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article by Jill Andrewartha

state-of-the-art opossum bay jetty



There is now another page in the annals of the Derwent River's historic Opossum Bay Jetty. In 2004 it was considered that the jetty's pylons and decking had aged beyond repair and so the wooden structure was taken down. There were no plans to replace the 115 years old landmark but, due to the total dedication and resolute hard work of a local resident, a push began to get support for a new jetty and - it happened!

Work began in June 2006 on a new, state-of-the-art design which promises to be virtually maintenance-free and the final bolt was made fast on the 9th of November. That was a red letter day. But the Big Red Letter Day was Sunday December 17, when Lin Thorp officially opened the jetty - she and a young local lass performed the ritual "cutting of the ribbon" with a 1.2 meter pair of wooden scissors! There were boats in the bay, a chopper hovering

overhead and media coverage of the big crowd on the shore made for a buzz day which was complemented by a great jazz band playing on the jetty head.

Tied up alongside was the MV Excella who, it's hoped, will be able to provide a week-day ferry service to and from Hobart for commuters.

Residents from Bruny Island and Kingston are keen to see the future ferry service extended to Dennes Point and Kingston and, if all goes to plan, this may just come to fruition. It is now over 50 years ago when the Cartela provided such regular ferry service.

So, and after a nearly 3-year long campaign by local residents, Opossum Bay jetty is once more fully functional for all and sundry (it can safely accommodate boats of up to 75 tons).

The story of the new jetty can be seen on an excellent website (www.opossumbay.com), as can further details regarding the proposals for an estuary ferry service. For those with broadband Internet connection, the dedicated site contains more than 20 video clips, 100's of photos and even a purpose written soundtrack titled "Fishing on the Opossum Bay Jetty" by Peter Shaw - now living in Canada!

All in all, the official opening day brought out the community of Opossum Bay and South Arm in large numbers. Video clip No:16 on the website shows it was a fun day for all.

