

ESPERANCE TANKER JETTY — DEMOLITION

548. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Heritage:

I acknowledge the students and staff of Tambellup Primary School, who are up there in the public gallery. It is a great school in the electorate of Roe. I also acknowledge Hon “Tuck” Waldron, former member for Wagin. It is great to see both ex-members for my seat of Roe here twice in two days.

I refer to the minister’s signing of a section 64 notice for the demolition of the 85-year-old heritage-listed Esperance tanker jetty.

- (1) Is the minister comfortable in the knowledge that he will be forever known as the minister who signed the death warrant for one of Western Australia’s last remaining timber jetties?
- (2) Is the minister aware of anyone within the McGowan cabinet who does not support the demolition of the jetty?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

I am very happy to answer the question.

(1)–(2) The Eighty Mile jetty —

Mr P.J. Rundle: No, that’s in Carnarvon.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Sorry, the tanker jetty in Esperance.

Several members interjected.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: If we are talking about the Carnarvon jetty, we would ask —

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, you have done it again. I am on my feet. Minister, through the Chair, please. The Chair is here, minister!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is unnatural for me to do this!

If we are talking about the Carnarvon jetty, I wonder, with great wonderment, where “Walker” is. Where is he? The member’s friend, who sits next to him?

Mr P.J. Rundle: Let’s worry about Esperance.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Where is he? He had some questions, but he is obviously unwell!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please! I want to hear the minister.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: In all seriousness, the tanker jetty in Esperance is an iconic part of the history of Esperance; there is no doubt about that. Indeed, it is one of a number of timber jetties that have been part of the history of Western Australia, and many of them no longer exist, as the member is well aware. During the tenure of the previous government, although the issue of the tanker jetty was of some ongoing concern for that community, I do not recall any commitment being made by the member’s party or indeed by him in government to do anything about it. What happened, of course, was that the jetty continued to decay and fall into the sea, and that is very sad. It is perhaps an indictment on the member and his party for doing nothing about it.

Due to agitation from me as shadow heritage spokesperson at that time, the then Minister for Heritage put a conservation order on that jetty, which was deteriorating particularly under the previous government’s tenure. That conservation order involved certain requirements of the local shire. I know this has been a polarising issue for many people in that community, and I pay tribute to the jetty group, which has passionately advocated for a replacement jetty in its current wooden form. The reality is that there was no commitment made by the previous government in terms of dollars in the lead-up to the last election, and, indeed, the jetty continued to deteriorate. The local government went through a process of focusing on securing federal funding, and that has been secured. It has some time parameters attached to it, so we are mindful of that. Secondly, we ultimately want an outcome that delivers a feature that the local community can be proud of, a tourism outcome and a heritage outcome.

Through all of that process, the Shire of Esperance voted to take ownership of the jetty and, in collaboration and through discussions with the Heritage Council, it came up with a design that, I understand, went out to public comment and was favourably received in respect of the large percentage of people who demonstrated support for it. The section 64 notice that I have imposed is an important part of the process that will allow for reconstruction of the structure. However, it also imposes a series of important conditions that will need to be adhered to by the shire.

Ultimately, member, I want an outcome that is positive for tourism in the area and that delivers a jetty that can be used for recreational purposes and that reflects and interprets the heritage of its predecessor. I think that would be

a great outcome. If the member had acted earlier, perhaps there may have been issues around its reconstruction, but he will be well aware that the current structure has deteriorated to the stage at which sections of it continue to fall into the ocean. This process will now deliver an outcome that I think the people of Esperance will ultimately be proud of and that will, indeed, attract people from around Australia to look at when they visit the region.