

Balmain East Wharf Upgrade – Frequently Asked Questions November 2014

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Position, size and design of the new wharf

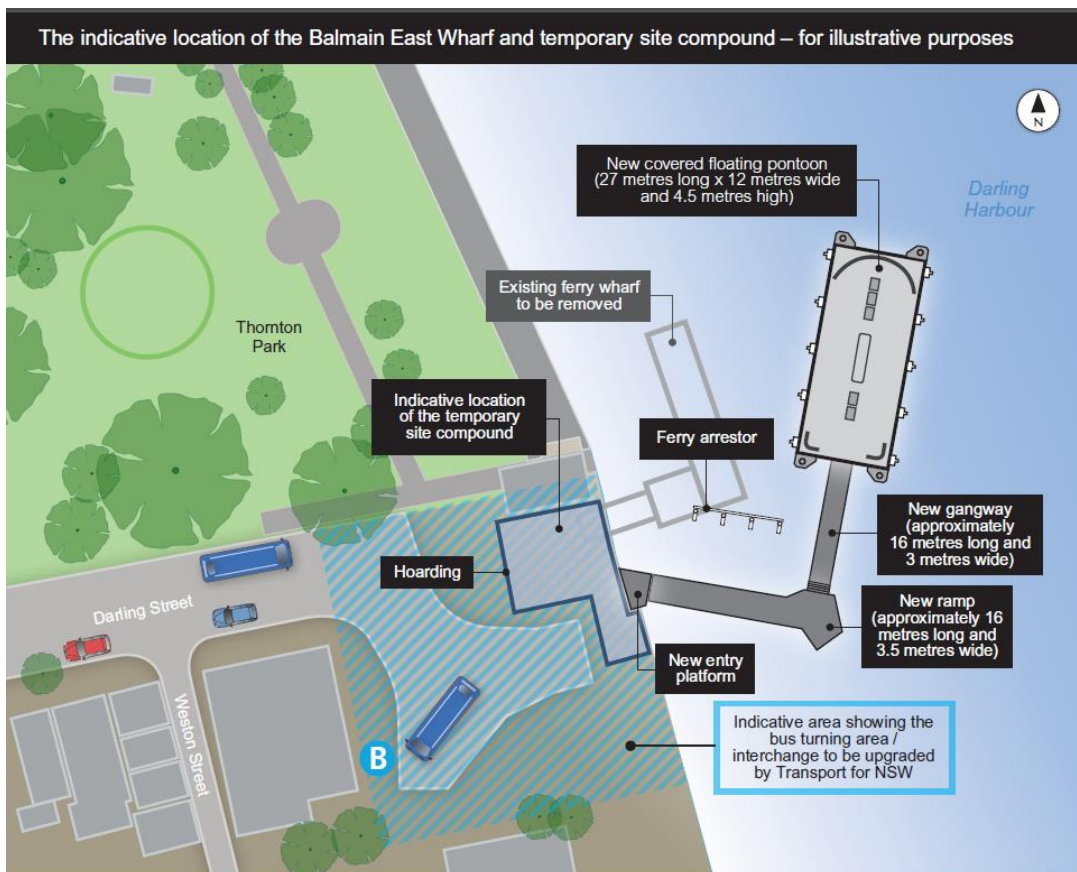
What size is the wharf and could it be smaller?

The dimensions of the new wharf are:

Floating covered pontoon - 27 metres long x 12 metres wide x 4.5 metres high

Gangway - 16 metres long x approximately 3.5 metres wide

Ramp – approximately 16 metres long x 3.5 metres wide



Dimensions and indicative location of new wharf and temporary site compound – for illustrative purposes

The size of the wharf is determined by the conditions in each location as the wharf must provide a safe platform for customers and ferries to operate in all-weather types. The 27m x 12m pontoon is the preferred size for this location to provide a safe platform based in the environmental influences experienced at Balmain East.

The new Balmain East Wharf must meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

To achieve compliance in a tidal environment the new wharf design includes a floating pontoon and a fixed entry bridge connected by a gangway and ramp.

- While the floating pontoon is anchored by four piles it is free to move up and down with the tide providing safe, level access between ferries and pontoon.
- The changing levels of the pontoon mean that the gangway connecting the pontoon and ramp must be a minimum of 16 metres long to maintain the required gradient for wheelchair access in the tidal conditions.

Can the position of the wharf be changed to reduce the visual impact on Thornton Park?

Transport for NSW has considered community feedback regarding the location of the wharf and the new position is believed to be the most practical solution given some heritage and engineering constraints.

Artist's impressions of views from Thornton Park showing the change in view resulting from the repositioning of the wharf.



Why wasn't the pontoon located in front of the bus turning area?

The option of positioning the pontoon in front of the bus turning area was assessed and drawings and artist's impressions prepared, however the impact to adjacent heritage items was considered too great and unable to be managed to an acceptable level.

Artist's impression of proposal for new pontoon positioned adjacent to Iloura Reserve



Could the pontoon be positioned directly out into the harbour with the short side parallel to land?

The pontoon cannot be reoriented directly into the channel, which is only 400 metres wide, without compromising safety and operations.

Why is dual berthing required at Balmain East Wharf?

Ferry services from F3 Parramatta River (night only) and F4 Darling Harbour use Balmain East. The wharf is also used as a ferry / bus interchange.

As part of Sydney's Ferry Future, Balmain East will become an important interchange hub. As more ferry services are provided around the river and harbour there will be greater numbers of customers using the Balmain East pontoon. To meet this future demand, a dual berthing solution is required at Balmain East.

Could the size of the wharf be reduced if the wharf was limited to dual berthing?

The size of the pontoon is not determined by the requirement for dual berthing. The pontoon size is the preferred size to provide for safe operations.

Will the ferry arrestor be the same size as the ones at Circular Quay?

The new ferry arrestor at Balmain East will be smaller than the arrestors installed at Circular Quay. The ferry arrestors are an important safety structure to mitigate the risk of vessels overshooting the ferry berth and causing damage and/or injuries.

How will customers be protected from the weather?

The new ferry pontoon has been designed to improve protection for customers from weather conditions. It is difficult to provide weatherproofing for all conditions however glass panelling is included at either end of the pontoon and the pontoon area will be covered by a zinc roof.

Alternative transport during the upgrade

What are the alternative transport options during the upgrade?

Additional 442 bus services will operate to and from Balmain East Wharf in peak times to meet increased demand during the wharf upgrade. If required, the number of buses will be adjusted according to the level of demand.

Customers can also travel to North Sydney and Circular Quay by ferry from Balmain Thames Street Wharf. During morning and afternoon peaks there are direct ferry services between Balmain Thames Street and Milsons Point on the F3 Parramatta River ferry service and there are regular connections to Circular Quay.

Balmain Thames Street Wharf can be accessed from Balmain East by walking to Balmain Thames Street Wharf (around 15 minutes) to connect with F3 Parramatta River ferry service to Milsons Point (11 minutes) or bus from Balmain East to Gladstone Park (5 minutes) walk to Balmain Thames Street Wharf (around 8 minutes) to connect with F3 Parramatta River ferry service to Milsons Point (11 minutes) or Circular Quay (15 minutes).

Why do the buses need to run to the end of Darling Street why not use an alternative layover/interchange location, like Gladstone Park?

Transport for NSW expects a significant increase in numbers of customers travelling by bus from the wharf and lower Darling Street therefore additional buses will be required from the wharf rather than Gladstone Park, Curtis Road. However, services will be monitored during the closure and adjusted if required.

Will existing 442 timetables change at Gladstone Park?

Existing 442 services will remain and additional services will be provided in peaks at 5 and 10 minute intervals.

Will there be any impacts on 444 and 445 bus services?

There will be no impact on 444 and 445 bus services.

How will customers travel to Pyrmont?

Customers can catch a 442 (Balmain Wharf to City service) or 444 (Balmain Wharf to Canterbury service) bus to Victoria Road (near Darling Street) to connect with a 501 (West Ryde/Ryde to City service) bus to Pyrmont.

How will customers travel to Darling Harbour?

Route 442 operates to the Queen Victoria Building (QVB) which is close to Darling Harbour. Passengers can catch Route 442 to QVB and walk to Darling Harbour or catch Route 442 to QVB and change to Routes 413/413 which operate to Darling Harbour, King Street.

How will customers travel to North Sydney?

Customers can catch a 442 bus service from Balmain East Wharf to the Queen Victoria Building (QVB) in the city to connect with services to Circular Quay and other destinations.

Customers can also connect to train services, including services to North Sydney and Milsons Point from Town Hall Station near the QVB.

During peaks some existing Parramatta River F3 services operate between Milsons Point / McMahons Point from Balmain Thames Street to provide connections to North Sydney for customers who wish to use Balmain Thames Street Wharf. These services operate before and after school hours.

Can a temporary ferry wharf be installed during the upgrade?

The cost of installing a new temporary wharf structure is prohibitive as it requires fit out to accept large ferries and must be safe for customers to access landside and waterside to/from ferries.

There will be barges and equipment in the water during the upgrade work. Because safe ferry access is required for customers, operators and construction workers, this limits the possible locations for a temporary wharf structure.

Yeend Street Wharf was used for ferry services while Balmain Wharf was closed, why not use a nearby wharf as an alternative during the upgrade?

Assessments were carried out however there are no suitable facilities nearby that could be adapted as a commuter ferry wharf.

Balmain East Wharf provides connections between F4 Darling Harbour and F3 Parramatta River services in the evenings, how will customers transfer between these services during the upgrade?

During construction the F4 Darling Harbour Service will make an additional stop at Balmain (Thames) Street Wharf between 7.30pm and midnight to provide connections for customers who normally transfer between the F4 Darling Harbour and F3 Parramatta River services at Balmain East Wharf. Some timetable changes will be required and these will be advertised.

Can additional F4 Darling Harbour services operate to Balmain Wharf during the upgrade?

Consideration was given to diverting Balmain East F4 services to Balmain Thames Street however the resulting extra distance could not be accommodated within the existing timetable without significant flow on effects to other services.

Can a shuttle bus operate between Balmain East and Balmain Wharf to connect to ferry services during the upgrade?

Transport for NSW gave consideration to running a shuttle bus to Balmain (Thames Street) Wharf to connect to F3 Parramatta River Services. However, a check of all the streets around Balmain Wharf showed that safe operation would require the removal of around 50 parking spaces to operate a full size bus and at least 25 spaces to operate a smaller bus.

Can I use my School Student Transport Scheme (SSTS) Ferry Pass on buses and trains during the closure of Balmain East Wharf?

Students using a Ferry SSTS Pass to travel to and from school from Balmain East Wharf will be able to use their passes for travel to and from Balmain (Thames St) Wharf during the temporary closure of Balmain East Wharf. Students will also be eligible for a Bus SSTS Pass and a Train SSTS Pass during the closure. Students will need to apply for the bus and train passes through their school.

The application process:

- Complete the attached application form
- Forms must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian if you are under 16 years of age
- A separate application must be lodged for bus and train travel
- The completed application form(s) should be returned to the school, which will verify that you are enrolled
- The school will forward the application form(s) to the transport operator who will process the application and issue the pass.

Timing

Why are five months required to build the wharf?

The upgrade takes four to five months and involves the dismantling and removal of the existing wharf and the construction of the new wharf in the same location. Work on the water also requires consideration for tides, currents, weather conditions. Please be assured the planning and scheduling of activities required for the wharf upgrade have been carefully planned to minimise the length of time the wharf is out of operation while delivering a new wharf that is long lasting and safe for all marine conditions.

Based on other wharves recently completed as part of the wharf upgrade program to date, we expect Balmain East Wharf to be completed on time or earlier.

The project team will make all efforts to reopen the wharf as soon as possible.

Why will the wharf be closed over New Years Eve and during summer when there are more people using ferry services?

The wharf will not be closed on New Years Eve, work is scheduled to start in January 2015 next year.

The aim of the wharf upgrade program is to deliver new and upgraded transport infrastructure that improves access and amenity and also meets Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.

Interchange upgrade

Is the interchange being upgraded as well as the wharf?

The interchange will be upgraded under the NSW Government's Transport Access Program.

When is the interchange work being carried out and why aren't the upgrades being done at the same time?

The interchange work will be carried out after the wharf upgrade has been completed to ensure bus services can be accommodated while there are no ferry services operating at Balmain East.

It is anticipated work on the interchange upgrade will start in 2015 however updates on timing will be provided as planning progresses.

Will there be community consultation regarding the interchange work so residents have a chance to provide input into the planning process, sharing their local knowledge?

Members of the Transport for NSW interchange project team were at both community sessions to hear feedback and answer questions. Planning for the site was in very early stages in June when the first wharf upgrade community session was held.

Transport for NSW has now carried out initial consultation with Council and have been working collaboratively with Roads and Maritime Services to ensure an integrated solution is proposed to provide a seamless journey across all modes of transport and align with the upgraded wharf.

Transport for NSW has assessed a number of options to upgrade the transport interchange. A preliminary preferred option has been identified to improve access and increase safety by changing the interchange layout.

Transport for NSW will carry out further consultation with residents on the interchange project in late 2014/early 2015.

Will the toilet block be upgraded?

The public toilet block is not included as part of the wharf upgrade. The toilet block is managed by Leichhardt Council. Public toilet facilities are being considered as part of Council's foreshore Master Plan.