

Boats put on ferries' radar at night time

Kelly Robinson

MANLY'S ferries have been fitted with infra-red technology and cutting-edge radar systems in a bid to improve the safety of night trips on the harbour.

The new navigational systems have been fitted to all Sydney Ferries' 28 vessels, including the *Collaroy*, *Narrabeen*, *Queenscliff* and *Freshwater*.

The \$4.8 million safety system includes digital radars on board each ferry showing the navigational course and the location of other vessels in the vicinity, and a forward-looking infrared (FLIR) system which displays thermal imaging camera data of fixed or mobile objects.

Also on board the ferries is an automatic information system - linked to a GPS - which pinpoints the exact location, speed and course of other vessels equipped with the same technology.

There have been several crashes on the harbour in recent years, including one between the *Pam Burridge* ferry and a cruiser in 2007 which killed four people.

Earlier this year, Deputy State Coroner Hugh Dillon found the ferry and the recreational vessel crashed because the *Merinda's* navigation lights were not on and its crew was not keeping a proper lookout.

Transport Minister John Robertson said the new system would ensure ferries could see every vessel out on the water at dusk and night.

"Even kayaks or sailboats can be detected by the radar system and show up on the screen so that our ferry masters can safely navigate through our busy waterways," he said.

"Sydney Harbour is the heart of our great city and it is no surprise that so many people want to get out on the harbour, particularly at this time of year.

"With this new night-vision technology, we are arming our ferry masters with the best tools to ensure our ferries are safe out on the water."



Should this have been brought in sooner?

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