


SOUTHERN PORTS ALBANY BUNBURY ESPERANCE

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

Date: Wednesday, 30 July 2025
Venue: Southern Ports – Esperance Administration Boardroom
 Cnr Bower Avenue and the Esplanade, Esperance WA 6450
Time: 1700 hours

Attendees:	Stephen Francis Stephen Schmedje Malcolm Heasman Rob Horan Rod Taylor Wayne Walter Greg Solly Michelle Spicer Emma Sticken	Committee Member & PCCC Chair Committee Member & PCCC Deputy Chair Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Committee Member Acting Regional Manager Esperance Committee Secretary Esperance Business Administration Trainee, SPA Esperance
Online:	Scott Bates Alana Monaghan	Acting Chief Operating Officer, SPA Group Corporate Affairs Manager, SPA
Apologies:	Keith Wilks David Swan Murray McGregor Ron Chambers	Chief Executive Officer, SPA Committee Member Committee Member Shire President

Meeting opened at 17:03 by Chair Stephen Francis.
 Apologies were noted.

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- None

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- The minutes of the previous Committee meeting held on 14 May 2025 were noted as approved via circular resolution. The circular resolution is ratified by the Committee.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

- None

4. SOUTHERN PORTS UPDATE

Acting COO Scott Bates provided the following update:

- Rob Alexander, former Chief Operating Officer, has departed Southern Ports to pursue new opportunities. As part of the interim leadership restructure, Scott Bates has stepped into Chief Operating Officer role, and Greg Solly into Regional Manager role.

Highlights FY25:

- Achieved thirteen trade records across Southern Ports despite loss of trade in Esperance.
- Fertiliser imports reached 300,000+ tonnes Esperance (significant growth from past years). Achievements include successful facilitation of fertiliser through Berth 2, using the sulphur in-loading circuit — a strategy implemented after FQM entered care and maintenance. The team's proactive adaptation allowed repurposing of existing assets, resulting in a more efficient import process that's expected to support ongoing trade growth.
- Bunbury port saw record trade on caustic soda, breakbulk cargo and spodumene.

Potential upcoming Trade:

- Yilgarn Iron recently purchased iron ore operations, land interests and assets across the Yilgarn Hub, following Mineral Resources announcement to cease operations in 2024. Southern Ports are working with Yilgarn Iron to explore potential export trade opportunities through the port.
- Gold Valley continue to grow export volumes through the port.
- Southern Ports continue to work through its strategy to establish a multi-user circuit, aimed at reducing reliance on individual major customers and fostering a more diversified trade base.
 - The committee welcomed the strategic approach to diversify its customer portfolio.
 - The team have been working on initiatives geared toward unlocking shared circuit access, reducing the dependency on a single iron ore exporter, which will support sustainable growth in the region.

Infrastructure and Capital Investments Highlights:

- Southern Ports has delivered a record capital spend this year, focused on asset renewal and long-term infrastructure planning.
- Hughes road upgrade is on track for completion by the end of August. Once complete, the project will streamline access to the port, supporting CBH's grain deliveries, with exports expected to see further growth this year.
- The Operations Technology Upgrade Project (OTUP) will deliver major upgrades across the three Southern Ports sites, with a primary focus on Esperance. The project aims to mitigate operational risks by improving performance, furthering digital integration of our assets into a broader smart system, and further standardising our systems across our ports.
- Plans are in place with works to soon commence to transform Port of Albany's historic Pilot Station into a vibrant precinct for the community.

5. TRADE FACILITATION & SUPPLY CHAIN UPDATE

Acting Regional Manager Esperance, Greg Solly provided an update on current and new trade for the Port of Esperance:

- Shed 5 was recently repurposed for fertiliser storage, storing 62,500 tonnes of additional product which otherwise wouldn't have come through Esperance due to storage constraints. The use of container crane, adapted from sulphur operations, enabled faster import rates. The team is engaging with CSBP for a future agreement and anticipates interest from other customers.
- Southern Ports preliminary discussions with rail stakeholders as part of potential future trade opportunities with Yilgarn Iron and is working to ensure capacity readiness.

- The 3-month overlap between MRL and Gold Valley provided a critical window for the operations team to investigate conflict mitigation strategies with vessel and train scheduling across shared assets; implement and refine simultaneous inloading/outloading methods for multiple customer demands; and identify practical improvements for circuit fluidity. The team remains fully committed to enabling successful trade outcomes.
- A life extension study for Berth 3 shiploader and RCD is currently underway, aimed at ensuring long-term operations integrity and performance.

Committee Discussion:

- Iron Ore volumes through the port:
 - Gold Valley is currently operating close to its capacity, mainly constrained by the Leonora rail line. There is opportunity for expansion with rail upgrades.
 - Existing infrastructure, coupled with past performance indicates the port could support considerably higher volumes – even with two active exporters.
- Southern Ports are engaging with Mt Bevan proponents to explore a joint study focused on enabling future trade of magnetite. While the potential for magnetite trade is gathering momentum, its progression remains highly dependent on logistics, infrastructure alignment and capacity, design compatibility with existing assets and long-term market conditions.
 - The committee raised a question about the handling differences between magnetite and hematite: Magnetite, often processed as a slurry, requires larger chutes to prevent blockages, which ultimately reduces capacity. Southern Ports would need to assess the specific characteristics of Mt Bevan's magnetite to determine compatibility and required upgrades to the Esperance circuit.

6. CORPORATE AFFAIRS UPDATE

Corporate Affairs Management provided the following update:

Industry Engagement:

- Day of the Seafarer: On 25 June, Southern Ports celebrated the Day of the Seafarer, recognising the vital role seafarers play in international trade and port operations. Lunchtime barbecues were hosted with staff across all three ports for visiting crews. Each seafarer received a care pack, reflecting Southern Ports' ongoing commitment to seafarer welfare and appreciation.
- On 21 June, Southern Ports partnered with Mission to Seafarers (MTS) to host a community engagement event, *Cuppa and a Convo*, at the Seafarers Centre in Esperance. The initiative aimed to attract local volunteers to support struggling MTS services, particularly bus driving and general assistance for visiting seafarers. The event drew 10 community members, with 7 expressing interest in volunteering - an encouraging outcome for the ongoing support of seafarer welfare.

Community Engagement:

- Curiosity Quest: To activate our new brand and strategy, we held a Curiosity Quest for the community where they were invited to answer a series of questions about Southern Ports and share what makes them curious about our work. Prizes encouraged broad participation.
- Port Tours: Southern Ports continues to host educational port tours engaging with community and school groups and showcasing our operations in Esperance and across southern WA. In August and September, the popular TAFE career taster program welcome over 40 students.

- Community Investment Program: Round 3 funding saw eleven local groups supported with approx. \$40,000 invested in this round, and approximately a total of \$150,000 in FY25.

Steve Lewis Regional Scholarship:

- In its second year, engineering student Thomas Hage from Margaret River has been selected as this year's Steve Lewis Regional Scholarship recipient. As part of the scholarship, Thomas will receive university tuition as well as working at our ports in the holiday breaks assisting with engineering projects.

Staff Engagement:

- In recognition of Reconciliation Week, Southern Ports hosted its annual cultural walks across all sites. These walks were led by local Elders and Traditional Custodians, offering staff a meaningful opportunity to deepen their understanding of Country and culture. Tjaltjraak Elder Doc Reynolds shared his knowledge with the Esperance team.
- Southern Ports is proud to continue its support for communities through the renewal of our Foodbank partnership across all our regions. In addition to financial contributions, Southern Ports is expanding its involvement through staff volunteering. In Esperance, we are partnering with Esperance Care Services to assist with distribution of Foodbank donations.

Media:

- State budget funding for ongoing improvement and projects across Southern Ports (including new Esperance tug pen and shed upgrades).
- Community Investment Program
- Curiosity Quest
- Gold Valley
- Day of the Seafarer
- Mission to Seafarers campaign
- New owner for Yilgarn hub

Upcoming:

- Converge in Esperance: CEO Keith Wilks will be presenting on Southern Ports with a focus on the Port of Esperance's projects and plans for the future.
- Southern Ports will be in the spotlight at upcoming events for its asset management system, digital and safety transformations including International Public Works Conference (August) and Ports Australia's Biz Ops (September).
- Southern Ports will be increasing awareness of maritime careers at the Esperance Community and Employment Expo (September) and Goldfields Community and Employment Expo (October).
- Community Boat Tours rescheduled 10th & 11th October
- Annual Report in progress.
- Completion of Hughes Road and Electrical Workshop
- Next round of CIP kicks off next week.

7. PROJECTS UPDATE

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

OTUP Project:

- As per agenda item 4. – the multi-stage project will positively impact operations across our three ports by improving performance and furthering digital integration of our assets into broader smart systems. Project is in the early stages and will take place over a number of years.

Hughes Rd:

- Hughes Road Stage 2 is progressing well with asphaltting works due for completion first week of August. Final items of line marking, fencing and lighting install will follow, with a projected practical completion date of mid-August.

Berth 2 Container Crane Rails:

- Works are on schedule with the last of the rails now removed. The final two grout pours will be completed next week with the final asphaltting scheduled for 11th – 15th August. Practical completion is planned to be issued on August 15th 2025. Final line marking will be completed the following week. The team has successfully maintained a balance between facilitating ongoing trade and managing works.

Electrical Workshop:

- All external works are complete with final internal fit outs coming to a close. Working through punch list items with practical completion expected within the next 3 weeks. The location of the new electrical workshop aligns well with the current master plan and potential of future development.

CV40 trestle Legs Replacement:

- Conveyor on Berth 2 used for Fertiliser. Works are scheduled to commence in September/October 2025 with a duration of approximately 6-months.

Berth 1 & 2 Pile Wrapping:

- Currently out for tender with site meeting scheduled for 31st July.

Berth 1 Soffit Remediation Program.

- Works are scheduled to commence in October 2025 and the program of works will continue for 3 financial years.

Container Crane – Winch House Roof:

- Contract has been awarded. Final contract execution is expected in August with works schedule to commence in September 2025.

Port Operations Building:

- Currently in design stage and will be presented to PCCC members for feedback upon completion of the detailed design. Should the project proceed, it aims to consolidate the workforce into a single facility and unlock valuable land within the port precinct for trade.

Committee Discussion:

- Discussion was had regarding the old electrical workshop burning down. The Port team recently conducted an emergency exercise focused on lithium battery fire response and mitigation strategies.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Environmental Management provided the following update:

New Business:

- The environmental team continues to drive long-term improvements in product quality. Current focus includes:
 - Working with our bulk mineral clients to develop mine site Environmental Management Plan's (EMP) aligned with Southern Ports DWER Licence on sampling and moisture testing so the Port has clarity on what condition the product will be before it gets here. Anticipate this requirement will be rolled out to all new bulk clients, particularly those with product quality challenges.
- The team is conducting its first media change-out for the Berth 2 stormwater first flush tank and filtration system which will restore optimal system performance, contributing to improved environmental outcomes. The stormwater treatment system has successfully reduced emissions throughout 2024, even as fertiliser export tonnages increased. This

performance outcome strengthens the case for supporting potential licence increases and demonstrates effective environmental management under growing operational demands.

- Advanced to stage 2 for the Golden Gecko award.
- A series of licence amendments have been progressed to facilitate trade volumes. The fertiliser import method has also shifted to utilise the sulphur circuit, as previously noted in item 5. This approach is proving more efficient and significantly reduces spillage on the berth compared to traditional methods.

Committee Discussion:

- Discussion around the source of iron sulphide.

9. MEMBER DISCUSSION/FEEDBACK & COMMUNITY QUESTIONS

- Deputy Chair Stephen Schmedje shared his positive experience representing the committee while attending the International Day of the Seafarer luncheon at the port, engaging with visiting Chinese seafarers including receiving a thoughtful gift. A speech from a Filipino ship master praised the event as one of the most welcoming he'd experience globally. Inspired by this event, the Rotary club made a donation to the support seafarers.
- Community members have expressed interest in volunteering to drive the seafarer shuttle bus, a vital service that helps visiting crew access town amenities. There is currently only one active volunteer. The initiative is ongoing with continued efforts to engage the Esperance community.
- The Rotary Club will not be hosting New Years Eve fireworks this year, some factors may have included insufficient funding, environmental concerns and high costs of alternatives such as laser shows.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Despite some loss of trade, Southern Ports remains committed to supporting career pathways across its regional operations including; apprenticeships and traineeships, on-the-job training, career taster expos, regional workforce development.
- Two new apprenticeship positions – a Fitter and Boilermaker – will go out for advertising in November.
- Southern Ports will host career port tours for high school and TAFE students in the coming months.
- Southern Ports has achieved ISO certification for its occupational health and safety, and environmental managements systems. The certification reflects a continuing focus on taking a proactive approach to health and safety.

Meeting Closed: 1801hours

Date of Next Meeting: TBC - 29 October 2025