



MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday February 8, 2009

ALL ABOARD FOR NEW MANLY FAST FERRY

The operator of the new privately run Manly express ferry service today went through a final series of test runs and checks on Sydney Harbour, ahead of accepting its first passengers on Tuesday morning.

Manly Fast Ferry now has three high-speed catamarans in Sydney that will carry commuters and day trippers during weekday morning and afternoon peak periods.

The showpiece catamaran 'Eye Spy' - which arrived in Sydney from Brisbane last Tuesday - is able to carry 300 passengers and travel at a speed of 29 knots.

'Eye Spy' will be temporarily complemented by the catamaran 'Fantasea', which holds 200 people and can travel at 22 knots.

'Eye Spy' and 'Fantasea' have been leased by Manly Fast Ferry.

The company will take delivery of another leased catamaran within a fortnight (which will replace 'Fantasea').

The vessels will be backed up by 'Ocean Dreaming', a stand-by vessel on hand in the event that the routine vessels experience delays or mechanical problems. Ocean Dreaming can carry 400 passengers.

Manly Fast Ferry is also finalising the construction of 'Ocean Dreaming 2', a 320 passenger catamaran being built in Brisbane. Capable of travelling at 31 knots, this vessel is scheduled to be operating by April.

Manly Fast Ferry Director Richard Ford said the company had worked hard to have things in place in a relatively short time frame, ahead of the first passenger runs.

"We're asking passengers to bear with us as we get through the early start-up phase," Mr Ford said.

"We're of course ready for teething problems that you'd expect with such an operation."

Mr Ford said that for the duration of Manly Fast Ferry's 14 month contract period with the New South Wales Government, passengers might notice subtle changes compared to riding on the former Sydney Ferries JetCats.

CONT PAGE 2

CONT FROM PAGE 1

“What people might notice most is a smoother and quieter ride, on vessels that are far more fuel efficient than the former JetCats,” Mr Ford said.

“One area we really want to focus on is customer service. As a private operator we want to make an impression when it comes to courtesy and atmosphere.

“Ticket prices will be discounted during the first week of operation, but beyond that will be the same as what people paid on the former JetCats.”

Mr Ford also acknowledged ongoing union concerns over the partial privatisation of the ferry route.

“We are an Australian owned family company with 25 years experience in the maritime passenger sector, and we’re just asking that everyone gives us a fair go in doing the temporary job we’ve been asked to do,” Mr Ford said.

“We’ll always try to work with the unions.”

Manly State MP Mike Baird said Northern Beaches communities were well and truly behind the new service.

“The Manly Ferry service has always been a critical part of everyday life for so many people living in and around Manly, and this new contribution is most welcome,” Mr Baird said.

“It’s taken a lot of work to get this service in place, and the people of Manly are waiting with great anticipation for the vessels to commence operating.”

Llewellyn Jenkins, Chairman of Manly-based ‘Fix-Our-Ferries’ expressed similar sentiments.

“The people of Manly can’t articulate enough the importance and convenience of an express harbour service, and we are absolutely delighted that a family-owned Australian company with such a good reputation is finally here to take up the challenge,” Mr Jenkins said.

Sydney Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Patricia Forsythe said the Manly Fast Ferry was also important to the broader Sydney economy.

“The economic benefits of an efficient express ferry service to and from Manly are obvious and we very much welcome the fact that Manly Fast Ferry has the opportunity to fill the void, in accordance with government policy,” Ms Forsythe said.

“It’s important that Manly Fast Ferry is given a fair go. They have the wholehearted support of the business community.”

Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) Managing Director Matthew Hingerty also welcomed the arrival of Manly Fast Ferry.

“The Manly ferry run has always been an iconic tourism drawcard and it’s important that patronage is maximised with a reliable service,” Mr Hingerty said.

“The people behind Manly Fast Ferry already have a strong track record in the tourism sector and they will no doubt add to their credentials with this new operation.”

CONT PAGE 3

MANLY FAST FERRY QUICK FACTS

- *Manly Fast Ferry is an operating company of Bass & Flinders Cruises, a well-known maritime passenger operator in Sydney, Hamilton Island and the Whitsundays, with 25 years experience*
- *The new Manly Fast Ferry runs are due to commence on Tuesday morning (Feb 10) at Manly Wharf, with the first service leaving at 06.15am*
- *Generally, morning services from Manly will run from 06.15am to 09.38am; evening Circular Quay services will run from 4.00pm to 7.25pm (updated information available at manlyfastferry.com.au or on 9583 1199)*
- *Harbour crossings will take about 15 – 20 minutes, depending on conditions*
- *Tickets can be purchased from custom Manly Fast Ferry ticket boxes at Manly Wharf as of Tuesday, and Circular Quay in the near future. Tickets can also be purchased on board. ‘Smart Card’ tickets are available, meaning passengers can purchase a business-card sized ‘smart card’ and stockpile journey credits to minimise queuing. It costs \$3.00 to purchase a smart card.*
- *Traditional single and ten-journey tickets can also be purchased. A 10-journey ticket costs \$67.20, and a single ticket costs \$8.20. Prices are the same as the former JetCat service. In the first week of operation, all journeys will be discounted to \$6.00 (one way).*
- *The Manly Fast Ferry contract with the NSW Government will see the operation run until the end of March, 2010 (14 months in total)*

FURTHER MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Matthew Watson, Repute Communications & Associates: 9220 3553 / 0417 691 884

Richard Ford, Director, Manly Fast Ferry: 9583 1199 / 0414 583 119

Mike Baird, Manly State MP: 9976 2773

Llewellyn Jenkins, Chairman, ‘Fix Our Ferries’: 0421 834 878

Patricia Forsythe, Executive Director, Sydney Chamber of Commerce: 0408 206 773

Matthew Hingerty, Managing Director, ATEC: 0407 220 945

ENDS