

**GOVERNMENT SEEKS PRIVATE OPERATOR FOR PARRAMATTA FERRY**

2 December 2008

Premier Nathan Rees today called for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from private operators to run a commuter ferry service between Parramatta and the CBD.

Mr Rees said that the Parramatta community have made it clear that they want a commuter ferry service to the City.

“This is an important step in making that a reality,” Mr Rees said.

“Parramatta is a major Western Sydney hub and we want a reliable commuter service established on this route.

“The off-peak services currently run by Sydney Ferries are just not enough.

“That’s why we are going to the open market to find an operator that can provide a reliable commuter service.

“Interested private operators will need to have vessels appropriate for the Parramatta River, a track record in providing ferry services and staff to deliver commuter services in the AM and PM peak.”

Transport Minister David Campbell and Member for Parramatta Tanya Gadiel joined the Premier at the Parramatta Ferry Wharf today.

Mr Campbell said a key aspect of the EOI was for private operators to show that they can provide a peak hour ferry service in both directions between Parramatta and the CBD in less than 55 minutes.

“The current service just isn’t working because of the shallowness of the upper Parramatta River,” Mr Campbell said.

“That’s why we are calling on operators with more appropriate vessels to come forward with an alternative approach.

“It’s important to understand that vessel technology has moved on since the RiverCats were first introduced 15 years ago, and there would now be a better choice for the river.

“Once we have a clearer understanding of the types of vessels the private sector has to operate in the sensitive conditions of the upper Parramatta River we can move quickly to establish the commuter service.”

Parramatta MP Tanya Gadiel said this was a great step forward in delivering a commuter ferry service for the people of Parramatta.

“I have been calling for this service for a long time with the support of the community and the thousands of people who signed my “Keep our Boat Afloat” petition,” Ms Gadiel said.

“The NSW Government is listening to local communities and working hard to deliver better services.”

Mr Rees said that If there is interest from the private sector the Government will go to tender in March next year for a commuter service between Parramatta and the CBD.

The EOI will close on 30 January 2009 and the Government will evaluate responses before going to tender.

For more information visit: <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/inquiries/walker-parramatta-eoi.html>