

**MINUTES OF MEETING  
SOUTHERN PORTS - ESPERANCE  
PORT COMMUNITY CONSULTATION COMMITTEE**

**Date:** Wednesday, 14 May 2025  
**Venue:** Southern Ports – Esperance Administration Boardroom  
 Cnr Bower Avenue and the Esplanade, Esperance WA 6450  
**Time:** 1700 hours

<b>Attendees:</b>	Stephen Francis Stephen Schmedje Rob Horan Rod Taylor Wayne Walter Murray McGregor Ron Chambers Keith Wilks Scott Bates Alana Monaghan Michelle Spicer Emma Sticken	Committee Member & PCCC Chair Committee Member & PCCC Deputy Chair Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Shire President Chief Executive Officer, SPA Regional Manager Esperance Group Corporate Affairs Manager, SPA Office Coordinator Esperance Business Administration Trainee, SPA Esperance
<b>Apologies:</b>	Malcolm Heasman David Swan Alex Leonard	Committee Member Committee Member Environmental Manager Esperance

Meeting opened at 17:04 by Chair Stephen Francis.

Apologies were noted.

New member Murray McGregor was introduced to the group.

The group acknowledged with respect the recent passing of Frank Roe and recognised his service and contributions.

**1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- None

**2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of meeting held on 29 January 2025 were noted as approved via circular resolution.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- None

**4. SOUTHERN PORTS UPDATE (including strategy and brand overview)**

CEO Keith Wilks and Corporate Affairs Manager Alana Monaghan provided the following updates:

### **Strategic Direction**

- Southern Ports recently launched a new strategic direction after the previous 6-year strategy concluded.
- In 2014, Southern Ports was formed through the amalgamation of three port authorities: Albany, Bunbury, and Esperance and remains governed by the Port Authorities Act and the Government Trading Enterprise Act.
- Southern Ports vision remains the same: *“Strong Regional Ports, Strong Regions”*.
- Four strategic pillars were introduced: Proactive Trade Facilitation, High Performing Organisation, Enduring Value, and Connection & Future Focus.
- **Proactive trade facilitation** emphasises active pursuit of trade opportunities and customer collaboration.
- **High performance organisation** focuses on culture, safety, equity, diversity, inclusivity, and employee engagement, creating value for our stakeholders.
- **Enduring value** promotes a positive impact on our regions through economic capability, asset stewardship, and protection of heritage and the environment.
- **Connection & future focus** enabling our ports with new technologies, innovative solutions and supporting clean energy transition.

*Ron Chambers entered the meeting*

### **Brand Refresh:** ([watch video here](#))

- The recent strategy release highlighted a timely opportunity to consider a brand refresh initiative, aligning with broader strategic goals.
- Previous branding did not reflect the broader role of the company.
- Research for the brand involved workshops with 40% of the workforce and interviews with stakeholders, striving to foster a culture that is aligned with the strategic direction.
- The brand identity needed to reflect who the organisation is, not just what it does. We are more than trade facilitators; we are a solutions company that moves the world forward.
- Four brand pillars were identified that underpinned the brand:
  - *Bold thinking to move forward together:* Focus on innovation, future-orientated mindset, and continuous improvement.
  - *Stronger when connected:* Importance of relationships with communities, customers, and stakeholders.
  - *Guardians of our adventurous playground:* Staff and stakeholders repeatedly expressed a strong connection to the ocean, reinforcing its importance in both work and personal life. Feedback also highlighted a collective sense of responsibility to safeguard the region’s natural assets, including marine ecosystems, coastal areas, and biodiversity.
  - *Awe-inspiring scale and precision:* An industry characterised by large-scale operations and high precision.
- The new brand statement: ***“Working with the power of the ocean to move our world forward.”***
- An Employee Value Proposition (EVP) was developed to define what it means to work at Southern Ports and reflect the companies identity, values, and culture, helping staff feel proud and connected to their work.
- New corporate values were introduced:
  1. Put people first
  2. Believe in better
  3. Embrace curiosity
  4. Find your voice
  5. Be greater together

- The visual identity was updated with a cleaner logo, refreshed color palette, and modern fonts. Patterns and textures used in the brand visuals are inspired by the company's core activities and industry presence.
- The logo retains the three ship icons representing the three ports and includes a guiding star.
- The brand rollout includes updated ads, signage, uniforms, and a redesigned website.
- Internal engagement activities included a week-long launch program and health & wellbeing initiatives.
- The brand and strategy are designed to unify the workforce and strengthen community and stakeholder relationships.

#### ***Further updates***

- Industry Recognition and Awards:
  - Asset Management Council Excellence Awards – National Winner
    - Information Management Award
  - Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia – State winner
    - Excellence in Environment and Sustainability (Esperance stormwater treatment system)
    - Excellence in Water Projects
    - Excellence in Asset Management
- Minister Stephen Dawson (MLC) appointed as the new Minister for Ports. Minister Dawson is also the Minister for Regional Development, Digital Innovation and Cybersecurity as well as the Kimberley. The Premier has restructured ministries to include regional-specific ministers.

## **5. TRADE FACILITATION & SUPPLY CHAIN UPDATE**

Management provided an update on current and new trade for the Port of Esperance:

#### ***Current Trade:***

- April recorded the second-best month of the financial year, driven primarily by grain exports. Over 400,000 tonnes of grain exported – typically a strong month averages 340,000-350,000 tonnes.
- Significant increase in fertiliser imports following March/April rains. On track for a record year.
- Despite challenges with mine closures, spodumene remains relatively strong.
- Woodchip exports have resumed after a 12-month hiatus. Positive development for clearing existing stockpiles.

#### ***Potential Future Trade:***

- Liquid fertiliser facility under early-stage consideration.
- Kaolin Clay enquires continue: potential exports could begin as early as next year. One deposit located just 30km north of Esperance, offering a logistical advantage.
- Available capacity in sheds and dumper supports future growth.
- Consolidated Gold Valley operations showing increased tonnage. Projected to export up to 2.8 million tonnes.

#### ***Committee Discussion:***

- Query around Norseman Iron Ore deposit: still in early-stage exploration with surveying and drilling underway. Development is progressing slowly. With the departure of MRL, expectation is to see smaller operators emerge.
- Voluntary Redundancy process was carefully managed. The organisation is proud of how the Esperance team managed the change. New rosters and rhythms are now in place,

supporting operational stability. Support roles within SPA are now more location-flexible, allowing some staff to relocate during the process.

- Southern Ports successfully mitigated the gap between MRL's departure and Gold Valley's ramp-up with some staff temporarily deployed to Albany and Bunbury to support maintenance, stocktake and shutdown activities. Staff responded positively to the opportunity.

## **6. PROJECTS UPDATE**

Management provided an update on port development and projects in Esperance:

### **Current Projects:**

- Hughes Road Stage 2 project will see the installation of new roundabout to better manage CBH traffic and queuing and allow direct port access for internal traffic. Completion expected by August.
- Electrical Workshop now under construction. Extensive planning confirmed the current location as optimal to free up space closer to Berths for trade facilitation.
- Berth 3 container crane rail remedial works underway with the focus on improving the working conditions of the crane.
- Breakwater maintenance campaign nearing completion.
- Sulphur circuit maintenance including paint and blast while circuit is accessible.

## **7. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Management provided the following update:

### *New Business:*

- SPA has recently received approval from DWER for the excision of the regional parkland area adjacent to the Port. The area is now considered remediated for continued use as a public park. The change removed the publicly accessible parkland from the Port's operational footprint. This reclassification will eliminate the need to investigate historical contamination issues.
- Feldspar confirmed trial shipment compliance confirmed by DWER.
- SPA implemented a new method for fertiliser in-loading using the container crane and sulphur circuit. DWER reviewed and approved the method, noting it is more efficient and environmentally friendly than the previous method.
- SPA provided financial support to the Esperance Wildlife Hospital, which held its official opening on 2 May.
- SPA is working through pigeon management measures across its land and assets including Taylor Street Jetty.

### *Committee Discussion:*

- Tug Pen is still progressing. A meeting was held recently to review the current design, and some minor tweaks and redesigns are being made.
- A research vessel recently visited Esperance waters as part of a hydrographic survey mission. The vessel was charting uncharted waters around the offshore islands. The vessel's presence generated some public curiosity.

## **8. CORPORATE AFFAIRS UPDATE**

### **Industry Engagement:**

- Recognition and Awards as mentioned in agenda item 4.

- TRANSafe WA in Esperance and Albany – Group HSE Manager presented on *Building safety into growth*.
- AMPEAK Conference and Mainstream – Chief Operating Officer presented on our asset management system and certification.
- Major Projects Conference – Chief Executive Officer presented on key projects underway across our ports and our growth plans.

Community engagement:

#### **Community Investment Program Recipients:**

- Seventeen community groups received funding totalling over \$50,000, marking the final round for this financial year.
- Groups included a diverse mix of local organisations and broader towns including Condongup, Munglinup, Hopetoun, Ravensthorpe etc.
- Dates for the next round are being finalised and will be posted on the website.

#### **Community Boat Tours**

- Community Boat Tours scheduled across all Ports were postponed due to poor weather conditions.
- All ticket holders have been offered priority access for rescheduled tours, likely to occur in early October.

#### **Staff Engagement**

- A week-long launch was held across all sites to introduce staff to the new strategy, values, and brand pillars.
- Health and Wellbeing week launch.

#### **Media**

- New Gold Valley deal
- Accreditation for Asset Management
- Silver Nova Cruise ship visit in February
- First Sulphur export
- Faba bean trade

#### **Upcoming**

- Draft Reconciliation Action Plan is nearly ready for submission to Reconciliation Australia.
- Commissioned Indigenous artworks have been completed for two regions, with Esperance underway.
- A major website revamp is underway for Southern Ports website which will improve accessibility and functionality.

### **9. MEMBER DISCUSSION/FEEDBACK & COMMUNITY QUESTIONS**

- Brand release was rewarding for SPA particularly with the engagement received from staff and stakeholders.
- The previous arrangement with Mineral Resources for iron ore exports ended on 31 December. There are no legacy or access rights, or ongoing agreements tied to MRL regarding port assets or access. SPA acknowledged the impact of losing such a dominant customer, but look to the future by actively engaging with junior miners and ensuring access to port infrastructure.
- Committee discussion around industry rumours that BHP may be looking at purchasing Ravensthorpe site.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- SPA to explore avenues to highlight public awareness about how community members can access members of the Port Community Consultation Committee for concerns or enquiries.

***Meeting Closed:*** 1836hours

***Date of Next Meeting:*** TBC - 30 July 2025