

# Push for commuter ferry services to deal with Melbourne's traffic and public transport congestion

A ferry network is being touted as part of a push to take pressure off Melbourne's congested roads. See how it could work.



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## **17 comments**

City authorities are upgrading infrastructure for ferries amid a renewed push for commuter services to take pressure off congested roads and public transport.

A high-level forum on the issue on Wednesday is expected to call for a [ferry network](#) to be integrated into the transport system, including myki access.

Port Phillip Ferries, owned by rich lister Paul Little, is considering a central city commuter service on the Yarra River and between Docklands and Mornington Peninsula destinations.

However, low speed limits on the river threaten the viability of such services.

Lobby group [Melbourne Maritime Heritage Network](#) (MMHH) is holding a forum on the future of ferry services to be attended by marine operators, and state and local government representatives.

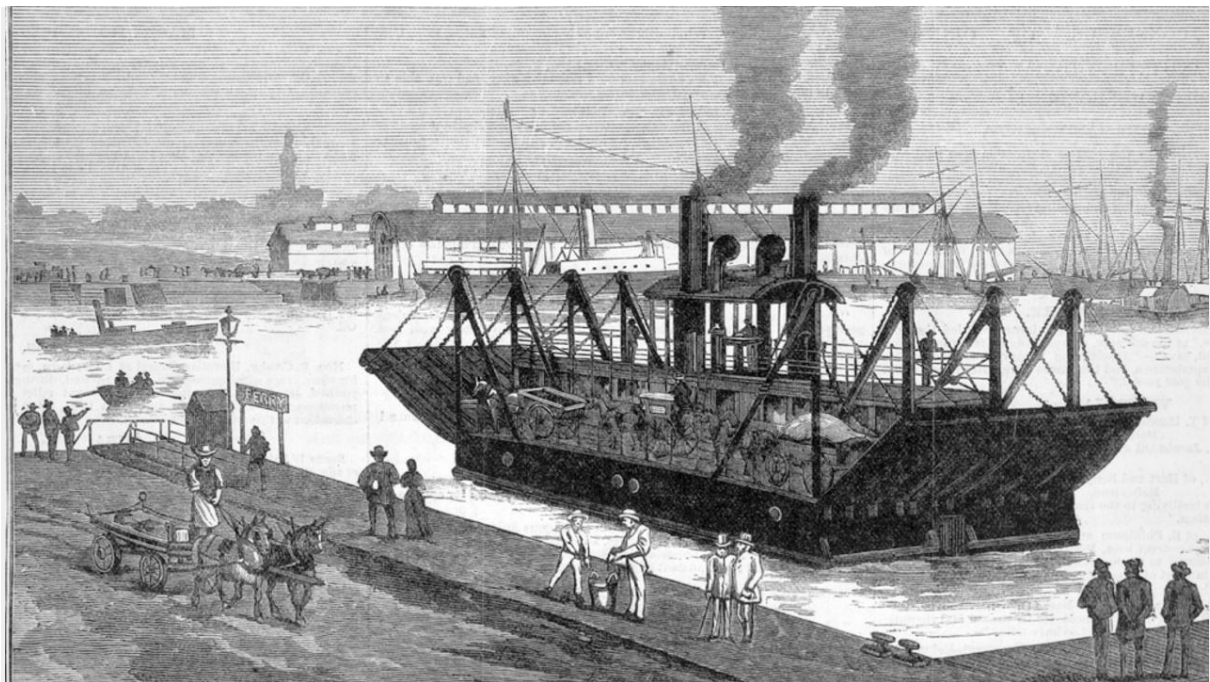
MMHH chair Jackie Watts said that ferries should be publicly subsidised just like trains and trams.

“Given Melbourne's congestion, the state government has to regard it as a legitimate public transport option,” she said.

“There’s no reason a commuter ferry can’t run from Docklands to Station Pier, and to St Kilda and Williamstown. It could be a hybrid model covering tourism and commuter passengers.



Owner of Port Phillip Ferries Paul Little. Picture Rebecca Michael



The steam ferry at Spencer Street, part of Melbourne’s rich maritime history.

Melbourne City Council is working with Development Victoria on a proposal for a temporary ferry pick-up area opposite [Marvel Stadium](#) that would support connections for services in Port Phillip Bay and on the Yarra.

The council is also spending \$300,000 on infrastructure on the south side of Bolte Bridge to help ferries refuel and stock up on provisions.

Lord Mayor Sally Capp said the council backed expanding water transport services to fill gaps in land transport.

“Any new or expanded services would be supported in principle if they were consistent with our Transport Strategy 2030,” she said.



Former Sydney the Lady Cutler.

Committee for Melbourne chief executive Martine Letts said that more than ever, the city’s recovery depended on bold projects to restore liveability and bring back tourists and talent.

“A bigger and better commuter ferry service, together with an integrated plan for Melbourne’s major civic attractions, with the activation of the Yarra at its heart, will help restore our status as one of the most liveable and visitable cities in the world,” she said.

Ms Letts said ferries and water taxis could link locations like Federation Square, Southbank, the Chapel Street shopping precinct, Sea Life Aquarium and the future Fishermans Bend redevelopment.

Wednesday’s forum is expected to hear calls for reform of waterways bureaucracy to reduce the number of responsible authorities.