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PRESS RELEASE

10 July 2008

BIRKENHEAD NORTHCOTE SHORT-CHANGED AGAIN

ARTA today admitted that two major public transport projects in the Birkenhead-Northcote Community Board area have been deferred for another year. The upgrade of Beach Haven wharf and the implementation of the hydraulic ramp at Birkenhead wharf will now not go ahead until mid-2009.

The upgrading of Beach Haven wharf was due to begin this month; however ARTA have now announced that they will not begin construction until July 2009 and the project will not be completed until October 2009. This means the Beach Haven residents will have to wait another year before they can even start to use a ferry service from Beach Haven wharf.

Paula Gillon, candidate for the Birkenhead Northcote Community Board and ex-City Councillor says:

“The way Beach Haven residents have been treated over this issue is wholly unacceptable. This is yet another example of how ARTA have tried to put off the implementation of the Beach Haven ferry service.

“I want to see the upgrading of the Beach Haven wharf and implementation of the ferry service to begin as soon as possible. I will work to see this happen as a member of the Community Board.”

The Birkenhead wharf hydraulic ramp was due to be installed however this has now been delayed until August 2009. Birkenhead wharf has recently been upgraded but the new ferry terminal is underutilised due to the need for a hydraulic ramp on the seaward side of the building.

Paula Gillon says:

“Birkenhead residents have waited for years to be able to fully utilise the new ferry terminal. It is not good enough for ARTA to delay the installation of a hydraulic ramp at the last minute. This ramp needs to be installed as soon as possible and we need Community Board members who will work hard to make this happen.

“Both of these projects are vital to the public transport needs of the Birkenhead Northcote communities. My real fear is that with the delay a new Government might change the funding criteria or cancel the funding completely and we will lose these projects.

“This is another example of the Birkenhead-Northcote area losing out on major public transport initiatives. As a member of the Birkenhead-Northcote Community Board, I would commit myself to ensuring that both the development of the Beach Haven wharf and the implementation of the hydraulic ramp at Birkenhead wharf took place as soon as possible.”

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Notes to Editor:

1. ARTA made their announcement to the North Shore City Council's Infrastructure and Environment Committee.
2. Paula Gillon was an elected City Councillor from 2001 – 2004 and a member of the Birkenhead Northcote Community Board.
3. Paula is standing for election to the Birkenhead Northcote Community Board in the by-election.
4. The election will take place by postal vote and polling day will be Thursday, July 31, with voting closing at midday.
5. The vacancies have been caused by the resignations of Adrian Tyler and Peter Burn.