



Worn away: Graham Gath, Neville Mulgat, Sally Faahan-Smith and John Coates look at some rusted bolts.



Right: Katie Riggs, Victoria Brown and John Shannon with some rusted bolts and rotten beams.
Photos: TIM SLATER

Call for a new full length jetty



Rotten logs: Keely Parnell, Darryl Noye and Sharon Parnell-Johnston look at some rotten wood beams.

■ Tim Slater

The Tanker Jetty should be replaced to its full length to maintain a major walking promenade, safe fishing location and, according to the Save the Esperance Tanker Jetty Association inaugural chairman Graham Gath.

Mr Gath said a lot of people enjoyed walking the jetty, as well as fishing off it, to take photos and observe the town.

"It's a good walk along a magnificent promenade, it's as simple as that," he said.

"A lot of people put a fair effort into the artificial reef in between the end of the jetty and the old headland.

"It would be good to continue to provide access to the reef for divers without them needing a boat."

He said he wouldn't like to see it replaced by a "stumpy little jetty".

Mr Gath's call for a new jetty to be the same length was backed by long-term Esperance resident Neville Mulgat who used to frequently fish off it during the 1950s.

"It would be fine if a replacement jetty was the same length," he said.

"If it was just 100 metres it would be too short and would be just a landing."

Mr Mulgat acknowledged that the jetty needed to be replaced.

"Esperance without its jetty or a jetty is just not Esperance," Mr Mulgat said. "It would be like chopping down our Norfolk Island pine trees, we'd never be the same."

"It's a marvellous tourist attraction and we'd be lost without it."

Mr Mulgat has lived in Esperance for 60 years and spent a lot of time catching herring, skippy and barracouta when he was a boy.

"Even when the ships came in you

could go on board," he said.

"It was very relaxed in those days you could stand there and watch the ships being loaded or unloaded."

Mr Mulgat said a lot of people from the Goldfields used the jetty and it was a safe environment for children to go fishing. Kalgoorlie resident John Shannon said he had been a regular visitor over the past 40 years.

"Every time I come down here I always run into somebody I know from Kalgoorlie on the jetty," he said.

"If they take that away it will be disappointing for a lot of people."

About 200 people attended a community information day near the James Street carpark on Saturday morning to inspect rotten timbers and rusted bolts taken from the jetty.

Councillors and shire staff showed people a collection of photographs highlighting the extent of the damage to timbers on the jetty.

Last week the Shire of Esperance decided to allocate \$70,000 for repairs to six pylons that will enable it to be reopened on a temporary basis for between six to 12 months, according to deputy president Victoria Brown.

She said the damaged pylons were spread throughout the jetty, with one of the most serious pylons located right where a bridge was going to be connected, linking the jetty with the new headland.

"We wanted to show everybody what a bad state the jetty is in," she said.

"The jetty is like an old member of the family who has a life span and sadly reaches the end of that life span and the community has to learn to let go, to grieve," she said.

Cr Brown said the council was "crying out to members of the community" to tell it what they want to happen to the jetty.

Cr Brown said feedback she had received had shown a clear determination that a jetty was an important icon for Esperance.



Passing through: Dockers supporters Tash, Carl and Oliver Newman on their way to watch the final.



Dilapidated: John Bridges and John Hart with a rotten pylon.



Teredo damage: Marilyn Hart has a look at 1930s pylon that had been attacked by Teredo worms.



Sizzling snaggers: Esperance Lions Club member Brian Hunt keeps an eye on the sausages, while Allan Gibson gives Sally Faahan-Smith a sausage sandwich.



Jetty photos: Audrey Danielsen has a look at some photos of damaged and patched up sections with Paul Griffiths and Liv Gaunt.