

General Information			
Meeting:	Port Community Consultation Committee Meeting		
Meeting No:	3/2026		
Location:	Southern Ports – Esperance Administration Boardroom Cnr Bower Avenue and the Esplanade, Esperance WA		
Date:	5/08/2026	Time Open:	1705
		Time Close:	1753
Attendees			
Name	Title	Name	Title
Stephen Schmedje	PCCC Deputy Chair	Greg Solly	Interim General Manager, SPA, Esperance
Malcolm Heasman	Committee Member	Alex Leonard	Environmental Manager, SPA, Esperance
Rob Horan	Committee Member	Michelle Spicer	Committee Secretary, SPA, Esperance
Jennifer Obourne	Committee Member	Emma Sticken	Business Administration Trainee, SPA, Esperance
Rod Taylor	Committee Member		
Gerry Harp	PCCC Shire Representative		
Online Attendees:			
Scott Bates	Interim COO, SPA		
Apologies:			
Wayne Walter	Committee Member	Murray McGregor	Committee Member
Stephen Francis	PCCC Chair	David Swan	Committee Member
Minutes of Discussions			
1. Opening, Present and Apologies			
Meeting opened at 1705 by Deputy Chair Stephen Schmedje. Above apologies were noted.			
2. Declaration of Interest from Committee Members			
None			
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting			
The minutes from the previous committee meeting held 06 May 2026 were noted as approved via circular resolution, the circular resolution was ratified by the committee.			
4. Matters Arising from Previous Minutes			
None			
5. Trade Facilitation / Supply Chain Update			
<i>Interim General Manager - Goldfields/Esperance Greg Solly, provided the following update:</i> Yilgarn Iron: consistent operations with some challenges relating to Fe grade. Annual export volumes remain consistent at ~4.2mtpa.			

- **Esperance Quality Grains:** Second shipment using a new mobile shiploader/telestack conveyor with significantly improved load rates. Working with customer to further refine operation for third shipment planned for January 2027.
- **Gold Valley:** Short term reduction in train unloads to port at end of March, from five to three per week. Currently operating with five short trains per week.
Scott Bates joined the meeting online.
- **Spodumene Exports:** Working with numerous potential customers who are looking to export spodumene next year on the back of strong lithium prices. SPA working around shed 4 capacity to accommodate enquiries.
Committee discussion around Ravensthorpe mine and the potential of this reopening in the future dependent on a buyer.
- **Fuel imports:** vessels continue to be scheduled monthly and arriving as planned.
- **Shed 5 opportunities:**
 - Increased storage capacity is improving flexibility and supporting supply chain uncertainties.
 - Additional bulk storage opportunities, including Kaolin, are being explored.
 - Preliminary discussions on potential cement imports.
 - A second bulk lime import vessel is scheduled for September.

Committee Discussion

Committee discussed recent movements in iron ore prices and the potential impact on mining companies, including matters relating to foreign investment in the sector.

6. Projects Update

Interim General Manager - Goldfields/Esperance Greg Solly, provided the following update:

- **Berth 3 shiploader:** Major maintenance works package has been released to market and closed on 4 August. Works are scheduled to commence in November 2026. A two-year maintenance program will be delivered alongside ongoing berth operations.
- **Berth 1 & 2 pile wrapping:** Pile wrapping works under Berths 1 and 2 are 85% complete and progressing to schedule. Works are being completed around shipping operations with no disruption to port activities. Completion remains on track for the end of August 2026.
- **Berth 1 soffit remediation:** Stage 1 works are complete, contractor has demobilised. Stage 2 is scheduled to commence in October 2026. Restrictions around Bent 33 remain in place pending contractor remobilisation.
- **Hughes Road widening:** Road widening works near the west gate will improve truck access and manoeuvrability. Contract has been awarded, with works commencing mid-August 2026.
- **Ocean Drainage outfall:** Drainage upgrade project has progressed to preferred tenderer selection. Contract award is planned for September/October 2026, with works scheduled to commence in January 2027.
- **Tug Pen Jetty's Replacement & Upgrade:** Contract endorsed. Scope of works involves demolition and removal of the existing tug pen jetty and piles, and the construction of two new jetty's with associated infrastructure. Project completion is scheduled for March 2027.

7. Southern Ports Update

Scott Bates, Southern Ports Interim Chief Operating Officer, provided the following update:

- FY26 Esperance trade records achieved include grain and fuel.
- Albany and Bunbury ports also recorded strong grain volumes. Bunbury port achieved a record through Berth 8, driven by spodumene exports.
- ISO environment and safety accreditation audits were completed successfully, providing positive recognition of significant work undertaken across the business.
- Following asset management accreditation renewal last year, preparations are underway for recertification in November, with training programs currently being delivered across the organisation to support compliance and continuous improvement.
- Biennial Staff survey recently completed, with positive feedback received on employee opportunities and initiatives such as staff awards and the health and wellbeing program.

- Stakeholder engagement continues across a range of groups including major customers, port users, smaller customers and community. Results remained consistent with the previous year, maintaining overall satisfaction. Feedback indicated there is an opportunity to further increase awareness of Southern Port's operations. Results also reflected positive levels of awareness and understanding of Port activities within the Esperance community.
- Progress continues on a range of major capital and operational projects, supporting the long-term sustainability, reliability and performance of the Port's assets.
- Business case development for the Operations Centre is underway.
- The Community Investment Program continues to support a range of regional initiatives. PCCC members were encouraged to help promote the program within their networks to increase awareness of available funding opportunities.
- The Port continues to invest in apprenticeship and traineeship programs, helping to build skills, develop future talent and support long-term workforce sustainability in the region. Additional initiatives have been introduced to support apprentices' career development and encourage long-term employment opportunities with the Port.
- Some movements within Southern Ports Board of Directors with Gaye McMath and Ian Shepherd departing and Brad Geatches appointed as Southern Ports Board Chair, effective from 1 July.
- The passing of Fred Lockowicz from the Mission to Seafarers Centre was acknowledged, recognising his significant contribution to seafarer welfare over many years.

8. Environmental Management Update

Esperance Environmental Manager, Alex Leonard provided the following update:

- **H5 Bird Flu Update**
 - Cases continue to escalate in South Australia, with local transmission reported.
 - Community members are encouraged to report any sightings of unusual, sick or dead birds or wildlife in the Esperance region to DPIRD.
 - Agreed pigeon management activities will continue, noting that pigeons are considered a low-risk species for H5 bird flu, to support a safe and healthy environment for staff and port users.
 - Seabirds that are injured by colliding with Port infrastructure will continue to be assessed in consultation with DPIRD on a case-by-case basis, with referral to the Esperance Bird and Wildlife Rescue Centre where appropriate, such as in the case of a recently injured Shearwater that was released back into the wild after making a full recovery.
- **Licence Approvals/Amendments**
Efficient Licencing for Port Iron Ore Operations:
 - Application to withdraw the 1993 and 2001 Ministerial Statements relating to iron ore operations has been approved.
 - Environment approval requirements for iron ore operations have now been consolidated under the ports operating licence.
 - This change will provide a more efficient and flexible approval process for port operations while maintaining environmental management obligations.
- *Dempster Head stormwater discharge:*
 - Plans for stormwater discharge infrastructure at Dempster Head will help manage runoff and reduce flooding risk on Port land.
 - Environmental risks have been mitigated through the design, which promotes infiltration, incorporates sediment traps, and includes stormwater monitoring.
 - DWER agreed the environmental risks are appropriately managed and amended the licensed premises boundary, so the catchment area is outside the licensed premises.
 - DWER advised that no further assessment is required.
- **Dredging Approvals**
 - Dredging is planned to restore harbour depths and establish a new sand trap within the inner harbour.
 - Depths in the inner harbour have reduced over time, impacting vessel operations.
 - Dredged material is proposed to be placed at the approved offshore spoil ground near Limpet Rock subject to regulatory approvals.

- Environmental and sediment quality assessments are underway to support approvals for the proposed dredging and sediment disposal activities.
- Key environmental considerations include protection of seagrass, marine fauna, marine biosecurity, and water quality.
- Mitigation measures will be implemented to minimise environmental impacts during dredging activities.

Indicative Timeline:

- Project planning and approvals works expected to continue through 2026-2027
- Environmental assessments, permit applications, and regulator review processes are ongoing.
- Timing for dredging works remains subject to approvals and procurement processes.

Committee Discussion

- Discussion regarding the size and location of the spoil ground.
- Dredging operations are anticipated to occur during daylight hours.
- Potential for working with the shire on alternative disposal options if necessary.
- It was noted that the committee raised no objections to the planned routine dredging of the proposed upgrades to the stormwater drainage system.

9. Member Discussion, Feedback and community questions

- Members received an update on towage services following Boluda Towage's acquisition of Mackenzies Marine. It was noted that operations are progressing well, the relationship between SPA and Boluda is good. Boluda Towage has also facilitated a number of student tours alongside the port to showcase maritime career opportunities.
- The committee discussed tug development works, including the capacity of the new tug pen and future operational requirements. It has been confirmed the new tug pen can hold 4 tugboats.
- Shire representative Gerry Harp advised that signage for the miniature railway is being investigated. It was noted that there is currently no budget allocation for fencing around the pond, which also forms part of the area's drainage system.
- The Committee thanked the Port for the recent site tour, noting it was a valuable exercise.
- Appreciation was also expressed for support provided through the Converge event which attracted strong sponsorship support this year, with larger corporate organisations playing an important role.

10. Any other Business

- Day of the Seafarer was held on Thursday 25 June with a lunch celebration at each site. Stories were shared by Seafarers and out Marine team which offered a reminder about sacrifice, connection and recognition.

Next Meeting

Date: 4/11/2026

Time: 1700