

FROM THE COAST

Esperance Tanker Jetty

In a recent interview on ABC Radio I said that the Esperance Tanker Jetty, which has been closed due to significant structural issues and risk to public safety, will need to be demolished. Concern was raised en masse on social media. It is evident from the hundreds of comments that the impending demolition of the jetty has caused heartbreak and outrage throughout our community and beyond. A Special Council Meeting will be held tomorrow in Council Chambers at 4pm to discuss the proposed demolition of the Tanker Jetty.

As your Councillors we have asked the same questions the community has asked. How could this happen? How did it get to this state? What can we do to save our iconic Tanker Jetty? Blaming the past does not help our current predicament. As members of our community, we too are devastated that it is closed and we are now at the pointy end of all our discussions and fact gathering, and have to make a very difficult decision tomorrow.

The jetty is disintegrating. Not many in our community have had the opportunity to sit in Chambers and hear all the information we have gathered over the last few years, although we have tried through community consultation, the Shire website, workshops, newspapers, social media and radio to share that information. The jetty issue is all about asset management and money at the end of the day, because it is our community that will have to take financial responsibility for whatever we do. If we get funding to build a new jetty, the costs won't end there. The ratepayers and the community will still have to pay for the whole of life costs going forward. Is the community willing to pay? If so, how much? This is what Council needs to know.

All the petitions in the world won't fix our jetty. We hear you loud and clear, but patching up the jetty will cost millions of dollars, and for how long will it last? Six months? Two years? And then we'll be faced with another huge dollar spend to patch again. To build a new infrastructure will cost millions of dollars depending on what the community wants and can afford and there are so many different opinions in the community about what people want. Council has applied for state and federal funding which to date has been unsuccessful, and is determined to continue to seek funding to reduce the burden on ratepayers for whatever option we as a community agree to take.

Reigniting this conversation has ripped the band aid off the sore. We have been picking away at it for years and now we have to face it. But I do wonder, if you had all the information and had seen the costs, public and marine safety issues and implications of any of the options put in front of you, what decision would you be making for your community tomorrow?