

OPPOSAL TO THE PROPOSED REINSTATEMENT OF THE KAMAY FERRY WHARVES

I live on the La Perouse peninsula and most of my comments relate to that area.

I oppose the proposed reinstatement of the Kamay Ferry Wharves on the following grounds:

The proposal states that the primary purpose for these wharves would be to allow a ferry service to start operating again for the first time in over 40 years as an alternative way to access the national park. The old wharves were destroyed by storm nearly 50 years ago but there has been no need to re establish them in that time and the proposal gives no real reason to consider reinstatement now.

The area already has a great number of visitors on weekends, particularly in summer. Car parks on The Loop are full and there are queues of cars waiting to access the area. Parking on occasions in the past summer extended far into surrounding streets and the pile up went along Bunnerong Road almost back to the port road. It was not pleasant for residents of the area. Parking on the Kurnell side is also challenging.

Possible users of the proposed ferry include day visitors, bus tours, some bike riders, and residents of Kurnell commuting to the city. The hope is to increase visitation to the Kamay National Park, particularly to the Kurnell side to justify the expenditure on the new visitor centre and other facilities. Most people who visit the Kurnell side come from the Sutherland Shire while the majority of La Perouse visitors come via the M5 motorway. Nealy all visitors come by car. Any increase in visitors to the northern shore would simply cause more havoc in the summer. A mere 13 extra car parks plus a couple of "kiss and drop" and handicapped parks would be provided while the use of a passenger ferry up to 40 metres long and carrying several hundred passengers is recommended. The worry is, if this project were to happen, that further car parks would be made at a later date to accommodate the overflow, thus destroying the green, open character of the place.

Previous reports and research have indicated that the main reason why people come by car to La Perouse is to enjoy the natural features and openness and to relax. From the headland you can enjoy open grass areas, vast skies, blue waters, views of the Bay entrance, views of Kurnell and Towra Point all the way around to Brighton le Sands, extreme weather events, sunsets, sunrises, you can imagine what the first peoples saw. You can swim at the local beaches, fish safely on the rock platforms, have something to eat. There are historic sites and buildings to explore and the bush to walk in. There is nothing to indicate that these visitors would be motivated to cross the water for a similar experience.

Multi-use of the wharves is recommended with a berth for commercial and recreational vessels. This would create further extra use of the area and more demand for parking. What would the recreational vessels do here? I assume tying up for lunch wouldn't be appropriate, if they were picking up people they would have to arrive by car. There was a suggestion that a boat launching ramp might be a possibility but there is already one at Port Botany and the requirement for trailer parking would create a problem. If people were on whale watching or around the bay cruises then the time spent in the car parks would be longer than current stays in the car parks. If they came on cruise tours from the city, where would their buses park?

The wharve at La Perouse would be a very large structure, visually interfering with the views from Yarra Bay of the headland and Bare Island. It is hardly needed as a viewing platform as there are commanding views from the headland itself of the whole of the surrounding area. Fishing is enjoyed on the rocks and beaches already.

Transport for NSW is adamant they are not creating a large commuter system passing from Kurnell to the city and back and yet every effort is made in this proposal to meet the requirements for future transport development. It is acknowledged that such a commuter system would not be self sufficient and would require passenger subsidy.

Ironically, Transport NSW is pushing these plans while the costs will come out of the National Parks budget.

No consideration is made of climate change or extreme weather conditions. The reason why Botany Bay was rejected as a harbour initially was because it is a large open body of water subject to extremes of weather. The original wharves and restaurant were destroyed by storm, boats moored in Frenchmans Bay have been tossed on the shore by southerly winds in the last few years. The wharves on both sides of the bay are exposed to all weathers and conditions. There would be many times when they couldn't operate.

Place to store, refuel and service the ferries is vague. Would new facilities have to be built? There is also vagueness about how many vessels would be required for a ferry service, how big they would be and who the operators would be. Time tabling is left to future operators. Is there a new building for toilet and staff facilities proposed on either side of the bay?

The development plan is in a sensitive land and marine biodiversity and heritage environment. Damage would impact on endangered species in the water and on land including the Towra Point Reserve, a Ramsar site. At best construction damage could possibly be reduced but not eliminated and marine offsets would be required. Thirteen months of construction with the Loop badly affected by construction traffic, a large area excluded from public use for a depot, drilling vibrations and noise, sediment affected beaches, car parks not accessible; not something for locals to look forward to.

Provision of jobs would be mainly during construction and would unlikely to be local. Ferries and tours would provide very few jobs and again, probably not for locals and probably casual jobs. There is very little room for additional businesses other than perhaps tours of the historic areas which could be done without a ferry service.

All in all, there has been no convincing argument that there is need or demand for such a service. It would cause environmental damage, great disturbance to the neighbourhood, increase problems from more visitors to the area. It would provide few extra commercial opportunities and employment and the report acknowledges it would not resolve existing traffic and parking issues. The report is vague about operations of ferries and commercial tours, who would operate them, at what cost and whether it would be viable. It would require a great investment in wharves and vessels for very little benefit and would require permanent subsidy.

From
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