

# Gippsland Ports

## Position Paper - Port Welshpool Long Jetty, January 2016

The Port Welshpool Long Jetty is owned by the Victorian State government.

Gippsland Ports Committee of Management Inc (Gippsland Ports) is the appointed manager of the Port Welshpool Long Jetty.

Gippsland Ports Board closed the jetty in 2003 on the basis that it required significant capital investment to render it safe, the recurrent maintenance costs were prohibitive and unsustainable and that there was no ongoing commercial shipping demand for its continued operation.

### **1. Gippsland Ports' position on the Port Welshpool Long Jetty:**

Gippsland Ports' position is:

- It continues to support the rehabilitation of the Long Jetty for pedestrian access.
- There remains no commercial shipping demand for the jetty. Even if there was, the cost of rehabilitation for commercial shipping functionality would be far greater than the 2015 estimate of \$10.6m for rehabilitation for pedestrian access.
- The long jetty remains a hazard to public safety and waterway safety in its current condition. Elements of the jetty continue to break free and cause a hazard to small vessel safety. The deck is severely degraded and continued trespass on the structure places people at extreme risk. Gippsland Ports continues to incur risk mitigation costs.
- There is no "do nothing" option.  
Given the safety risks, the structure must either be rehabilitated or removed.
- If Gippsland Ports is to be vested with responsibility for ongoing maintenance of a rehabilitated Long Jetty, then the rehabilitation must be completed in a manner that provides an acceptable "design life" (eg desirably 40 years) and acceptable recurrent maintenance costs.
- Gippsland Ports would, with Government approval, willingly relinquish responsibility for management, operation and maintenance to any party prepared to accept and which is demonstrably capable of exercising these functions in their entirety on an enduring basis.
- Gippsland Ports funding has declined by more than 40% since 2007/8. It does not have the capacity to maintain existing assets throughout Gippsland and consequently must make difficult decisions as to which assets it will continue to invest limited maintenance funding into. All new assets constructed in recent years and all major upgrades of existing assets by Gippsland Ports have been funded by grants specifically for those projects. No such funding opportunity has been available for the Long Jetty other than the avenues that have been pursued collectively with SGSC to secure the State Government's potential \$5m contribution. Gippsland Ports has not been eligible to pursue Commonwealth funding through its grants programs. It has and will continue to support SGSC to obtain Commonwealth grant funding.

- Gippsland Ports has worked, and will continue to work objectively, constructively and co-operatively with South Gippsland Shire Council, Regional Development Victoria, the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and community representatives through the Project Control Group, to achieve a practical and sustainable rehabilitation solution.
- Gippsland Ports supports a further application by South Gippsland Shire Council to the Commonwealth National Stronger Regions Fund, subject to:
  - Funding being provided now to remove deck, transoms and at risk elements from the outer end of the structure; (est cost \$170k)
  - Funding being provided now to carry out a current detailed condition assessment to better inform the options available irrespective of the outcome of the next application to NSRF. (est cost \$140k)
  - The quantity of funding sought through the next application to NSRF being increased to reflect cost escalation through inflation subsequent to the last application

It is Gippsland Ports' recommendation that if funding for these activities can be found, they should be undertaken concurrently which would result in a saving on mobilisation and demobilisation of barges and other plant of \$40k (approx), such that the total estimated cost would be \$270k (given the degraded condition of the structure, removal of elements of deck for condition assessment, at least for the area over water will necessitate the use of a barge and examination of piles in deeper water will necessitate the engagement of a suitably qualified dive team, in addition to further examination conducted from the deck of the jetty).

## **2. Port Welshpool Long Jetty – Condensed chronology:**

DATE	EVENT	COMMENT
June 2003	Jetty was closed by Gippsland Ports (GP) following a fire. Repairs were made, but advice was to not reopen it due to wider safety concerns that had become apparent during the repair process. At this time also the increasing costs associated with periodic maintenance were not sustainable	One commercial shipping customer only using the jetty at that time, providing an income of \$20k pa.
2004	GP undertook a structural assessment (Maunsell Rehabilitation Report) of the jetty, and estimate to repair for (a) commercial or (b) recreational purposes. GP recommended, and Government agreed, that it was no longer viable as a commercial facility.	Preliminary estimates at the time - \$15m to replace, \$2.5m to demolish.
Feb 2006	Minister responsible for local ports accepted a recommendation that an EOI process be undertaken to determine if there was any private sector interest in restoration with a long term lease.	Some private sector developers had expressed interest during 2005
2009/10	EOI process undertaken; no viable offer received.	
Jan 2010	Section of the jetty at about the 720m along destroyed by fire.	Total original length 906m. 60m length at end closed many years

		prior to 2003. Fire isolated another 120metres at end
Nov 2010	New Minister for Regional Development requests Regional Development Victoria (RDV) to lead a review process of the project, overseen by a multiparty committee, including consultation on options and an update on estimated costs.	Committee included RDV, Dept Transport (now DEDJTR), Gippsland Ports, SGSC, Port Welshpool Working Group (community group)
2011-12	At the end of the review, agreement was reached by all parties on a preferred rehabilitation design. This included consideration of retention of character of the structure, rehabilitation costs and future maintenance expense and provides for rehabilitation from the shore to the 760m point (ie to the point of the 2010 fire damage).	Initially \$9.8M cost for rehabilitation for pedestrian access.
2012-2015	Shire of South Gippsland commits \$1m, and RDV commits \$5m towards the project. Applications made to the federal government for remaining \$5m funds. Notified the last one unsuccessful 7.12.2015	Initial NSR application made, using 2011 estimates. 2nd bid estimate updated to \$10.6M

### **3. Actions taken to date to inform rehabilitation planning and decisions:**

Actions undertaken to date, at the request of the Project Control Group, include:

- A comprehensive condition assessment of the existing structure to inform the extent of required restoration work; (Hyder Consulting)
- A Heritage Assessment; (Context P/L)
- Development of a Conservation Management Plan; (Context P/L)
- A termite assessment, to inform the extent of known termite infestation; (Dr Don Ewart, Consulting Entomologist)
- Development of a termite management plan; (Dr Don Ewart, Consulting Entomologist)
- A geo technical survey to inform of seabed foundations for the specification for pile replacement; (AS James P/L)
- Pile Condition Survey (Kina Diving P/L)
- Hydrographic Survey (Gippsland Ports)
- Features Survey (Beveridge Williams P/L)
- A range of design options; (Gippsland Ports)
- Cost estimates for two design options (timber deck and modular concrete deck); and
- An independent third party review of cost estimates. (WT Partnership Aust P/L, Quantity Surveyors and Construction Cost Consultants.)

**Engineer's impression of jetty rehabilitation design adopted by PCG:**



#### **4. Port Welshpool Long Jetty - Current condition:**

Gippsland Ports undertook a further inspection in July 2015 on a very low low tide enabling approximately 200 additional piles to be visually examined. The deteriorated condition of the piles is largely as feared, however without removal of silt from around base of piles (evidence of shoaling around some piles), cleaning off growth and pressure washing, a good understanding of condition in some cases remains somewhat subjective.

What is clear is that there are approximately 430 piles (from about pile row 35) on the section proposed to be rehabilitated which will require treatments including wrapping, extension of concrete casing, epoxy pressure injection or replacement.

GP strongly advocates that a further condition assessment is necessary to more accurately inform the cost of rehabilitation given that degradation of all elements of the structure is a dynamic process and that there is clearly evident degradation subsequent to the last condition assessment. In addition, to mitigate the real risks to waterway and public safety, Gippsland Ports strongly advocates immediate removal of the high risk elements on the outer end of the structure that do not form part of the PCG agreed rehabilitation design.

Images of elements of the structure are included below to provide an indication of the current condition.



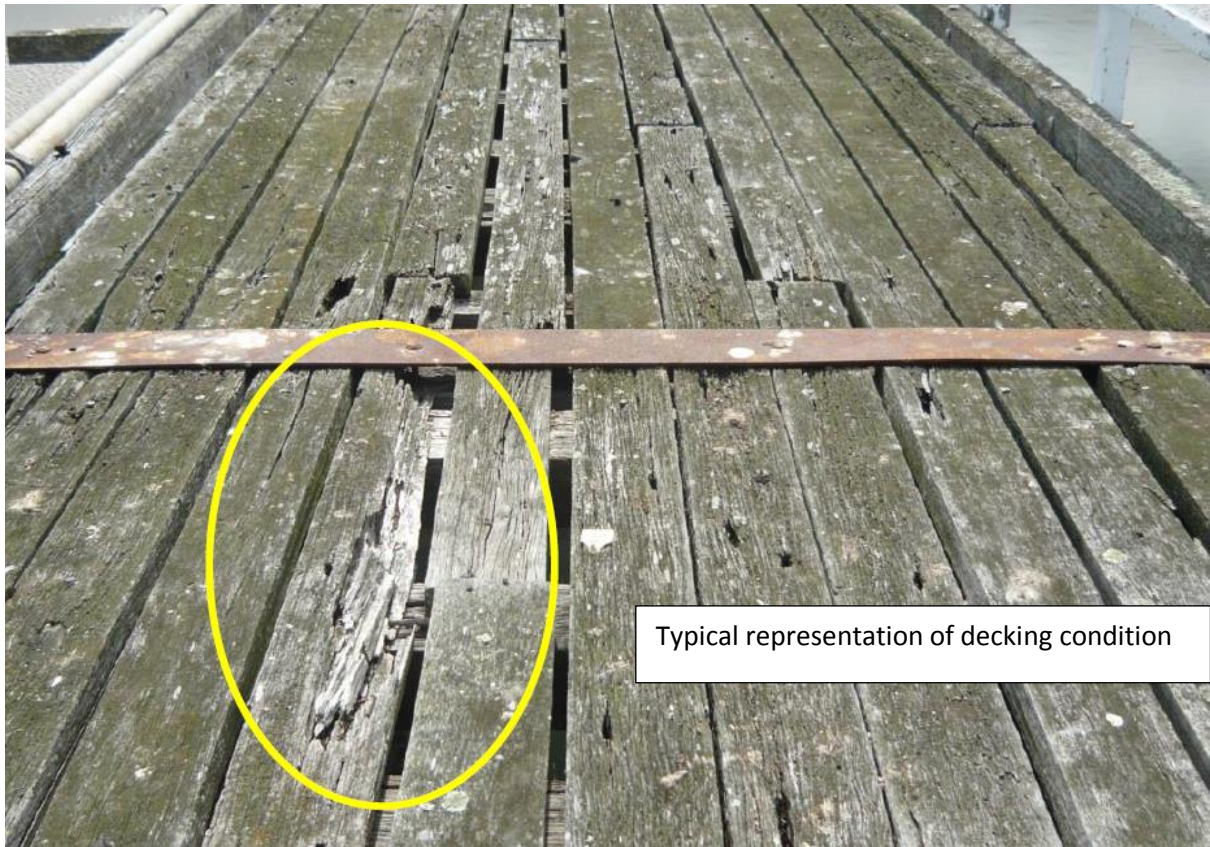




Typical pile condition in inter tidal zone



Rot in beam and transom



Typical representation of decking condition



Rot and possible termite damage in beam around bolt penetration





Splitting of cross head through degradation of black steel bolts.



Termite infestation of a beam.





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