

THE JETTY GROUP (Inc)  
5 The Esplanade  
ESPERANCE WA 6450

28 September 2016

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Sir

**PETITION NO 129 – ESPERANCE TANKER JETTY**

Please find enclosed the **Submission to the State Heritage Council of Western Australia by The Jetty Group** seeking a permanent Conservation Order be placed on the iconic Esperance Tanker Jetty preventing the Esperance Shire Council from demolishing this heritage listed structure.

We trust you and the committee will view our application favorably and without hesitation immediately endorse this proposal.

Yours sincerely

David Eltringham  
Chairman

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**The Jetty Group's submission to the Legislative Council Committee seeking the Legislative Council's support for the heritage listing and permanent conservation and restoration of the historic Esperance Tanker Jetty.**

**Historic Values** - The Tanker Jetty was integral to the success of the 3500 Farm Scheme (1929) that opened 3.2 million acres of land between Southern Cross and Salmon Gums in the 1930s. The scheme was under the Land Settlement Scheme and Migration Agreement established to develop Western Australia's economy and to populate the State after World War One. During World War two the Tanker Jetty played a vital role in supplying fuel and chemicals to the Goldfields mines. Gold was vital to Australia's war effort. The Golden Mile was Australia's biggest gold producer.

**Heritage Values** - The Tanker Jetty was listed on the State's Register of Heritage Places in 2008. Its values listed as being aesthetic, historic, scientific and social. Those values and the Degrees of Rarity and Significance, which relate to the fact that it is the only remaining authentic wooden structure out of the 80 built from the 1930s onwards, indicate its importance not only to our town and our region, but also to Western Australia and the nation. The Tanker Jetty also meets all the requirements for permanent heritage listing and conservation under the Burra Charter, the charter that underpins all aspects of heritage and conservation in Australia.

**Economic Values** - Tourism is Esperance's second most important industry after agriculture. The Tanker Jetty is Esperance's most important tourist attraction, more important for visitors than our award winning beaches, our world-class national parks, and our Ramsar protected wetlands. Figures show that more of the 300,000 visitors that came to Esperance in 2014-15 visited the jetty than any of the other attractions. Tourism Western Australia research shows that domestic visitors spend on average \$110 a day at a location. That relates to more than \$30 million annually for each overnight stay. If the Tanker Jetty can attract people to stay another night, then that figure is doubled. The flow-on effect from people coming to Esperance to recreate on the Tanker Jetty directly impacts on accommodation providers (hotels, motels and caravan parks), on suppliers of fishing tackle, bait and diving equipment, on grocery stores, restaurants, fast food outlets, and on fuel providers. These businesses employ local people to service the needs of visitors.

**Engineering Solution** - The Jetty Group commissioned engineering consultants to determine if the Tanker Jetty can be restored. The engineering report received indicates that there is a very practical, cost effective and achievable solution, which is at odds with the Esperance Shire Council report which states that an ideal solution is not achievable. Restoration involves an engineering solution not considered in the Council's report. The cost of restoring the 650 metre long structure has been estimated at less than \$7.1 million. The Esperance Shire Council is seeking funding to build a 250 metre steel and concrete structure costing \$11 million, while the cost of demolition of the Tanker Jetty is estimated to be between \$ 3 and \$4 million. With these costs it makes no sense not to restore the existing structure.

**Funding Restoration** - Esperance is one of nine Supertowns established by the State Government in 2008 under the terms of its Regional Centres Plan. As such it is eligible to receive Royalties for Regions (R4R) funding, and has received considerable funding over the past few years for the upgrade of the town site foreshore. Discussion with the Goldfields Esperance Development Commission (GEDC), which administers the R4R Scheme in our region, indicates that capital funding is available and that the jetty restoration would qualify. Once a decision is made to conserve the

Tanker Jetty for posterity, a business case will be developed and submitted to GEDC. Another source of capital funding could be through the Federal Government's Regional Development Australia (RDA) initiative.

The Council's concerns about recurrent funding, and that ratepayers will have to pay for the on-going maintenance of the restored structure can be addressed through setting up a management model similar to that now in place for the Busselton Jetty. The State Government separated the maintenance and management of that Jetty, with a volunteer organisation running the commercial business relating to jetty activities and the Council the maintenance program. Commercial activities provide the funding for the annual maintenance program. Therefore, the operation of running the business and maintaining the Busselton Jetty has no impact on the ratepayers of Busselton.

**Community Support** - A petition calling for the Esperance Shire Council to re-consider its decision to demolish the Tanker Jetty has attracted more than 4800 signatures. Furthermore, The Jetty Group has attracted more than \$36,000 in donations to pay for legal expenses and engineering and heritage reports. The Group has attracted a membership of more than 100 in two months.

**Jetty Licence** - The Jetty Licence issued to the Shire of Esperance in 1990 by the State Minister for Transport is a legal document prepared by the Crown Law Department (WA). The Tanker Jetty is a State Government asset. Esperance Shire Council was granted this Licence to maintain and use the Tanker Jetty subject to the strict conditions outlined and agreed to by the Council. The Licence was granted in perpetuity, the terms and conditions relevant in 1990 are still relevant today. These Licence conditions relate only to "repair, restore and maintain the jetty in a state of good and substantial order and condition at all times". Clearly the Esperance Shire Council has failed to meet the conditions of the Licence. Further, the Licence clearly stipulates that the Council has no authority to undertake any other actions but to restore, repair and maintain the jetty unless it has the written approval of the Minister. Not only has the Council not fulfilled its obligation under the terms of the Jetty Licence it deliberately neglected carrying out maintenance from 2011 and allowed the natural elements to take their toll on the structure.

**Working with the Shire** - The Jetty Group has tried to have an open and frank relationship with the Esperance Shire Council to discuss other alternatives to demolishing the Tanker Jetty. Our initial efforts to open lines of communication were met with either anger or defiance and their response that the Jetty is "old, worn out, and is past its use-by-date" and "we have made our decision". The Jetty Group has provided the Council with weekly updates about its activities in relation to its discussions with Government, its appointment of an engineering consultant to look at restoration possibilities and the scope of works associated with that, and has provided briefings to an indifferent and unreceptive audience. The offer for the engineering consultant commissioned by The Jetty Group to brief the Councillors on his finding to alternatives to demolition was rejected.

**Community Consultation** - The Esperance Shire Council claims to have consulted with the community over the Tanker Jetty issue. This is incorrect and we dispute the effectiveness of this process. The Council conducted a Public Relation program that only considered the demolition of the existing structure, the construction of a new one, its location and how much ratepayers were prepared to pay for the new structure and on-going maintenance. Restoration of the Tanker Jetty was not on their agenda and when raised was dismissed. The council has never considered the Tanker Jetty's heritage values.