

Ferry proves a game changer for Bellarine commuters



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THERE'S a new set of Bellarine commuters who are in on the best kept secret around.

They're not sacrificing lifestyle for work any more... they're "setting the cruise control" with Port Phillip Ferries by sailing to Melbourne across Port Phillip Bay.

Port Phillip Ferries has been helping Bellarine residents arrive at their jobs in Melbourne stress-free and in comfort since commencing services from Portarlington in November 2016.

The much-loved service has been described as a "game changer" and offers a new kind of commute; an easy car park, familiar faces, a warming smile, scenic vistas and vitamin sea - not to mention a guaranteed seat.

Those who take advantage of the ferry do so

because the service has had a positive impact on their lives.

Margaret, Paul and Kira were among the ferry's very first passengers three years ago.

All three still travel onboard daily because the service offers a better way for them to balance their professions and coastal lifestyles.

One new convert is Ocean Grove resident Jarrod, who spent 12 years travelling to his job in Melbourne on the train before making the switch to the ferry.

"I was living the daily grind," Jarrod said. "Train, work, train, home. Rinse, wash, repeat. I was just in a vicious cycle and didn't even know how bad it was until it stopped."

He said he heard about the ferry over the last

two to three years, but never really considered it an option for him.

He was convinced to give it a try by David, another father from his child's school, who is also a regular commuter on the ferry.

"Just one trial on the ferry and I was hooked," Jarrod said.

"First and foremost, my wellbeing and state of mind has completely changed... it has provided me with a real happiness factor.

"It's also great to brag to your work mates you're catching a boat home to the coast when they are sometimes travelling just as long to get a few kilometres out of the city."

The ferry's locations at Portarlington and Docklands makes the commuter experience a

viable option for almost all residents on the Bellarine - and from December 2, Geelong.

There's a licensed café onboard that serves up barista-made coffee for the morning trip over. On the way home, passengers can unwind with a great selection of wine, beer and local snacks, including Bellarine Smokehouse pâté and Manzanillo tapenade.

The ferry sets sail from Portarlington Pier at 7am sharp on weekdays and glides into Victoria Harbour at Docklands at 8.20am (just across the road from Marvel Stadium) before making the return journey home at 5.30pm.

Jarrod encouraged more Bellarine residents to try the ferry out and promised it would not disappoint.