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Cruise ship brings in the tourists



By **LAUREN VARDY**
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LUXURY cruise liner Celebrity Solstice made its maiden call into Esperance on Wednesday, bringing with it 2800 passengers and 1200 crew.

Esperance Port Sea and Land staff met at the new landing pontoon before departing on a ferry for the Celebrity Solstice for a plaque exchange ceremony.

Port deputy harbourmaster and pilot Stephen Dickason presented ship captain Konstantinos Nestoroudis and staff captain Panagiotis Kiouis with a plaque marking the date of their call as part of the inaugural exchange.

The plaque will be displayed in passenger areas near the bridge.

The first ship to visit in 2013, Celebrity Solstice arrived in Esperance in the early hours of Wednesday after departing Adelaide.

The ship has since left Esperance for Albany after which it will finish its tour in Perth.

Tourism Esperance deputy chairperson Milton Valli said a large number of passengers made use of the

Flying 15 Yacht Club area with the new pontoon departure to alight from a tender and onto Esperance shores.

"With some 2800 passengers on the ship and the majority coming ashore, there were queues 100 metres long towards the end of the day as people returned onto the ferries," he said.

"The installation of the concrete ramp and pontoon area has really beautified the scene and made it an easier access point for all passengers arriving from cruise liners into Esperance."

We would encourage business owners to pull out all stops.

Grant Shipp, Esperance Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive officer

Esperance Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive officer Grant Shipp said that from a business perspective, the influx of people into town had bought a real "vibe" to the town centre.

Cruise liner Silver Shadow will be next to visit Esperance and is due to arrive next Friday, February 22.

"We would encourage business owners to pull out all stops," Mr Shipp said.

"Hopefully the lessons learned this time around can be applied next time to make a good visit great."

Passengers took up tours from town and wandered around the special Museum Village markets which ran to coincide with the cruise visit.



REMOVAL of the first 80 metres of the Esperance Tanker Jetty began on Monday.

THE commencement of the \$59-million Esperance Waterfront Project began with Monday's start on the removal of the first 80 metres of the Esperance Tanker Jetty.

"Work on the physical decommissioning of the first 80 metres was scheduled to begin on Wednesday, but the contractors were able to start a few days earlier," Esperance Shire Council chief executive officer Matthew Scott said.

Those 80 metres of the Tanker Jetty are being removed to allow for the creation of a new headland at the base of the jetty.

Once the new headland has been completed, the remaining section of the Tanker Jetty will be reconnected to the coastline by a bridge, once again allowing public access.

Former president of the Esperance Bay Historical Society, Merv Andre, said the removal of the first section of the jetty represented the end of an era. "It's the end of an era in several ways. Firstly, the foreshore will change forever due to the planned construction of a seawall and a headland."

"We're not going to have a beach there anymore."

"Secondly, it's an end of an era for the jetty itself. It's a 60-year-old icon of Esperance and one of the few original timber jetties still standing."

Mr Andre believed more could have been done to preserve the Esperance Tanker Jetty in its present form. "Personally, I think it is very disappointing that it has been neglected to the point where it needs to be dismantled and replaced with a new structure."

However, Esperance Shire President Malcolm Heasman said the jetty, in its existing form, had reached the end of its lifespan and needed to be replaced.

"The reality is that the jetty in its current state has reached the end of its life. An engineering analysis found that the first 80 metres were structurally unsound and needed to be removed."

"Some sections of the first 80 metres were so rotten that the planks were almost hollow."

Mr Heasman said the Esperance Tanker Jetty's remaining 600 metres would remain intact for the community to enjoy into the future.

"It's important to remember that we may lose 80 metres but the vast stretch of the iconic jetty will remain in place," he said.



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