of demand. Estimates of the likely

proportion of children travelling by ferry are not available but could be inferred from the passenger mix using existing methods of commuting as representing an additional 17%.

"In the longer term, 'latent demand' may be stimulated for leisure trips to the Bellarine Peninsula, where connecting transport is provided by local operators; or travel stimulated by festivals and special events. Ipsos considers these as longer term opportunities to stimulate demand for the ferry service, as they will involve product development and significant promotion and communications activities. For example, ferries be equipped with bicycle racks to generate additional revenue from those taking cycling holidays or day trips. If 5% of this 'latent demand' by Victorian adults for leisure and recreation trips on a proposed ferry service could be captured through ongoing campaign activity, this could equate to 2,100 return trips per week. It should be noted that this estimate was based on a \$20 return fare for adults used in the survey questionnaire and that a higher fare of at least \$30 seems likely. Such higher fares, or limited marketing activity, would reduce this demand." {Continued in #175}

Ref: Portarlington to Melbourne Ferry Service,

Parks Victoria, DoT, DPCD, Tourism Victoria and City of Greater Geelong, June 2010

http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/resources/mresources/port-arlington/Portarlington_Ferry_Report_June2010.pdf

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Transport Newsletter #175

5/10/10

Researching into, and reviewing comment on, Sustainable Transport

Portarlinton Ferry Evaluation (Part 3)

"In the longer term, were the ferry to become established as a reliable service, the research suggests that the improved access to Melbourne would encourage some families to continue to live on the Bellarine Peninsula, when they otherwise may have moved to Melbourne, and some Melbourne families to move to the area permanently, particularly those who already own holiday homes on the Bellarine. Both these factors are outside the scope of this report. ..."

"The latent demand among potential visitors from Melbourne and, to a lesser extent, regional Victoria should be considered as longer term potential for the ferry service, as facilities and transport connections are developed at Portarlinton and Port Melbourne; as should projected population growth and changes to this growth brought about by the existence of any future ferry service. The visitor market, while potentially significant, would require substantial investment in marketing and tourist product development and therefore should not be relied upon in any decision-making about the current and near-term viability of the proposed service.

The passenger numbers estimated by this research could be analysed further to determine the extent to which they would make viable a regular commuter ferry service with a vessel of 200 to 300 seat capacity, considered appropriate for crossing Port Phillip Bay."

Ref: Portarlinton to Melbourne Ferry Service, Parks Victoria, DoT, DPCD, Tourism Victoria and City of Greater Geelong, June 2010

http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/resources/mresources/port-arlington/Portarlinton_Ferry_Report_June2010.pdf

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Tuesday 22 September 2009

| coast | community | environment |

Stateside support for ferry

BY ALISON MARTIN

THE BELLARINE Ferry project has attracted international interest and support.

United States academic, Dr Regina Bowden, visited the Bellarine Peninsula last week to gain first-hand knowledge of the two-year project to establish a passenger service between Portarlinton and Melbourne.

Bellarine Ferry Group spokesperson, John Rae, said Bowden's field of expertise was project management and team building within organisations, particularly within community groups.

"She discovered the Bellarine Ferry Group Project while doing research on the Internet," Rae said.

"She was interested because she currently uses a similar case study of a ferry service that ran between Buffalo, New York and Toronto, Canada."

He said Bowden attended one of the group's project meetings and group representatives met with her to answer questions about the project.

Bowden was impressed with the amount of in-depth research that was accomplished by the Bellarine Ferry Group, including interviewing interstate ferry owners and operators, relevant state government departments, and potential connecting

bus and light rail providers, among others, over the past two years.

"This has confirmed the group's belief that the project is viable and sustainable. It will ultimately provide a major boost to the Bellarine Peninsula communities," Rae said.

"She was also impressed with the fact that the government works closely with the community to enable such projects to come to fruition.

"The Victorian Government Community Business Initiative provided a part time co-ordinator to help this group and others who are currently designing projects deemed important to the community."

Rae said the project had gained momentum with support from local state government members, Lisa Neville and Gayle Tierney, and City of Greater Geelong.

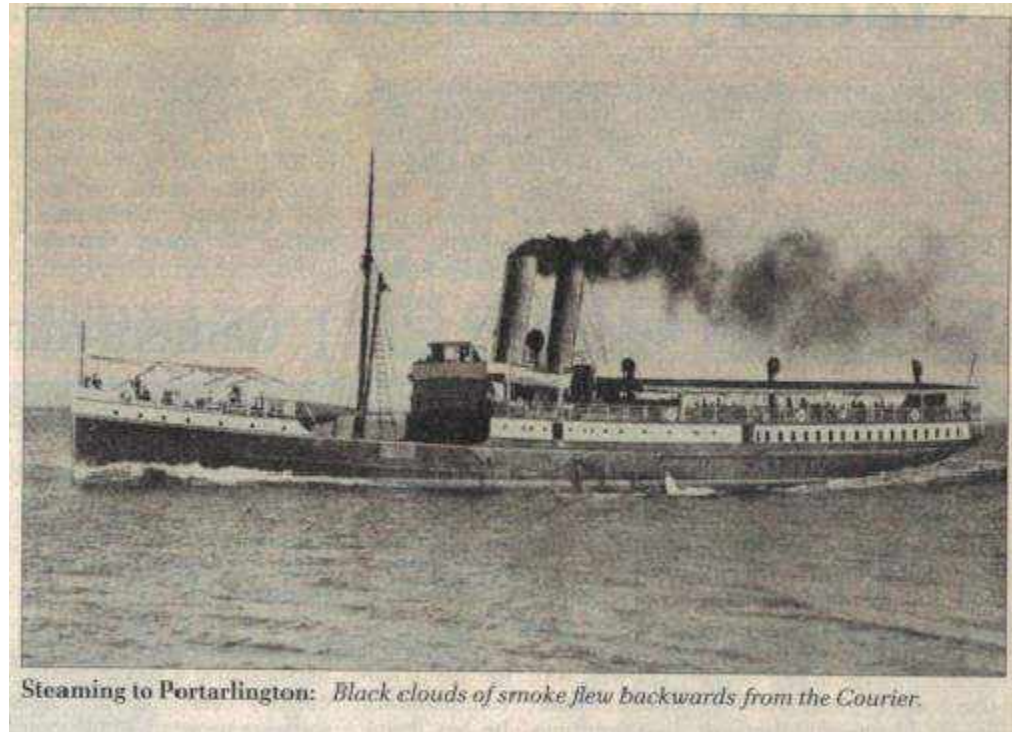
"As a result of these partnerships and of good feasibility studies with both the Department of Transport and Parks Victoria to date, there is currently a recommendation within the overall plan to include berths for two 300 capacity ferries in the new safe harbour to be built in Portarlinton," Rae said.

"At present, the ferry group is working with consultants who are currently conducting research to assess the potential number of commuters and tourists who might use the ferry on a regular basis."

November 2007 Bellarine Herald

The great bay steamer race

Which steamer
was 'Cock of the
Bay'? And did an
unofficial race in
1888 decide?



Continued

WHEN the big paddle steamer *Ozone* began her regular sailings down Port Phillip Bay in December 1886 it marked the start of a 40-year period when the magnificent big steamers took thousands of Melbourne-ites down the bay on daily excursions to the seaside resorts at Portarlington, Queenscliff and Sorrento.

The *Ozone* was owned and operated by the Bay Steamers Limited. The 260-foot long paddle steamer was dubbed the "greyhound of the bay" – the fastest excursion steamer at the time. She cruised at 18.5 knots after leaving Railway Pier at Port Melbourne on her regular run to Queenscliff and Sorrento. But rival shipping company Huddart Parker Limited was keen to tap into the lucrative excursion business. Just over a year later,

their new ship *SS Courier*, built at the Newcastle-on-Tyne shipyards, began her regular Port Phillip Bay sailings from Queen's Wharf on the Yarra to Portarlington and Geelong.

Huddart Parker advertised the *Courier* as the "fastest steamer operating in Port Phillip Bay" and this marketing ploy helped attract 30,000 passengers in the first month of her service.

Up until now, the *Ozone's* reputation as the greyhound of the bay had been unchallenged.

But by early February 1888, a month after the *Courier* went to work on the bay, the *Ozone* owners decided to prove their paddle steamer was the fastest and initiated a race to Portarlington.

Although it was never claimed by either shipping company that a race ever took place, the men at the Bay Excursion Company merely stated that they wanted to see what the *Ozone* could do at her best.

The *Ozone* was taken into dry dock at the Duke and Orrs' facility [now where the Polly Woodside is on display at South Melbourne].

All the marine grasses and periwinkles were scrapped from her hull and an antifouling compound was applied.

Her engines were overhauled, every bolt tightened, and every bar polished.

There was wild talk around the docks of wagering and rumours that the *Courier* owners were offering 10 to 1 in thousands on the result of the steamer race. One backer offered to put up one thousand pounds for the *Ozone* to win, but no one came forward, to match his bet, which believed the *Courier* was the fastest.

On Saturday morning 18 February, 1888, a small, invited party of 10 people mustered on board the *Ozone* at 10 am. The paddle steamer was alongside Railway Pier at Port Melbourne, steamed up and every man from the captain to the cabin boy was in his place. There was a gentle simmering at the valves and there was more heat than smoke issuing from her two, buff-coloured funnels.

At 10.15am, the *Ozone* left her berth. She was a ship with long, fine lines. Her hull was painted a deep green with a distinctive yellow line, and her upper decks were painted white. Her steam engines were capable of 2680 horsepower enough to drive the two, five-metre diameter paddle wheels through the water, giving the *Ozone* a top speed of 18.5 knots. Master

of the *Ozone*, Captain Fred Strickland steered a course through the broad waters of Williamstown and swept around in a wide curve to face up the Yarra River entrance to see if the rival *Courier* was coming.

The *Ozone* then steered around in another curve towards St. Kilda and Brighton giving those on board a view of Melbourne from the seaward fringe. The 20 square miles of comfortable and luxurious houses built behind St. Kilda and Brighton and in the far distance the Dandenong ranges, Mt Macedon and further around, the You Yangs.

Shortly before 11am, two black streams of smoke were seen near the entrance to the Yarra – the *Courier* was on her way.

The *Courier* at 221 feet long was 40 feet shorter than the *Ozone*, but had a gross tonnage of 762, compared to the *Ozone's* 572 tons. Her 150 feet

long promenade deck made of selected teak timber stretched the full width (30 feet) with seating around the sides and through the centre. A permanent awning covered the entire deck. She was a screw steamer [driven by a propeller] and powered by engines capable of 2800 horse power. Her top cruising speed was 17.5 knots.

The *Ozone* came around as the *Courier* steamed past the Light Ship off Point Gellibrand at Williamstown – the unofficial starting line – at 11.07am.

There was a good quarter of a mile separating the ships as they set a straight course to Portarlington. *Courier*, with a full load of cargo and 450 passengers set her low in the water, but she sliced through the Port Phillip Bay chop into a southerly breeze.

Down below, the *Ozone's* firemen shovelled coal into her 12 furnaces as black smoke poured from her fun-

nels and steam pipes began to roar. An increasing tremor and vibration was felt all over her decks as the paddle wheels churned the water into snakes of foam, driving the ship along at more than 18 knots.

The rhythmic beat of the engines drove the paddle wheels at 46 revolutions per minute.

On board the *Courier*, all eyes were on the *Ozone*, astern, which appeared to be gaining gradually. Captain Arthur Patrick had the *Courier's* engines full steam ahead and these were driving the screw at 116 revolutions per minute, which had been set down as the limit of safety.

The ships were now 10 miles clear of Point Gellibrand and the point at Portarlington could be clearly seen in the distance. Black clouds of smoke flew backwards from the *Courier*, almost engulfing the pursuing *Ozone*.

Continued

A newspaper reporter aboard the *Ozone* was invited below by the firemen:

"It is easy to get down to the fires, if you are not afraid of a little soot, grease and a few minutes of roasting. The fireman warns to hold on to your hat, as he opens the door, and a blast of hot air keen enough to skin a goose. You move through the air rush and hear the hatch door clang shut over head, and you find yourself face to face with the eyes of the six furnaces that drive the after boilers. It is not unbearably hot and there is indeed a gale of wind. The fans on the upper deck drive a blast down, straight to the furnace mouths."

On board the *Courier* the passengers note she is abreast of the central peak of the You Yangs on the starboard side, and just off to the starboard stern is the *Ozone*. It is 11.45am and the Portarlington buoy is sighted far ahead.

Somehow, word had gotten through to Portarlington earlier in the week that a great steamer race could be on this Saturday. People from all around the peninsula had been arriving at Portarlington from early morning to see the steamer contest.

People gathered in groups atop the hills around the town and watched as the *Ozone* and *Courier* ploughed through the water, their bows both pointed at the Portarlington Pier. As the steamers got closer, people began running down to the pier.

A blast of escaping steam streamed back from the *Ozone's* forward funnel, indicating her boilers had reached full pressure and she was travelling through the water at her top speed.

The paddle steamer was half a length ahead of the *Courier* and pulling away. As the Portarlington buoy neared, the *Ozone* was a clear length and a half ahead and still increasing that distance. By the time the Portarlington Pier came into clear sight, the *Ozone* was 200 yards ahead of

her rival.

A big crowd on the Portarlington Pier let out a roar as the *Ozone* put her helm to port and steamed across the *Courier's* bow in a magnificent sweep which took the paddle steamer through a narrow gap between the *Courier* and the pier.

Immediately the *Courier's* engines were shut down to give way to the *Ozone* and allow her to glide into her berth at Portarlington.

As the paddle steamer rushed past the pier, hundreds cheered and waved, and the thrash of the paddle-wheels sent a set of waves from her wake under the pier and up onto the beach, startling those gathered on the sand.

As the *Ozone* passed, a roll of bunting was unfurled, and a white flag emblazoned with a red crowing cock was raised to her masthead, as she turned her bow back to Port Melbourne.

Catering staff quickly went about serving a victory luncheon of cold chicken, while Mr Baillieu, a director of the Bay Excursion Steamers company, proposed a toast to the captain and crew of the *Ozone*.

Speaking to a newspaper later that day, Captain Patrick of the *Courier* denied that his vessel raced the *Ozone*, although he admitted that she travelled to Portarlington in very quick time. Before leaving Melbourne the manager of Huddart Parker the *Courier's* owners claim they had heard rumours of a race between their ship and the *Ozone*, but gave Captain strict orders not to race under any circumstances.

Captain Patrick said he was not surprised when he steamed out of the Yarra to see the *Ozone* circling in wait and "trimmed like a race-horse".

"With all her awnings stowed and even the canvas taken down from in front of the bridge so that there was nothing to check her speed. There were few people on

her decks and from the manner in which she floated, there was no cargo and only enough coal to send her down to Portarlington and back to Williamstown."

Captain Patrick said his ship was severely handicapped with 130 tons of cargo on board, a full load of coal, and 450 passengers. Her hull was overgrown with marine growth and she had not been dry docked and cleaned since arriving from England months before.

The official time recorded for the unofficial race gave the *Ozone's* speed at 18.5 knots, and she covered the 19.75 nautical miles between the Gellibrand Light and Portarlington Pier in 1 hour 4 minutes.

There were no times announced for the *Courier*, but her owners said her average speed was 17.5 knots for the 19.75 nautical miles.

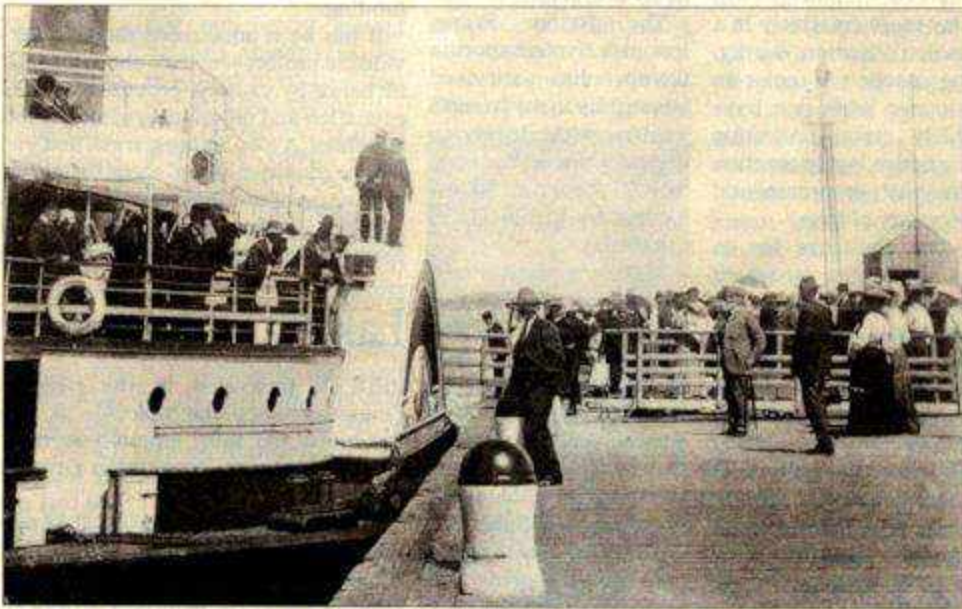
-by Greg Wane

Continued

Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group



Steamer crew: Officers and engine room crew of the PS Ozani pose on the forward deck of the paddle steamer in 1890.



Continued

The boat arrives from Melbourne: This photo shows the Ozone docking at the Queenscliff Pier about 1906. Such was the popularity of the paddlesteamer that Baillieu's Hotel was renamed The Ozone Hotel in 1896. Hotelier James Baillieu was also a director of the Bay Excursion Steamer Company that owned the PS Ozone.

The Bellarine Herald gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the State Library of Victoria for providing accurate reference material for this article. Queenscliff Historical Museum and Nepean Historical Society kindly loaned the historic photographs.

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Steamer era comes to an end

The *Ozone* was withdrawn from service in 1917 and eight years later she was stripped of all her fittings and the hulk was bought by Captain William Forbes who commanded the bay steamer *Edina* for 40 years.

In March 1925, Captain Forbes had the *Ozone's* hulk towed to Indented Head where he sunk the old paddle steamer in shallow water to form a breakwater. His grand plan was to create a marina for small craft. Soon after the *Ozone* was positioned a series of north-easterly winds pushed up heavy seas and the hulk was shifted out of position. Captain Forbes did not pursue his plan for a marina.

Today the remains of the *Ozone* is still visible just off the beach in front of the Indented Head General Store.

The *Courier* remained in the bay service until 1927 before she was sold to shipbreakers for 1000 pounds. The ship was stripped of all her fittings and the hulk was towed about four nautical miles out into Bass Strait off Barwon Heads on 29 March 1928 and scuttled in 65 metres of water in a spot known as the 'ships' graveyard'.



Paddlewheel: All that remains today of the great paddle steamer *Ozone* at Indented Head, 82 years after the hulk was sunk just offshore to form a breakwater.
—PHOTO BY GREG WANE



Media Release

Member of the Victorian Legislative Council for
Northern Metropolitan

Minister for Planning

Thursday 18 July 2013

Melbourne's western harbour town to grow

Minister for Planning Matthew Guy has given approval for the expansion of one of the most exciting redevelopments in Melbourne's west by announcing extensions to the Wyndham Harbour project.

Planning Scheme Amendment C156 will allow Wyndham Harbour to grow to a community of almost 1,400 residents. **Mr Guy's approval will also assist in fast tracking a ferry service link to the Docklands and the CBD.**

"Expanding the Wyndham Harbour development will assist in providing a critical mass of population to make a commuter ferry service from Werribee to the city fully sustainable," Mr Guy said.

"Wyndham Harbour also provides new lifestyle opportunities to Melbourne's west, opening up Port Phillip Bay to the western suburbs in the same way that the eastern suburbs have enjoyed the bay for decades.

"The expansion of Wyndham Harbour also provides an exciting opportunity to link Melbourne's west to the city for tourism and employment anchors such as the Werribee Zoo and the new Werribee Employment Precinct."

The rezoning of 11 hectares of land will accelerate the development of the 1,000 berth marina, 10 kilometre extensions of gas and water mains and reticulated sewage.

"This approval will assist in creating up to 3,000 jobs during a five-year construction period and up to 440 ongoing jobs associated with marina operations, retail activity and property and site maintenance," Mr Guy said.

Wyndham Harbour will be a residential, commercial and marina complex and the only safe boat harbour between Williamstown and Geelong.

The new development will provide approximately 200 residential housing lots, 200 apartments and 27 terrace homes that incorporate the latest in environmentally sustainable initiatives.

Other features of the development will include two new public beaches and Marina Square, which will offer a central hub with a range of restaurants and cafes, a convenience store, boat brokers and charter boat hire.

Members for Western Metropolitan region, Bernie Finn and Andrew Elsbury, welcomed the development and said Wyndham Harbour will become a treasured landmark in Melbourne's west, supported by its proximity to the Werribee Employment Precinct and other popular suburbs in Melbourne's west.

19 July 2013

Editorial

Ferry could turn the tide

There is road, there is rail...and there is water. Even though it is generally taken for granted that a river flows through Melbourne and into Port Phillip Bay, we don't always take advantage of such natural assets in terms of public transport.

There is a welcome hint of change in the air that eventually could see a ferry service from the western bayside suburbs to Docklands and the CBD. On Thursday, state Planning Minister Matthew Guy announced he had approved expansion of a harbour development project in the City of Wyndham - Australia's fastest-growing area which incorporates Werribee and Point Cook, where population of more than 30,000 is expected to double by 2021. This continuing population explosion was expected, in time, to make a commuter ferry feasible, Mr Guy said. The project, which includes a marina and new public beaches in addition to residential zones, will take five years to complete.

Of course, no one could expect a ferry service to instantly resolve the existing public transport or traffic problems that afflict commuters and drivers in the west, but it might at least provide a way of easing them. The advantage of talking to the water, as distinct from cramming into a train or bus, or chugging along in a car, is accessibility rather than novelty. Over time, taking the ferry to work in Melbourne could be as natural as it is in Sydney or San Francisco.

The Committee congratulates the State Government for taking action to relieve the chronic transport situation in the west of Melbourne. The Minister's recent study on ferries has obviously convinced the State Government that Victoria should be utilising ferries on the bay to supplement the state's transport system. The extension of the Werribee harbour to accommodate ferry berths will start to address the traffic issues in the west by providing another transport option for the people of the Werribee/Point Cook.

February 2018 Jetstar in-flight magazine

Explore | PORTARLINGTON



Explore | PORTARLINGTON



To me, nowhere seems more “unMelbourne” than Docklands, the city’s modern waterside suburb that wraps around the Yarra River and former docks.

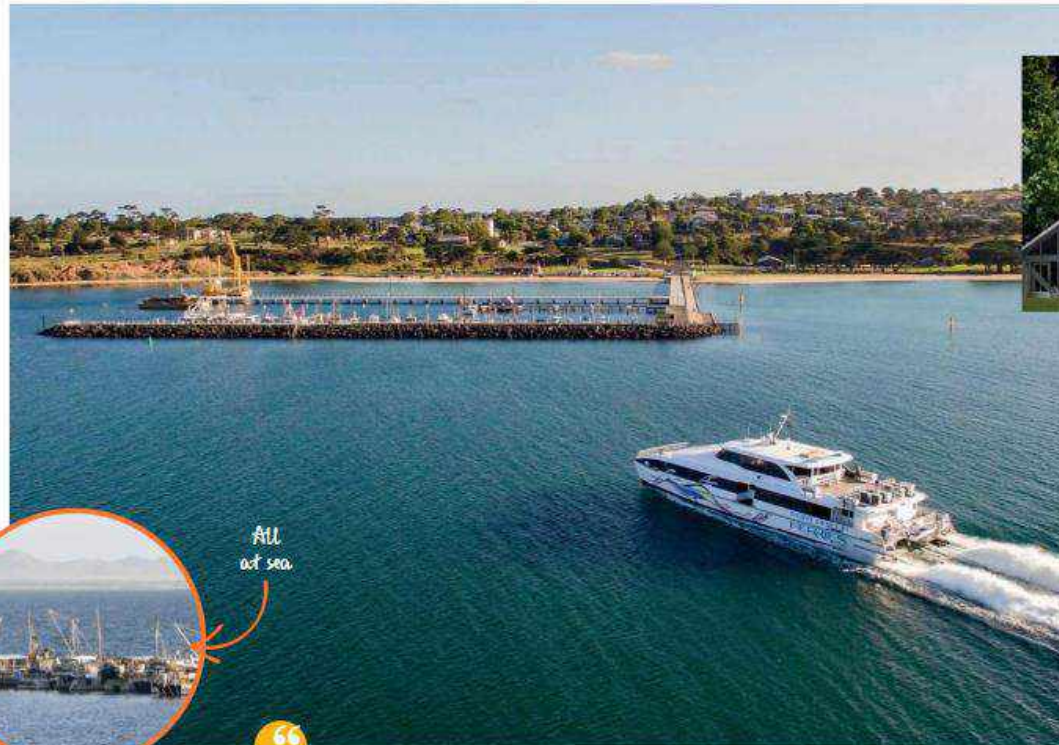
Melbourne is associated with gritty laneways, Victorian-era buildings and colourful street art. By contrast, Docklands is shiny new office buildings, and luxury apartments with sleek private yachts moored nearby.

It’s here I’ll be casting off for the 90-minute cruise to Portarlington, on the Bellarine Peninsula at the southwest end of Port Phillip Bay. The vessel, a two-deck 400-seater operated by Port Phillip Ferries, serves commuters heading to their Melbourne offices during the week. But at weekends its schedule is well suited to daytrippers wanting a break in the other direction.

Once I reach Portarlington, I’ll have four hours to enjoy the attractions of the town and peninsula, which include beaches, wineries and the famous Portarlington mussels harvested from the bay. In the meantime, however, there’s a cruise to enjoy – and it comes in two distinct sections.

The first, a leisurely progression down the Yarra River threading through Melbourne’s massive working port. The open rear deck is the place to be as we head downstream, past huge moored ships and beneath the impressive Bolte Bridge and West Gate Bridge.

As we pass from the river into the bay, I spot Williamstown’s historic Timeball Tower, from whose mast a ball was once dropped daily to signal 1pm. Then the ferry picks up



All at sea



The open rear deck is the place to be as we head downstream, past huge moored ships

speed, carving through the waves past smaller vessels out fishing.

The water is so calm, with tiny wavelets breaking softly in the breeze, that I ask one of the crew members if it ever gets rough out here.

“Not often,” he says. “But about once a month, it can slosh around like a washing machine.”

Luckily that’s not happening today. Between strolls on the deck to take photos and breathe in the fresh air, I settle into my window seat and soak up the view.



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Cruising in the dock at Portarlington, Leant Park Estate, Flying Brick Cider Co, fishing boats bob in the bay

landmark Grand Hotel, built in 1888 with an imposing three-storey facade. It’s a good place for a quiet beer or pub meal, inside its old-school interiors or beer garden.

Nearby is Saints & Sailors, a lively, informal eatery with bay views. It hosts regular live music gigs, and diners sit close to the music, so there’s an energetic vibe when a band is in the house.

But today I’m heading inland, courtesy of a Wine Wheels minibus tour. The Bellarine Peninsula is known for its vineyards, so this tour company meets the ferry four times a week to take visitors for a tasting tour and lunch.

The locations vary depending on the day. Today driver Grant is zipping our six tour members over the hilly countryside to visit our first port of call, the cellar door of Flying Brick Cider Co., its tables packed with lunching locals.

Though it also serves local wine, Flying Brick is best known for its cider. Barman Matthew deftly manages to run two parallel sets of tastings, as half our group fancies the wine while the other wants to try the alcoholic apple beverages.

I’m in the cider faction, and we’re soon enjoying samples. The Flying Brick Original (made from Pink Lady and Granny Smith apples) is popular, but our overall favourite

Stepping from Portarlington Pier onto dry land, I see Rockwall just back from the water. This restaurant serves breakfast and lunch, with the midday menu featuring local seafood. A highlight is Portarlington Mussels, “fresh from the pier”.

These molluscs are also the stars each January of the popular Portarlington Mussel Festival (13 January), which combines food stalls and live entertainment.

Up the slope from the harbour on the town’s main street is the



PHOTOGRAPHY: JAMES COOPER; COURTESY: PORT PHILLIP FERRIES

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Explore | PORTARLINGTON



Al fresco dining and pizza (INSET) at Laura Park Estate.

75

is the Pachanga, which contains no apple at all; rather it's a feisty blend of pear, chilli, ginger and lime.

Then, we're back on the bus and off to Laura Park Estate. Its cellar door is a beautiful space, with tables decked out in blue and white cloth beneath umbrellas on a stretch of lawn. Our group has become quite chatty, and we compare notes as waiters bustle around our table, bringing impressive antipasto plates and the first of our wine tastings.

One of the gang tells me she's a regular user of the ferry as she catches it to Melbourne on weekdays, followed by a tram ride to her office. Today, though, she's doing the wine tour to catch up with friends in a laid-back setting.

We drink a toast to friendship with the second of the wines and my favourite, a sparkling pinot chardonnay, which seems made for a hot sunny day.



We drink a toast to friendship with the second of the wines

A set of flavoursome pizzas and a few more tastings later, our tour draws to a close and Grant reappears to drive us back to Portarlington.

The ferry ride home is just as pleasant, but I'm not as active. Full of food, wine and sunshine, I'm happy to recline in my seat and watch the water slip by. ✨

Tim Richards travelled courtesy of Tourism Greater Geelong & The Bellarine.

Stay longer

It's easy to extend the ferry trip to a longer stay, with more time to explore the Bellarine. Here's how.

CRUISE

Port Phillip Ferries sail between Melbourne and Portarlington twice daily, return fare \$27. Bikes can be carried for free if booked ahead. portphillipferries.com.au

STAY

Portarlington Accommodation hires out holiday homes, including renovated cottages in the centre of town. portarlingtonaccommodation.com.au

TOUR

Wine Wheels operates regular wine tasting tours. winewheels.com.au

SEASIDE BUSBOAT TOURS

tailors tours to farm doors and wineries, some via an electric tuk-tuk. forgesbeaumontours.com

BELLA E-BIKE

hires out electric bicycles at Portarlington Pier. bellaebikehire.com.au

Travel info

Jetstar has great low fares to Melbourne and Avalon from across the network and extensive car hire options.

To book, visit JETSTAR.COM

PHOTOGRAPHY: LEJAK OAK (STYL)



MarineBusiness

News Business Products Events

New Incat bound for Port Philip Ferries

14 December 2017

0 Comments

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The Bellarine Express undergoing sea trials

Melbourne ferry operator to trial faster speeds on the Yarra.

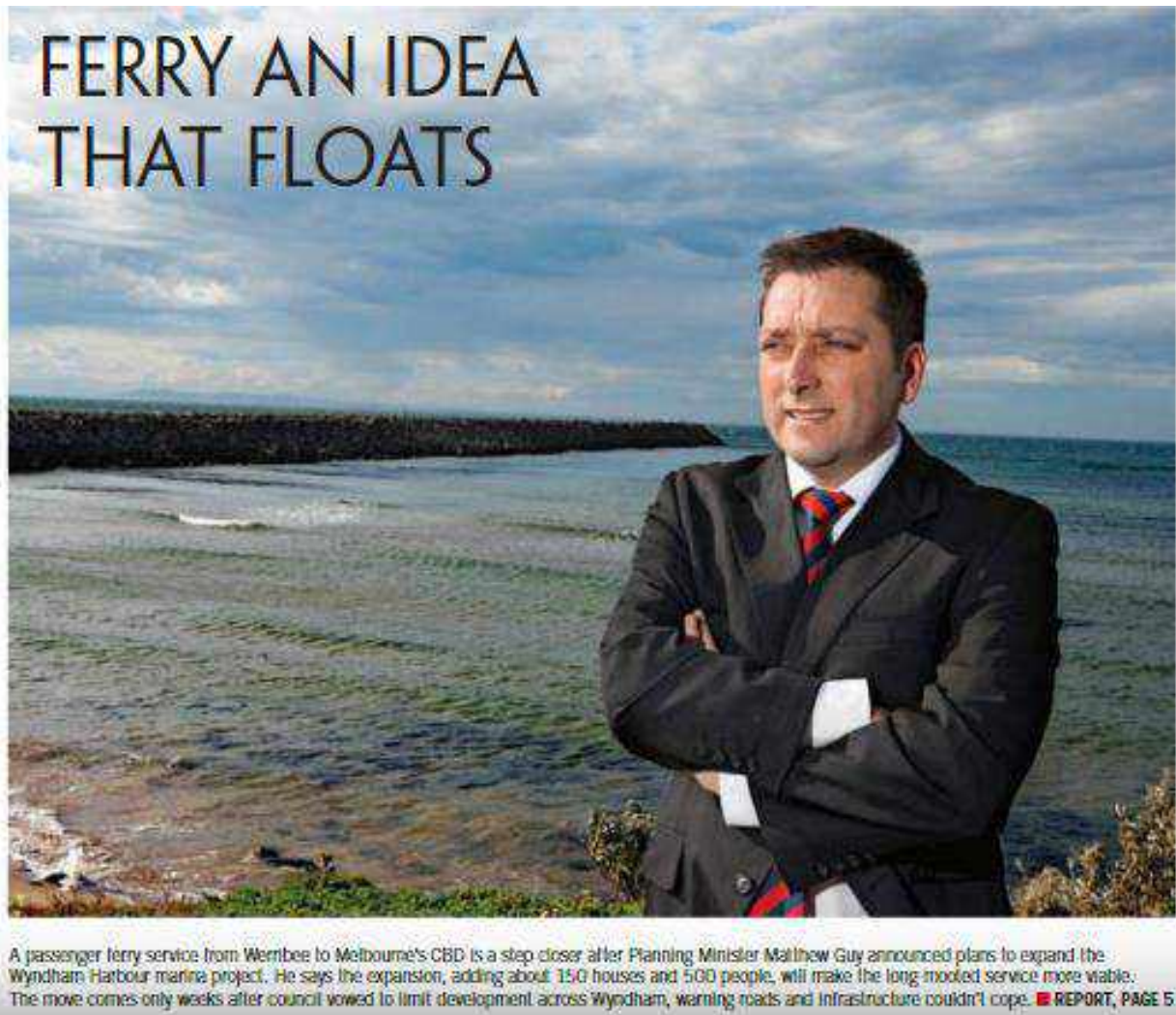
Tasmanian high-speed ferry manufacturer, Incat, has completed hull No. 90, a 35 metre catamaran called the *Bellarine Express* which will be going into service with Port Phillip Ferries in Melbourne.

Port Phillip Ferries, which has been running for just over a year, operates a regular ferry service between Melbourne's Docklands and Portarlington on the Bellarine Peninsula, as well as between Portarlington and Geelong. According to the report in the *Herald-Sun* newspaper, a new service between Melbourne and Geelong is also under consideration.



The new high-speed ferry operational in Melbourne.

The arrival of the new vessel coincides with the ferry company announcing that it will be conducting a three-month trial of faster cruising speeds on the Yarra River using its current vessel, *MV Capricorn Dancer*. The vessel will operate at an increased maximum speed of 15 knots on the Yarra River between beacons 23/24 and the West Gate Bridge commencing on 16 December.



Designated vessel allocations

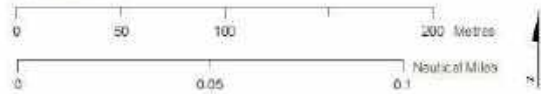
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Portarlington Safe Harbour and Bellarine Ferry Group



Portarlington Safe Harbour

03/12/2017
 Coordinate System: GCS WGS-1984
 Datum: WGS 1984



Disclaimer: Parks Victoria does not guarantee that this data is without error and therefore declines all liability which may arise from relying on this information. Data source: Aerial photography. View digital map on The State of Victoria and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

- Commercial Berth only
- Ferry Berth only
- Anchoring Permitted
- Swimming Only Zone (No Vessels)

- Lateral Mark - Port
- Lateral Mark - Starboard
- Special Mark



DOCKLANDS NEWS

Vice-regal launch

05 Feb 2018



Victorian Governor Linda Dessau on December 21 launched in Docklands a brand new ferry to service the Portarlington commuter route.

The 400-passenger craft, Bellarine Express, is faster than the original boat and is expected to take significant time off the journey if open-water speed restrictions are eased.

Little Group chairman Paul Little spoke at the launch about the opportunity the new service will offer for travellers.

“Victoria is growing more rapidly than any other state in Australia. Everyone knows the frustrations of traffic congestion and ferry travel offers a safe and reliable alternative,” Mr Little said.

Bellarine Express features a licensed cafe on board, bike rack storage, free Wi-Fi, charging stations for electronic devices and better table and seating configurations, including drop-down tables on the back of seats.

“Featuring low emission engines, Bellarine Express is one of the most environmentally friendly ferries travelling Australian waters. And with the latest designs to increase speed, it’s also one of the most efficient,” Mr Little said.

The ferry service has moved to new jetty installations adjacent to the Cow up a Tree sculpture on Harbour Esplanade. The former Hortus café has been transformed into a terminal for passengers and office for administration.

January 2018 Bellarine Times

BELLARINE EXPRESS UNVEILED, ALONG WITH FASTER SPEEDS

written by Rebecca Adam 02/01/2018



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PORT Phillip Ferries has introduced a new vessel which will service its Portarlington to Docklands route.

The Bellarine Express has been designed to provide a better transport solution by transferring local residents and visitors to Victoria's major destinations quickly and comfortably.

Bellarine Express will seamlessly navigate both Port Phillip and the Yarra River.

Little Group chairman Paul Little said the new vessel would carry 400 passengers and offered an efficient journey with all the comforts of other transport options and more.

It features a licensed café on board, bike rack storage, free Wi-Fi, charging stations for electronic devices and better table and seating configurations, including drop-down tables on the back of seats.

"Featuring low-emission engines, Bellarine Express is one of the most environmentally friendly ferries travelling Australian waters," Mr Little said.

"And with the latest designs to increase speed, it's also one of the most efficient."

The launch of the ferry came at the same time the state government announced a new trial of faster speeds in the Yarra for Port Phillip Ferries

Bellarine MP Lisa Neville said the Andrews government had granted the company an exemption to the speed limit in the Yarra as part of a three-month trial, which was expected to cut journey times by seven minutes.

"With services guaranteed until at least 2019, faster speeds in the Yarra, and a safe harbour in Portarlington – it's full steam ahead for the Portarlington to Docklands Ferry," Ms Neville said.

"I am confident that the ferry's popularity will grow over summer as more people discover this fast and convenient way to travel to the Bellarine.

"We're proud to support this venture, which is boosting tourism on the Bellarine and providing an alternative way for Bellarine residents to head into Melbourne."

The new vessel will join the Capricornian Dancer on the route between Portarlington and Docklands in the next month.

Tuesday 16 February 2010
people | places | lifestyle

Portarlington

CBI work impresses D'Ambrosio

BY ALISON MARTIN

LAST week's Portarlington Community Building Initiative presentation was one of the first official appointments for Victoria's new Minister for Community Development, Lily D'Ambrosio.

D'Ambrosio was appointed to the Community Development portfolio on January 19 and attended the CBI function to learn about the progress of a range of, state and council-funded projects, including the ferry and neighbourhood house.

She told the local community leaders that working together as a community was the best way to improve liveability in a town and achieve their priorities.

"It is your work on the ground that has attracted funding to realise your achievements," D'Ambrosio.

The presentation was appropriately held at the Portarlington Neighbourhood House, one of the CBI's success stories over the past three years.

CBI spokesperson, John Rae, said three years ago the community initiative identified five top priorities of Portarlington

residents: a ferry to Melbourne, a safe harbour, a retirement village, transport and neighbourhood house.

He said the safe harbour masterplan had been finalised and construction of a retirement village would start this year and the Neighbourhood House was open and well supported.

The minister was updated on the launch of a Portarlington community website and the development of a community network to link more than 50 local groups.

Portarlington Community Association spokesperson, John Turner, said the previous lack of cross communication was also being addressed with weekly emails to share information and encourage a "cohesive community".

Transport has also been improved, with changes to public bus services and community bus services available weekly for residents with limited mobility and during festivals.

The CBI Ferry Group's Geoff Henderson informed D'Ambrosio of the continuing work to attract support for the proposed passenger ferry between Portarlington to Melbourne.

He said two ferry berths had been allocated in the harbour plan but the group was waiting for the outcome of a broad survey to indicate expected usage of the alternative transport service.

While unable to make any funding commitments for the ferry or harbour plan, D'Ambrosio said the strength of the CBI was that it allowed the community to make decisions and be "in control", with an important focus on volunteering.



The benefits of a ferry between Melbourne and Portarlington were discussed by Minister for Community Development Lily D'Ambrosio, Ferry Group member John Rae, City of Greater Geelong councillor John Doull, Ferry Group member Geoff Henderson and Safe Harbour committee member Graham Shirley.

17 August 2018



Taking a trip on the Portarlington ferry service will be safer and dryer with a re-elected Andrews Labor Government to build a new covered walkway along the Portarlington Pier.

As a Government, we said we'd deliver the Portarlington Safe Harbour project and guarantee a Portarlington to Docklands ferry service, and we have.

The \$15 million Portarlington Safe Harbour project includes two rock breakwaters to the east and north of the pier, a new 190-metre long concrete commercial berthing area and 27 commercial berths serviced with water and electricity.

This has boosted the local aquaculture industry and increased tourism and economic growth across the Bellarine Peninsula, but there's more to do.

A re-elected Labor Government will invest \$550,000 to build a new covered walkway from the beachfront to the ferry berths on Portarlington Pier.

This will make sure passengers stay dry and safe as they walk along the 190-metre long pier.

Tourism is an important part of the local economy and the number of people commuting to and from Melbourne by ferry will increase into the future. This is why the Labor Government is building upon the Portarlington service with a ferry trial between Geelong and Melbourne to give workers an alternative transport route.

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Wadawurrung Welcome At New Portarlington Pier

Premier Daniel Andrews

Locals and visitors will be welcomed by Aboriginal art celebrating a sense of Wadawurrung Country when they visit the new Portarlington Pier on the Bellarine Peninsula – which is now officially open.

Minister for Ports and Freight Melissa Horne and Member for Bellarine Lisa Neville today announced the original artwork and works to upgrade the pier have been completed, with a ceremony to be held next month to mark the occasion.

The artwork – which spans over 120 metres – has been created by the Traditional Owners, the Wadawurrung people, and displayed along a new covered walkway constructed from the foreshore to the ferry terminal.

More than 100 Wadawurrung families contributed to the artwork – with hand-drawn illustrations etched into the structure’s specialised marine glass and metal panels to tell the stories of place, water and journey.

The artwork compliments the coastal landscape and culturally significant local marine species including sea snails, fish, molluscs, and crustaceans, imparting valuable knowledge of the area’s traditional use over tens of thousands of years.

Portarlington Harbour is an important focal point for the Bellarine Peninsula, providing significant economic and recreational benefits.

The \$9.6 million upgrade to the pier saw major improvements take place – including a new, strengthened pier head to enable vehicle access for the aquaculture industry and emergency response crews. A new accessible low landing and rock groyne has also been installed to improve access to the water and protect harbour berths.

The upgrade has been funded by the Andrews Labor Government’s \$24 million Piers and Jetties Stimulus Package.

[Return to 2022](#)