

# 'Bus stops on water' idea preferable to community hub

Proposals for a River Derwent ferry service have been on the cards for the length of many Tasmanian governments.

I recall, in celebrating a marketing law publication in 1975, I boarded the ferry at Wrest Point in company with Tony Hocking, a fellow lecturer in the Faculty of Economics and Commerce at the University of Tasmania. During a long day sustained by an on-board bar, we crossed over to Bellerive Pier, then to the Hobart Wharf and back to Wrest Point.

The trial of a regular ferry service between Hobart wharf and Bellerive has concluded with the state government putting forward the River Derwent River Service Master Plan. This is a submission putting

However, two key ferry proposals don't need to be mutually exclusive, writes John Livermore

forward comments and suggestions on proposals already put forward and an assessment of the issues to ensure a practical outcome for a comprehensive, sustainable and affordable ferry service linking key locations on the River Derwent.

Infrastructure and Transport Minister Michael Ferguson's claim (Mercury, July 20) that the newly commenced Bellerive-Hobart ferry run by Roche Brothers is "part of solving Hobart's traffic congestion problems" is difficult to justify.

To begin with, the users of the ferry

were both cyclists and foot passengers. There seemed to be no prior investigation by the Department of State Growth to indicate the ferry would take car traffic off the Tasman Bridge. In addition, apart from providing disability access from the Bellerive wharf, there was no provision for infrastructure to deal with parked cars belonging to ferry travellers.

The assessment of the ferry service at the end of 2023 ignored the offer by Incat founder Bob Clifford to provide floating jetties and his expertise in

setting up ferry services on the Derwent. The initial ferry service Bellerive-Hobart cannot give an indication of the potential use of ferries by the public to ease traffic congestion.

There are two key proposals offered for Derwent River ferry services.

The first is one from Mark Drury ("Jetty project could build brighter future", Mercury, December 27, 2023). He claims that "we can do better than offer a 'bus stop' on the water". He said the state government should be spending money on a facility that would have far greater benefits to the community. He advocates the jetty project as an "ideal synergy" between a ferry stop that draws the community to the

foreshore but, unlike a ferry terminal, will have an income-generating potential, which helps to pay for this infrastructure.

The jetty project involves creating a ferry terminal as an over-the-water, fully accessible community asset that encourages community interaction and recreation, which improves connection, social interaction, health and wellbeing. Depending on location, the jetty project can be customised to meet each community's specific needs, with possible facilities including paddlecraft launching, docking and storage, meeting and training hire spaces, an arts showcase, public toilets, showers, saltwater therapy facility and overwater sauna, kiosk or cafe, relaxation areas, bike storage

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## jetty project on the Derwent

and charging, allied health rooms and ferry docking area.

Bob Clifford offers an alternative view (Mercury, December 28, 2023), he sees the River Derwent becoming a "mini Sydney Harbour" within the next decade.

Any new terminals along the river he believes should be kept simple and free of mod cons so they can be built simply and in greater number. "Quite frankly, I think glorified bus stops is all we need ... we need them pretty simple - just simple pontoons that the ferry comes alongside. By all means, if people want to add to them, that's great. But you have to get value for money, that's the point."

Mr Clifford said the terminals didn't need to resemble Brooke Street Pier and be able to accommodate two

ferries at a time, including a large vessel with the capacity to carry 300-400 passengers. His design for the terminals was about 10m by 10m, with a ferry either side and "a bit of lid on to keep the rain out". With a gangway to the shore the terminals could all be built and floated into position. Mr Clifford wants 16-18 terminals built with government focus on making the service attractive to tourists as "the tourism market will probably end up paying for this".

Of the two proposals, in my opinion, that of Mr Clifford's is preferred. The ferry terminals could be fabricated by Incat and floated into position at given access sites on the Derwent. The Drury proposal would take longer to provide and if the terminal itself was funded by

government, it would be more costly than under the Clifford concept.

It does not need to be either/or, as Mr Clifford holds that, if the bus-stop model is adopted, the Drury Brooke Street Pier add-on could follow.

The River Derwent River Service Master Plan lists the following as the best places to add ferry terminals; Hobart, Bellerive, Lindsifarne, Howrah, Wilkinson's Point, Sandy Bay, Regatta Point and Sandy Bay. Opossum Bay with an existing upgraded jetty could be added as could ones at Old Beach, Granton and Bridgewater.

**John Livermore is chair of Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (this organisation does not necessarily endorse this submission).**

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