



## FROM THE COAST

### Tanker Jetty Debate

A number of petitions have been circulating through the Goldfields and beyond to try and delay or stop the demolition of Esperance's 80 year old tanker jetty. While their passion and determination is admirable, the group aiming to have the jetty restored rather than replaced may be shooting themselves, and all other residents and ratepayers of Esperance, in the foot.

If a conservation order is successfully obtained, it will overrule the decision made by the Council to demolish the Tanker Jetty, however this will also restrict what can be added to the jetty. Input received from the community through workshops and surveys undertaken have indicated that they would like a recreational jetty to include additional features. A conservation order provides strict guidelines on remaining true to original form which may preclude shade shelters, seating, fishing and diving platforms being added. If the conservation order is granted it will be interesting to find out what support the state government will provide in the ongoing, expensive maintenance of the jetty.

The financial burden of maintaining a structure well past its use-by date won't just fall on the shoulders of Esperance ratepayers, but also everyone who lives here. There is a limited amount of funds available and the Shire is responsible for a vast number of services in your community – your rubbish collection, road maintenance, community groups funding grants, Library, the Leisure Centre, just to name a few, all of which have a financial cost. Any additional costs incurred have to be covered by either additional income or reduced service levels. These will only be felt by the Esperance residents and ratepayers, not by the broader community, many of whom have signed the petition to restore rather than replace the jetty.

Every day we are hearing more misinformation being spread through the community despite the facts being distributed over and over again. The file containing jetty inspections, maintenance and reports since the jetty came under the responsibility of the Shire of Esperance is huge. Maintenance has been regularly done to stretch out the life of the structure to an impressive 80 years. Consultation with the community has been thorough through the years in the form of workshops, surveys, fact sheets, media coverage, newsletters and social media bearing in mind that Council have to make public safety decisions without consulting with the community. We have all the documentation to prove it and have always made that information publicly available. You councillors were elected by the Esperance community to make the best decisions for us all and that is exactly what has been done. We have a long term financial plan that addresses the provision of services the community requires, manages our current assets, provides for replacement assets such as a new jetty, waste management facility and sports stadium upgrades whilst carefully considering these impacts on rates.

We do not want to financially cripple the Esperance community, instead we would like to build a replacement jetty as soon as possible that will last for 50 years at least, have much lower maintenance costs and allow new memories to be made. If you agree with Council's decision, please show your support. Democracy tends to favour those who shout the loudest.