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Concern for jobs at port

By MOLLY BAXTER

CONCERNS have been raised in state parliament over staffing and a loss of experience at the Esperance port once the amalgamation is completed.

The state government has stated the decision to link the Esperance port with Albany and Bunbury ports will see a reduction in red tape, an improvement in efficiency and will maximise the capacity of the ports and ultimately benefit communities.

Member for Mining and Pastoral Dave Grills said local experience was integral to the operation of the port.

In parliament, Mr Grills sought confirmation from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Transport Jim Chown that the amalgamation would not leave out Esperance workers.

"I ask the parliamentary secretary once again to elaborate on the importance of maintaining professional staff at all local ports to ensure a smooth transition to the new centralised port authority model," Mr Grills said.

"I support the bill and appreciate the thorough briefings and supplementary advice provided by the newly appointed minister's office."

It was advised that there would be no changes to the staffing numbers with the port continuing to grow in future years.

"I have received correspondence from a number of constituents who are concerned that local issues and concerns will no longer be heard under the new centralised port authority model and that is particularly the case in communities that will be contained under the Southern Ports Authority," he said.

Mr Grills also asked if the amalgamation of the ports would ensure community representation into the future.

"I now take the opportunity to seek an assurance from the parliamentary secretary to confirm that the former minister's assurances that the composition of the Southern Ports Authority board will continue to comprise representatives from Esperance, Albany and Bunbury," he said.

Mr Grills said the government had been working with many other local business entities and remains committed to strengthening regional infrastructure.

The amalgamation is set to go ahead from July 1.

Jetty reopens in nick of time



Relaxing: Chris, Jasmine and Hugo Nieuwenhof enjoy the Easter long weekend down at the Tanker Jetty which opened just in time for the holidays. Story and photos page 6. Photo: Molly Baxter

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