



Brighton Council

1 July 2022

Expansion of River Derwent Ferry Service

It's a bright, still Hobart morning. The sun is already warm over the tree-topped hills on the eastern shore. To the west, a deep, blue sky wraps around kunanyi/ Mt Wellington. The shining Derwent River is winding around the curling span of the bright new Bridgewater Bridge. At the eastern end of the Bridge, hundreds of commuters are busily boarding a ferry service at the recently opened Bridgewater jetty terminal and heading off down river for another day's work in Glenorchy and the Hobart CBD.

Up the bank, more commuters are stepping from buses and parking cars at the extensive new bus terminal and park and ride facility. Some head into the onsite café for a strong morning coffee and a pastry. Others head straight to the new state of the art conference rooms and recreation facilities.

This is vision of a ferry terminal at Bridgewater. It's a vision that should be a reality. And this is why...

Every day tens of thousands of people drive to work from their homes in the South Central region (which includes Brighton, Derwent Valley, Southern Midlands and Central Highlands). Almost all are travelling one person per car. Around 70% of those commuters are travelling into Hobart and Glenorchy.

And the number of commuters is growing. Brighton is predicted to hit 20,000 residents in the next 12 months, with the sub-region rising to 40,000 inhabitants.

This is a huge pool of users for a Bridgewater ferry connection, and eventually Old Beach too. Adding these paying passengers would improve the viability of the entire Derwent River ferry network. And strengthen the case for further ferry sites in Clarence, Glenorchy, Kingborough and Hobart.

On top of this, every commuter taking the ferry from Bridgewater means one less car heading into Greater Hobart. That would significantly cut road congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from car fumes and create more socially and economically productive commuting.

A ferry terminal and linked facilities at Bridgewater also means lots of jobs. Council could look to rezone the area around a terminal to create a commercial and recreational precinct. That would deliver jobs in construction and service delivery. Inevitably further commercial, residential and recreation activity would emerge around the precinct.

And then there's marvellous MONA with its growing array of projects in Bridgewater, including the headquarters of its 24 Carrot Gardens Project and its Botanical Institute. A Bridgewater ferry connection would allow more visitors to travel easily to Brighton, encouraging MONA to further expand its offerings. And that means more projects and services and even more jobs.

There's also an equity issue here. The further you live from the Hobart CBD, the more it costs and the longer it takes to go to work there. A ferry service would reduce this transport poverty with an enjoyable and affordable transport option.

The cost of this development would be greatly reduced by the fact that the existing jetty and boat ramp must be replaced as part of the current Bridgewater Bridge project. Given they're being replaced, why not ensure the new infrastructure is fit for passenger ferries?

And we have the land for this. The Bridgewater Bridge project will free up parcels of government-owned land near the new bridge. That could be used for the whole commercial and recreational precinct and integrated bus terminals and park and ride.

Brighton Council is driving this vision for a Bridgewater ferry terminal. But we are not alone. We have received strong expressions of support from MONA, Incat, UTAS, Roche Brothers, RACT and others.

MONA's Kirsha Kaechele has hailed the ideas as "vital" adding, "Investing in a ferry service will address access barriers for the people of Brighton and bring visitor dollars into Bridgewater. Our river is a great connector, it is time to use it for the benefit of all communities."

The Derwent River ferry service has been a huge success since launching last year as part of the Hobart City Deal and the Greater Hobart Transport Vision. We want to constructively build on that success by playing a positive role in extending the ferry service to Bridgewater, and then Old Beach.

We know the Greater Hobart Act includes an "adjunct council provision" for exactly this kind of situation to ensure the involvement of neighbouring councils in specific strategic initiatives. Let's make use of that, not to slow things down, but instead to spread the benefits of the Hobart City Deal and the Derwent River ferry service to even more people across Southern Tasmania.

Leigh Gray, Brighton Council Mayor