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## **Two iconic Manly ferries saved, two more to go**

The Maritime Union of Australia has welcomed a backflip by the NSW Government, with two of the four internationally-recognised doubled-ended Manly ferries to be saved from the scrap-heap, but pledged to continue fighting to have all four vessels remain in service.

Transport Minister Andrew Constance has responded to the campaign by workers and the Northern Beaches community, who are overwhelmingly opposed to the loss of the iconic ferries, by committing to retain the Freshwater and Collaroy to carry tourists across the harbour on weekends and public holidays.

The union said the fight was far from over, with efforts continuing to also save the Narrabeen and Queenscliff ferries, ensuring they vessels are able to continue operating year-round.

"The community has overwhelmingly rejected the NSW Government's plan to slash passenger capacity by replacing these four Freshwater ferries with Emerald-class catamarans," MUA Sydney Branch Assistant Secretary Paul Garrett said.

"Today's announcement that two of the ferries will be saved is a win for everyone who has been fighting against this short-sighted decision, but it's far from the end of our campaign.

"These iconic doubled-ended vessels don't just bring international and domestic tourists to Manly each year, they are a vital part of the commuter network, reliably taking people from the Northern Beaches to work in the city each day.

"Replacing them with Emerald-class catamarans on weekdays will still see passenger capacity slashed from 1,100 down to 400 per trip, while the new ferries are unable to operate to the same swell limit while crossing the Heads.

"Sending these vessels to the scrap heap will be a costly mistake that will hurt tourism and commuters right as Sydney is attempting to recover from the COVID crisis.

"While these vessels may be getting older, the workers who crew and maintain them each day know there is a lot of life left in these great ferries.

"Rather than axing the iconic Freshwater ferries, the NSW Government should invest in this tourist drawcard with appropriate maintenance and life-extension programs to keep all four vessels operating safely for many years to come.

"As we've seen today, it's not too late for this short-sighted decision to be overturned, and we'll continue fighting for the best outcome for Manly, the Northern Beaches and Sydney, which is the retention of all four ferries."

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