Message from Shire President

The Esperance Tanker Jetty is a hot topic within the community. Council’s decision to demolish and rebuild, rather than to renovate the existing structure, has generated much conversation and a plethora of ideas from passionate residents.

While it may theoretically be possible to refurbish the Tanker Jetty using some of its original structure, the cost to the community would be massive and this was carefully considered by the council.

Whatever we do the poor old ratepayer will ultimately foot the bill, so the council must consider the implication of the total dollar spend to repair or rebuild, versus hanging a financial millstone around the necks of Esperance ratepayers.

A recent letter to the editor suggested a $6.8 million spend to demolish the unusable parts of the jetty, conduct repairs on salvageable parts and build a T-section on the end. But this would merely extend the jetty’s life another five years or so, after which we would still need to demolish it, and require the money to do so. Back to square one.

Council has been faced with the question: "Why would we pay the same amount to patch up a jetty which will last five years when we can get a new jetty which will last 50 years?"

"What will be the knock on effect of our decision be to ratepayers?"

The answers formed the basis for the decision which was made by local governments around the state.

The Esperance Shire Council of nine people was voted in by the community to make decisions for the community.

Decisions are made by collating well-sourced information, over time and with copious deliberation and a lot of discussion and questioning of shire officers’ reports.

Decisions are never made lightly and this one has been, without doubt, one of the hardest.

A town which needs a waste facility, wants an indoor sports stadium upgrade as well as a revitalised town centre, good roads, town services and infrastructure we have to ask: "Where is the money going to come from?"

Federal and state funding is a fabulous gift when it can be secured, but after we accept the gift it is the ratepayer who will pay for the ongoing costs, and few want high rate rises.

We live in a beautiful town, and the council is committed to ensuring it remains so and we enjoy facilities which we can afford and sustain into the future.

Shire wins road safety award

Shire has been recognised for its contribution to road safety through the Enjoy the Ride campaign, aimed at influencing driver behaviour.

Influencing the behaviour of road users is critical in saving lives and preventing injuries on our roads.

The evidence tells us it is not only risk-taking behaviour which causes serious crashes.

Many are caused by the mistakes road users make, such as errors of judgment or momentary lapses of concentration.

The award was won for the Safe Road Use category at the Local Government Road Safety Awards, a joint initiative of the WA Local Government Association’s RoadWise Program and the Institute of Public Works and Engineering Australia – Western Australia.

The award was presented by Road Safety Minister Liza Harvey to highlight road safety efforts being made by local governments around the state.

The Safe Road Use award relates to local governments which have developed a community road safety action project to address safe road user behaviour.

Esperance was named the Rural Award recipient in 2016 for more than ten road safety initiatives including a revitalised community road safety VISION project.

Contact the Esperance Volunteer Resource Centre for more information. P: 9072 0346 E: volunteer@esperance.wa.gov.au
Remembering our historical jetty

By NEVILLE MULGAT

With the fate of our last major historic jetty facing demolition for public safety reasons, it now seems appropriate to look back at the origin of our wonderful 80-year-old tanker jetty and the absolute recreational pleasure it gave to generations of locals and visitors alike, not to mention its once considerable commercial benefit to the town and district.

Firstly it should be said that, since time began, we all-owneds referred to the iconic jetty as the New Jetty, to distinguish it from the then Old Jetty at James Street, completed 40 years earlier in 1895.

The name Tanker Jetty was assigned to it, because of some kind of benefit it gave to our long-time residents (and visitors) who worked hard in order to ensure that the jetty would be preserved.

The revival of the mining industry meant a district extending north to Leonora and Wiluna would benefit from imports and exports of goods through Esperance. There was also a need to find employment for men thrown out of work through the Great Depression of the early 1930s, therefore construction of a new jetty would be of great benefit.

A former local Waterside Workers Representative had said that the government was more favourably employed on building the jetty than being given two weeks on and one week off, whereas single men working on the project worked one week on and two off.

Long time residents held out great hope that the town would at last be able to occupy a flourishing position in one of the important ports of the state.

Now Esperance, the natural port of the Goldfields, had assumed an importance little expected.

Meanwhile, the old wooden James Street Jetty had become decrepitude and provided insufficient facilities to accommodate wheat vessels.

The conditions for berthing and loading were considered by master mariners to be dangerous. In fact, some ship owners had refused to charter their vessels for loading there.

The government therefore decided it was necessary to replace that old jetty and, in 1928, estimates of its cost were made and found to be £20,000 ($240,000).

That the decision was so quickly made and found to be $240,000 demonstrates the fact that the original estimate had been reduced to £70,000 ($840,000) without sacrificing in any way the utility and stability of the structure.

A saving of £20,000 ($240,000) to the taxpayers of the state and of Esperance had been effected.

A sum of £8000 had been saved by an alteration in the size and £15,000 saved in purchasing piles cheaper than had been originally estimated. In sawn timber and freight costs a saving of £10,000 had also been achieved.

The use of the latest plant and equipment of the day also had a great extent in increasing savings. The brand new jetty had a total length of 873 tonnes.

A single railway line ran from the shore end, with three branches branching out at the head of the jetty.

The curved shape of the jetty was said to give the structare additional strength.

Imports in the early years included groceries for local stores such as Drans and Dinsons, as well as being used to Kelvin Grove stores.

Superheated steam and even West End beer were also off-loaded at the jetty.

The super was loaded onto Bramble's large tippers for transport north and the esperance Dive Club.

And so for obvious safety reasons, the head of the jetty was separated from the main building, leaving a gap of some 200 metres between the two.

The second section was destined to be replaced with mid-2015 as storms and heavy swells eventually began to break the jetty on the north side of the water.

During the following years local fundraising efforts and volunteer busy-bees grew considerably and operate but ultimately for- end}