

MAYORS MESSAGE 462

Some major projects are coming to fruition soon

Following a number of requests for updates about the Fish Unloading Facility at Thevenard and the Safe Swimming Enclosure the following is a quick summary as to where we are at;

Fish Unloading – this almost \$10 million undertaking will be commencing in the early part of next year. We experienced delays because of the Australian Government going into caretaker mode before the last Election. This effectively froze all activity pending the completion of a funding agreement which is now in place.

The process of obtaining access to the land in the seabed was also a very long one which is now almost finalized. Council certainly would not build a major facility without securing the ownership of the land concerned. Many other necessary things have also been lined up including sampling of material in the seabed and we will be good to go as per above.

Demand for access to the soon to be built facility is proving to be most encouraging with more users coming forward. As you probably are aware the unloading facility will be self supporting over the long term and should generate extra economic activity for our community.

Safe Swimming Enclosure – This has certainly been a very long winded process however it has been necessary to change our approach several times as further details were discovered. The committee could not gain solid assurance that the proposed pontoon model would be able to survive extreme weather events.

A new design had been agreed and commencement should not be far away. It is understandable that some people were concerned that the enclosure had been abandoned but this is certainly not the case.

The last thing anyone wanted was for a rushed plan to be found wanting and for us to find the enclosure broken by weather events.

Payday lenders.

Pay Day lenders provide small unsecured loans – usually under \$5000.00 at a very high rate of interest. It has been mentioned that some of these loans may have been made to people living in our district.

A Four Corners report on 30th March 2015 exposed the highly questionable practices of payday lenders including effective interest rates when fees and charges are included as high as 633 percent per annum for cash loans and 145 percent per annum for personal loans.

Payday lenders have recently refunded \$1.5 million in incorrectly charged fees and in another case incurred a penalty of \$12 million. They have a responsibility to ensure that borrowers have the means to repay loans before extending credit.

If you have a loan charging very high rates of interest and fees then you should seek financial advice as soon as possible.