

Esperance Tanker Jetty

Response to Consideration of a Conservation Order



1. Background

It is understood that the Jetty Group Inc (recently formed) has petitioned the Minister for Heritage via the State Heritage Council to invoke a Conservation (Stop Work) Order under Part 6 of the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990. The Jetty Group claim in their submission dated 17 August that:

"The Shire of Esperance's position to Heritage Council was ill informed and without adequate community consultation or consideration of the broader issues of State significance, the tourism economy or consideration of any alternatives in terms of conservation options and funding opportunities to retain the jetty."

The following seeks to address the concerns raised and note the actions taken by the Shire in reaching a decision to undertake demolition of the existing jetty and focus available funding on the construction of a replacement jetty, the design of which is yet to be determined.

2. Actions undertaken by Shire to Date

On 5 February 2016, the Shire submitted a request for approval to demolish the Esperance Tanker Jetty, Heritage Place Number 00831, to the State Heritage Office. Outlined in the submission was the:

- Current condition
- Options considered repair versus replacement;
- Community consultation undertaken to date;
- Heritage Interpretation; and
- The urgency of a controlled demolition.

The result of the request for demolition was a letter from the State Heritage Office on 21 March 2016 advising that:

- The Heritage Council does not support the demolition of the Jetty, however if the Shire considers that there are no feasible or prudent alternatives except to demolish, then the following conditions apply to the demolition:
 - Prior to demolition a detailed archival record, prepared in accordance with the State Heritage Office Guide to Preparing an Archival Record, should be undertaken to the satisfaction of the Executive Director of the State Heritage Office;
 - Removal of the jetty shall allow for retention of the structural footprint of the jetty at a level that allows for safe navigational water above;
 - An updated Interpretation plan is to be prepared to include demolition of the structure and options for interpretation of the structural footprint; and
 - The Shire shall enter into a Heritage Agreement with the Heritage Council to ensure ongoing interpretation of the Tanker Jetty and maintenance of interpretative installations.

In order to address the above requirements, the Shire has undertaken the following actions.

Archival Record

The Shire engaged GHD and Hocking Heritage Studio in May 2016 to undertake the detailed archival record in accordance with the Heritage Council requirements. A photographic record of the structure was undertaken on 16 May 2016 to supplement the already available information and a side scan survey of the jetty piles was undertaken on 24-25 May 2016 to accurately document the locations.

The finalised archival record was accepted by the Heritage Council on 11 August 2016, refer State Heritage Office letter P00831/41923 from Janine Symons.

Interpretation Plan

In the original request for demolition from the Shire, reference was made to the 2013 Griffith Architects Interpretation Plan. This plan largely outlined the interpretation strategy for the foreshore upgrade works which were undertaken in 2015. To address the requirement to upgrade the interpretation plan, the Shire engaged GHD in conjunction with Hocking Heritage Studio and Creative Spaces, who was involved in the implementation of the foreshore works.

The updated interpretation plan considered the opportunity to build on what had been done on the foreshore, rather than replicate already utilised interpretation measures. It was felt that the story of the history of the tanker jetty was well told already, so the plan focussed on documenting the emotional, social and recreational connection that the community has with the jetty into any future structure. Key strategies defined in the plan are:

- Interpretative Node at the head of the new jetty which documents the demolition and new construction process and forms an introduction to the history of the jetty;
- Incorporation of ground based interpretation elements into the surface of the new jetty such as quotes from archival material, key facts relating to construction, quotes from the community regarding experiences and markers showing the footprint of the old jetty in relation to the new;
- Incorporation of salvaged material into light posts (similar to the ones on the foreshore) and furniture on the jetty (seats and benches); and
- Opportunities for public art installations which complement the themes of the region and jetty, as well as the artwork already installed on the foreshore.

The finalised Interpretation Plan was accepted by the Heritage Council on 9 September 2016, refer State Heritage Office letter P00831/42018 from Harriet Wyatt.

Retention of Structural Footprint

In order to address the request to retain the structural footprint of the jetty, the Shire discussed this option with the Southern Port Authority and Department of Transport, due to the potential impact on navigable waters. It was agreed that piles would be cutoff as per Figure 1, which allows for retention of the archaeological values of the jetty as the piles will remain in ground as well as providing opportunity for incorporation into the interpretation strategies as a dive trail or similar. These proposed cutoff levels have been included in the scope of work for the demolition contract.

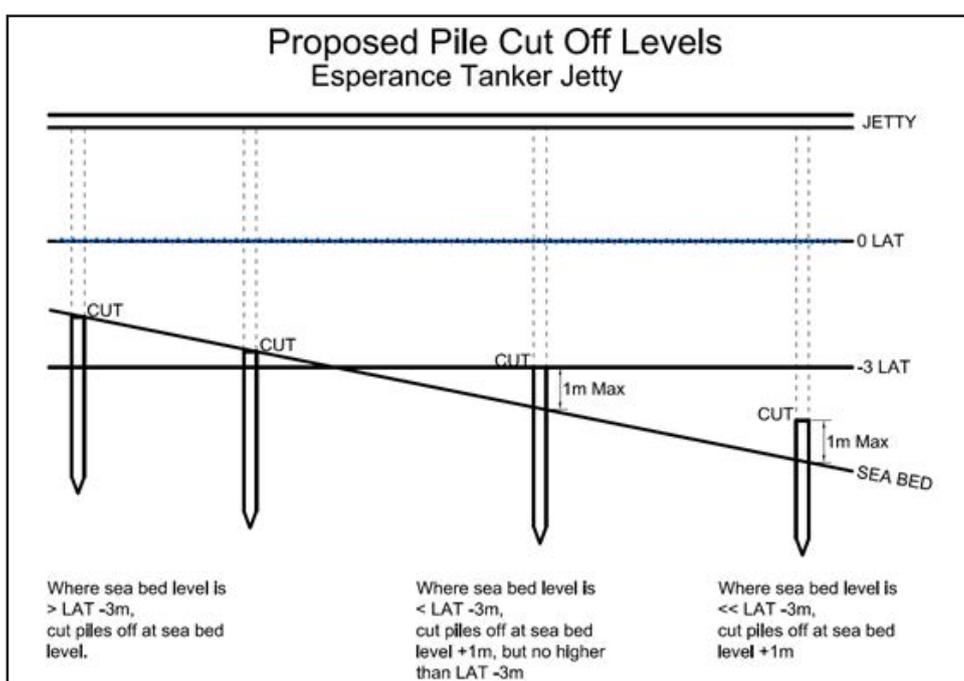


Figure 1 Proposed Pile Cutoff Levels

Heritage Agreement

The Shire is committed to entering into a Heritage Agreement with the Heritage Council for the ongoing interpretation of the Tanker Jetty and any subsequent maintenance of these interpretations. The interpretation of the Tanker Jetty has been identified in the original and updated Interpretation Plans and encompassed in the Waterfront Development and will be embraced in a replacement jetty.

Community Consultation

In addition to the above actions, the Shire also undertook additional community consultation via an online survey open between 19 February 2016 – 21 March 2016 to gauge the community's thoughts on:

- **Whether they would like a structure to replace the Tanker Jetty?**
Of the 1770 respondents, 91.19% said, yes, they would like a new structure to replace the old jetty, however note that in the comments provided, 46 respondents said they wanted the existing jetty retained and therefore did not provide an opinion on a replacement structure.
- **Whether a replacement structure should be built at the headland (existing site);**
Of the 1770 respondents, 71% wanted a replacement structure built at the headland, with definite bias towards this option from owner/occupiers in Esperance. The primary comments relating to this was to retain the headland as a social hub and focal point for tourism, based on the foreshore upgrade work already undertaken.
- ***The preferred uses for the jetty – fishing, walking, showing visitors to Esperance, offering a visual aspect of the bay, diving, photography and/or swimming;***
The highest three responses were fishing, walking and showing visitors to Esperance.
- **What features should be included in a replacement jetty structure – fish cleaning bench, seating, low level platform, shade shelters, T-junction at the end of the jetty and/or diving platform;**
The top two response were fish cleaning benches and seating, with low level platform also being a popular choice.
- ***What predominant design feature people would like to see;***
The trend is this response, supported by comments, is that people would prefer a traditional jetty, designed to look similar to the current jetty. There was some support for an iconic, unique design (35%).
- **How the community would like to see the heritage value recognised;**
The responses should preference towards reuse of materials in a new structure as well as leaving the piles in place for a dive trail. A number of respondents stated that they were happy with the heritage recognition that is already in place at the headland and foreshore.
- ***The community's preference for a course of action for the new jetty if external funding is not available (above the \$2 million already committed); and***
No one option was clearly preferred.
- ***Whether rate payers would be prepared to increase their rates by a given percentage to assist in funding a replacement.***
A number of respondents (ratepayers only) were willing to pay a 2% increase to support a new structure being built.



The findings from this survey have been considered in the interpretation plan prepared for the Heritage Council and will be considered in the design of a replacement structure by the Shire. The actions of the Shire to date and planned actions support the findings of the survey, namely:

- The Shire has committed to building a replacement structure – extent and design to be determined;
- The existing headland is the most likely location for a replacement structure given the existing foreshore upgrade works and opportunity to further develop this area as a tourism node;
- Discussions to date regarding potential designs have considered the incorporation of bench seats, low level access platforms and support for the preferred recreational uses of the jetty;
- Concept designs are to be developed to produce options for a like for like replacement as well as an iconic structure; and
- The interpretation plan (and demolition plan) has allowed for retention of the piles as a dive trail and has included a number of options for incorporation of existing materials into a new structure.

3. Summary

The reasons for the decision by the Shire to demolish the jetty and build a replacement structure are well documented in the previous correspondence provided to the Heritage Council. The cost of repairing the existing structure is significant for a marginally extended life span. The reality is, the scale of the repairs required will mean that the whole structure is effectively replaced or upgraded, so the original fabric will be lost over time.

From the feedback provided from the community, the connection to the jetty is very much one of the experience of using the jetty, rather than a connection to the structure itself. Commitment to providing a new jetty retains the user experience and can in fact enhance it, by providing a jetty with increased functionality for fishing, swimming (through low level platforms or similar), walking and sitting (there is currently no furniture on the jetty). A new structure that is complimentary to the old structure in location, functionality and experience will provide the community of Esperance with a long term amenity, tourism attraction and iconic structure in keeping with the recent foreshore upgrades. By incorporating the aspects noted in the interpretation plan, the old jetty and sense of place will be integral in the new structure.

The Busselton jetty, which is seen as a similar structure, has been completely replaced over the years to ensure structural integrity whilst retaining the character of the original jetty. The Sandgate Pier, just north of Brisbane in Queensland, was in a similar situation – a historic jetty which was well loved by the community but was well past its structural design life. The ultimate decision was made to replace the jetty with a like for like structure, using modern materials to ensure that the user experience remained the same, whilst ensuring safety of patrons into the future. While this was met with similar opposition initially, the new structure has been well received.

4. Conclusion

The Shire is committed to preserving the heritage and meaningful recognition of the Tanker Jetty as evidenced by the actions taken to date. The proposed conservation order would be to the detriment of the Tanker Jetty as it would not increase the heritage value and would impose an unrealistic financial burden on the Esperance community. On the basis of the evidence provided above and in the previous submission, the Shire respectfully requests that no further conditions are imposed; allowing the focus to shift to building a new jetty for the community and future generations that incorporates the history of the old, so that once again the experience of using a jetty can be enjoyed in Esperance.

