



COUNCILLOR  
**SEAL CHONG WAH**  
*Paddington Ward*



10th December 2024

Councillor Ryan Murphy  
Chair of Transport Committee  
Brisbane City Council

## **Re: Milton Ferry Terminal Timetable Reduction**

You have taken the decision to reduce the Milton terminal Ferry services as of yesterday, 9th December. I understand that 51 daily services have been reduced at Milton Ferry Terminal, from 122 to 71 stops. This is a 40% reduction in services to Milton.

I note that this reduction in Milton ferry services is also part of a wider reduction in timetabling that includes services to Bulimba.

### **Lack of Transparency & Consultation**

I have received no notification or warning of this major reduction in services, either from yourself, or from council 'Transport for Brisbane' teams. It would be a courtesy for you to ensure the local Councillors were contacted about an important reduction on key public transport services. The fact that no BCC staff have notified my office suggests there may have been a proactive political interference by yourself.

The fact that no consultation was done, no contact of the local Councillors, no attempt at engaging users or residents, suggests a poorly made political decision. I note you did not mention these ferry service cuts at a press conference to announce the opening of the upgraded Mowbray Park CityCat Terminal, held only one week ago.

There has clearly been a strategy of releasing this information as late as possible, only 6 days before the timetable change. This lack of transparency is actively undermining democratic processes and open government.

### **Ferries are a Popular and Well-used Public Transport Link**

I do not need to tell you, as Chair for Transport, that the Ferry services are some of the most popular public transport services in Brisbane, with some of the best customer feedback.

Translink data shows that ferry usage has increased 43% since the introduction of 50 cent fares. These reductions in ferry services, in Milton and Bulimba, will do nothing to address increased usage and overcrowding. It would be honest and transparent of you to release the detailed data and the true rationale for reducing services.

## Why Has Council Cut Ferry CityCat Services to Milton & Bulimba?

The Mowbray Park terminal was only closed temporarily in April in order to upgrade accessibility. Putting this terminal back into the timetable, after the accessibility upgrade, should not mean any reduction of services to other stops, as this is a return to previously existing services.

I understand that another CityCat ferry is now being freed up from the Bulimba-Teneriffe river crossing as it is converted to Kittycats. So there should be sufficient CityCats to add back in Mowbray Park without any timetable reductions.

The only justification for reducing the timetabling is the introduction of an additional Howard Smith Wharves stop to the CityCat network in May this year. Howard Smith Wharves ferry terminal was built in December 2021. You had three years to plan for this additional service and should have ensured adding this terminal would not mean a reduction of services elsewhere.

- **Question 1:** Can you provide the raw data that you based a decision to reduce Milton ferry services by 40%?
- **Question 2:** Please provide the data on patronage at the Milton Ferry terminal, both departing and arriving?

The council were quoted in a Courier Mail story on 6th December 2024, as saying that Milton was chosen for reduced services because it had the third lowest patronage.

- **Question 3:** What was the second lowest stop by patronage and why wasn't this stop reduced instead of Milton? Again, there is no transparency or clarity on council decisions, which would suggest these decisions were politically motivated, with both Milton and Bulimba terminals being in opposition Wards.

## Council Reducing Ferry Services Flies in Face of Increasing Public Transport Patronage

Unlike the bus network where the State funds most of the services, the BCC funds 66% of the ferry services and the State government only 33%. This means it is the Council making these decisions on ferry timetabling and services.

At a time when there is a major investment in public transport services, with the 50 cent fares, and ferry patronage having increased 43% in 4 months, it is extremely poor planning to reduce ferry services now. This goes completely against the momentum and investment in Brisbane public transport at this time.

I would appreciate an immediate response with answers to my questions on why this decision was made.

Warm regards



**Seal Chong Wah**  
Councillor for Paddington Ward

