

A ferry nice idea

IAN ROYALL

River plan floated

A FERRY from St Kilda to the city might be part of an overhaul of Melbourne's waterway transport for commuters and tourists in the postpandemic world, Melbourne city councillor Jackie Watts has declared.

Ms Watts, who is running for re-election on the Gary Morgan Lord Mayoral ticket, said it was the perfect time to make use of the city's "underdeveloped" rivers and bays.

She said a ferry terminal could be based at Docklands to accommodate regular water services from bayside locations as well as from the Yarra upstream from Richmond and Hawthorn. "The potential needs to be unlocked. Post-COVID lockdown will create an opportunity to seriously rethink waterways use — this underdeveloped public asset," Ms Watts said.

The Yarra and Maribyrnong rivers, Victoria Harbour and Port Phillip were all underused, she said.

"The Yarra was absolutely teeming with craft in the 19th century," Ms Watts added.

She accused the state government of failing to recognise the value of the city's waterways. "They tunnel on and on, ignoring the natural transport corridors," she said.

"Melbourne has more navigable waterways than Sydney."

She proposed ticketing for the water transport network could be integrated into the myki system.

Concerns about damage to riverbanks had been eased by modern ferry designs which reduced the amount of wash.

Until it was suspended by COVID-19 restrictions, Paul Little's Port Phillip Ferries ran services from Victoria Harbour to Portarlington and Geelong.

Ms Watts also backs plans for a Yarra Pool and the illumination of all the Yarra bridges.