



Exmouth Harbour Development Summary and Issues Paper

June 2008

Steering Committee appointed

Planning and Infrastructure Minister, Alannah MacTiernan recently announced an opportunity for the Exmouth community to participate in a consultation process on the potential expansion and development of the town's increasingly busy boat harbour.

The community consultation will seek feedback and gauge support for the future of the Exmouth Boat Harbour.

Ms MacTiernan appointed local member Vincent Catania MP to chair a steering committee to oversee the process and report on the outcomes to Government. The Department for Planning and Infrastructure will work in conjunction with the committee to coordinate the consultation process. The outcomes of this consultation process will be presented to the Minister for her determination on the proposed expansion, taking into consideration the level of community support and issues raised during the process.

Community forums will be held in Exmouth on 10 and 11 June, 2008 and people will also have opportunities to comment online, and by completing feedback forms.

A report on the consultation from the Department is expected in four months.

Demands on the harbour

For several years vessel moorings at the Exmouth Boat Harbour have been operating at full capacity. While different trends are experienced amongst the respective maritime industries the demand for harbour facilities is high and this is driving the potential expansion.

The operational focus of the harbour is changing and a number of key factors are influencing the future of the harbour. There has been a significant reduction in the commercial fishing fleet operating from this facility including the number of prawn trawlers and fishing vessels. Alternatively, in the last 18 months there has been a substantial growth in the number of large charter and deep sea sport fishing vessels seeking a base to operate from, servicing the growing tourism market at the Ningaloo Reef. The popular GAMEX sports fishing event hosted in Exmouth attracted 54 vessels in 2008, with many of the larger vessels having nowhere to berth. There has also been a tremendous growth in the number of (larger) recreational vessels seeking facilities at Exmouth, even before construction of the housing estates in the Exmouth Marina Village canals has commenced.

The recently opened resort at the harbour has resulted in requests for new pens to accommodate larger charter and deep sea sport fishing vessels ranging from 20 to 30 metres in length – this size vessel cannot currently be accommodated in the harbour. Further resort facilities are planned, increasing pressure to provide facilities to service this industry. Similarly, the Super Yacht Base Western Australia Committee has indicated that the Ningaloo Reef is a new and attractive destination for super yachts to travel to and it is anticipated that demand will grow for berthing these much larger vessels at the harbour.

Exmouth Boat Harbour currently services a small number of offshore vessels from the oil and gas industry. Many of the larger vessels seeking access cannot be accommodated due to the size and depth of the harbour. An increasing number of offshore vessels are seeking to gain entry to the harbour to enable crew changes particularly during the activation of their cyclone contingency plans offshore. Once again the harbour struggles to accommodate this demand.

Exmouth has been identified as being in a good position geographically to provide new infrastructure to cater for some of the needs of the offshore oil and gas industry, with its proximity to the offshore development and the protected waters of the Exmouth Gulf.

The Department is also investigating the potential to accommodate coastal shipping in an expanded harbour.

In response to these demands the Department identified a need for additional harbour infrastructure, and invited expressions of interest from organisations with proven commercial marine experience to express an interest to expand the Exmouth Boat Harbour. The vision for expansion is for a clean and sustainable transport hub to be developed with strict operating conditions imposed to ensure the amenity of the area remains conducive to the lifestyle expected from a commercial boat harbour adjacent to tourism and residential developments, and able to meet environmental requirements.

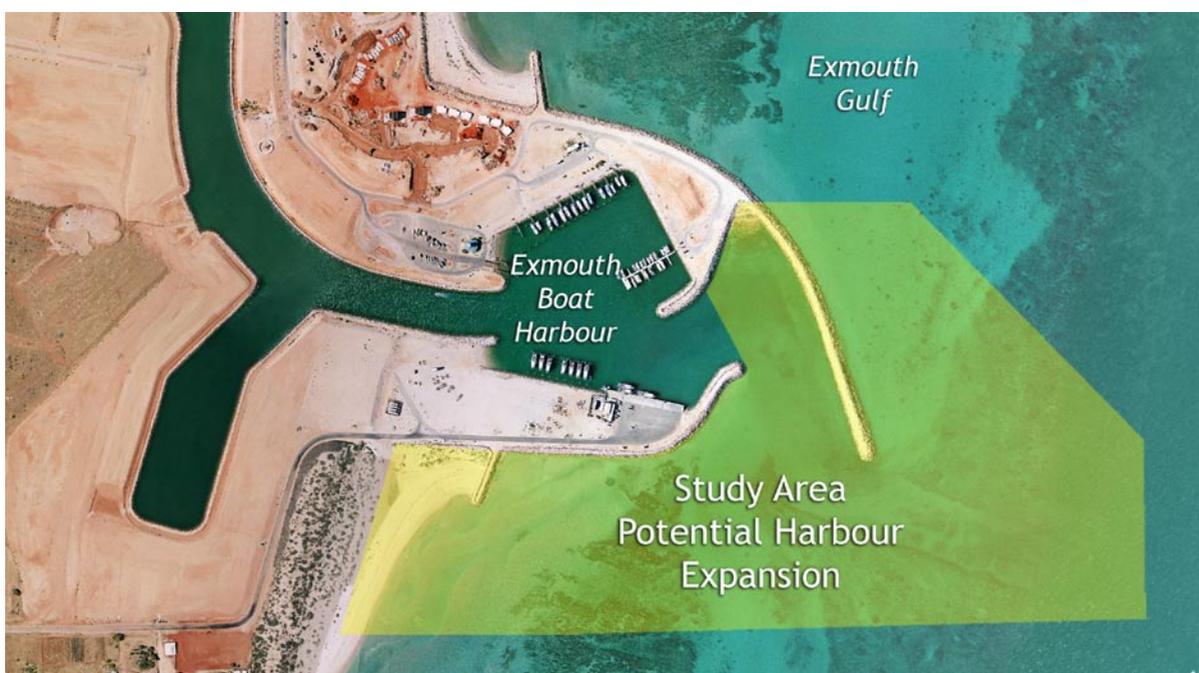
It is recognised that there are a number of infrastructure projects that are likely to be based around the Exmouth area which will further increase pressure to expand Exmouth Boat Harbour.

Potential expansion

Any possible expansion could include new breakwaters, wharves, land and associated infrastructure, for use by new and existing maritime industries at Exmouth. Some potential users could include the offshore oil and gas industries, coastal shipping, charter vessel industry, super yachts and cruise ship companies.

The original Outline Development Plan for the harbour approved by the WA Planning Commission in 1996 provided for a marina to incorporate infrastructure to service a range of uses including commercial and recreational fishing, charter boat operations, mining and exploration support and tour boats in Exmouth.

The study area for this expansion shown below, highlighted in yellow, is the extent of the harbour reserve:



Key issues to consider

The Department and the steering committee recognise that there are a number of key issues to consider with a proposed expansion of Exmouth Boat Harbour, including the impacts of this type of facility and the types of usage and operating parameters that could apply. To undertake a consultation process which explores the various benefits, likely outcomes and issues that may arise from this type of expansion it is important that the following three key areas and associated issues are considered:

Environmental and sustainability

- An expansion design would need to reflect the value of the local marine environment.
- The existing harbour infrastructure enhances the commercial viability of the expansion at this location.
- An expansion design would need to accommodate any Exmouth Floodplain Management Study findings.
- Providing for traffic management issues related to any future land and harbour uses (particularly around Murat Road and Market Street).
- Operational requirements and conditions for oil and gas related activities.
- The form and extent for any new works needed for an expanded harbour.
- Ensuring any new harbour design satisfies all sustainability and environmental issues.

Amenity and lifestyle

- Vessel moorings at Exmouth Boat Harbour are at full capacity, and expansion for larger vessels must be outside the confines of the existing harbour, but within the existing harbour reserve. Refer to the study area.
- Ensuring any new design complements existing maritime facilities and does not detract from operational functionality of the harbour.
- Heavy industrial engineering works would not be permitted at the site, and this type of activity would be better located at the light industrial area south of town.
- Aligning so far as possible, operational conditions with community expectations.
- Acknowledging Exmouth Marina Village Agreement expectations.

Economic and urban issues

- Investigating the viability and desirability of the current location despite alternate locations for such a facility may exist.
- Recognising the benefits to the tourism industry, and flow on effects to other local business, from additional accommodation for charter vessels, larger recreational vessels, super yachts, and some cruise ships.
- Recognising the benefits to local commerce of the offshore oil and gas industries.
- Considering the potential to improve the movement of freight into the township with reduced transport costs on materials and general commodities if coastal shipping is introduced.
- Providing additional sufficient land for future uses anticipated above, at the harbour or elsewhere. This issue could be considered in the development of the Exmouth Town Site Structure Plan.
- Ensuring any expansion is complementary to the overall land use framework of Exmouth.

Consultation process

The consultation process is focussed on the potential for expansion within the existing harbour reserve, and community feedback is sought on the types of issues, usage and operating parameters that could apply to an expanded facility.

The steering committee recognises that there may be alternate sites along the coast of the Exmouth Gulf and will have regard to those possibilities. If through the public consultation process the proposed development of the Exmouth Boat Harbour is not supported, then alternate sites may be considered but this would be a separate subsequent process.

If during the consultation process, issues are raised that should be considered outside the scope of the committee, the steering committee will bring them to the attention of the relevant authorities for consideration.

Invitation to participate

The Exmouth Boat Harbour Steering Committee is keen to consult with the Exmouth community and stakeholders during June 2008, to assess the level of support for the proposed expansion of the Exmouth Boat Harbour. This community consultation will include discussion on the types of issues, usage and operating parameters that could apply to this type of facility.

The committee would like to invite all members of the Exmouth community to have their say and be involved in the consultation on the proposed expansion of the Exmouth Boat Harbour

Community forums have been scheduled for 10 and 11 June, 2008, at the Exmouth Recreation Centre, Murat Rd, Exmouth.

Please have your say by registering to attend one of the community forums and/or completing the feedback form.

Contact details:

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[REDACTED]

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Thank you for your interest and participation