

## **Regional Impact Assessment Statement Kingscote Slipway**

---

**Agency:** Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI)

### **1.0 Title of initiative**

Review of the future of the Kingscote Slipway: assessing the impacts of decommissioning the slipway on Kangaroo Island.

### **2.0 The issue**

The Kingscote Wharf precinct has been identified as a strategic waterfront site with potential for tourism, marine, commercial and community related development since the release of the Kingscote Port Strategic Development Plan (2005) and the Kingscote Urban Design Framework (2005). The Kingscote slipway, located within the wharf precinct, is underutilised and in poor condition. The proposal is to remove the slipway in order to rehabilitate the site and encourage private investment in the redevelopment of the wharf precinct.

The slipway is on land owned by the Minister for Transport, managed by DPTI and leased to a private operator that provides maintenance services to commercial and recreational marine vessels. An average of 12 commercial and recreational vessels are maintained using the slipway each year (records from 1999/2000 to 2014/2015, DPTI 2015).

The slipway has been in operation since 1974 and comprises a boat cradle running on a piled steel beam structure, extending approximately 60 metres into the water, a waste oil station, winch house and slipway. It was designed to accommodate one vessel (commercial up to 40 tonnes) at a time. The condition of the slipway has deteriorated and since November 2013 limitations have been applied to its use. The size of vessels able to utilise the facility is currently restricted to 20 tonnes due to the structural integrity of the facility and the condition of the boat cradle. Furthermore, it is understood that the facility is not accessible in all weather conditions, limiting its use.

### **3.0 Region impacted by the proposal**

The area affected by this proposal is predominantly the township of Kingscote, however owners of the vessels serviced at the slipway may be drawn from other parts of Kangaroo Island.

Kangaroo Island has a population of approximately 4,414 people (ABS 2011) and covers an area of approximately 4,405 square kilometres. The population of Kangaroo Island is supplemented by regional tourism, increasing from an average of 129,000 visitors per year in 2012, to 138,000 in 2016 (South Australian Tourism Commission 2012 & 2016). Spending by international tourists on Kangaroo Island has also increased by 72 per cent in the past decade (SA Government 2016).

The Kangaroo Island community is relatively older than the rest of the state, with a median age of 48 years compared with 39 years for South Australia as a whole (ABS 2011). The community has lower rates of unemployment and a higher proportion of people in part time work than mainland South Australia. The Kangaroo Island community also has high rates of people undertaking voluntary work, with 38.5% of the population volunteering, nearly double the rate for South Australia. This highlights the strength and cohesion of the Kangaroo Island community. The major types of employment are management, technical and trades and labouring roles and the major industries of employment are farming, accommodation, school education and hospitals (ABS 2011).

Median household weekly incomes are lower (\$834) than the state as a whole (\$1,044). This is likely to reflect the higher proportion of people at retirement age and part-time workers in the community when compared to mainland South Australia.

There are 32 commercial vessels registered on Kangaroo Island (DPTI Registration Data; April 2017).

### **4.0 Community members affected**

Community members potentially impacted by any proposed decommissioning of the Kingscote Slipway include:

- Operator of the current slipway facility (Jamieson Marine)

- Commercial fishing operators
- Recreational boat operators
- Businesses on Kangaroo Island.

## 5.0 Consultation

The Kangaroo Island community have been consulted on a number of occasions about the future of the Kingscote Wharf precinct, including the slipway, over the last 13 years. The consultation has been associated with the:

- Kingscote Port Strategic Development Plan (2004/2005)
- Kingscote Urban Design Framework (2004/2005)

The community raised the following issues in relation to the future of the Kingscote slipway and wharf during the 2004/2005 consultation:

- The location of the slipway is unsuitable because:
  - it is in an area that would be more suitable for a freight wharf
  - the area is congested and the slipway represents an impediment to future development. For this reason it would not be prudent to undertake a major upgrade of the slipway in its current location.
  - as an unsecured industrial site it is a safety risk to the public and a security issue for boat owners and repairers.
- Aspirations to develop the wharf area for community, commercial and recreational use and to improve the overall appearance of the township

A further public consultation meeting: 'Kingscote Slipway – Future Options' was held in December 2015 and attended by the following groups:

- Kangaroo Island community, with focus on Kingscote township and surrounds
- Commercial fishing sector
- Recreational fishing sector (South Australian Recreational Boating Council (SABFAC))
- Relevant government agencies including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DPTI, Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) and the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources (DEWNR)
- Local Government (Kangaroo Island Council)
- Commissioner for Kangaroo Island.

People invited who were unable to attend were encouraged to provide comment via email/written correspondence or were contacted personally by the Commissioner for Kangaroo Island.

The purpose of the meeting was to inform the following options for the future of the Kingscote slipway:

- Option 1 – Facility closure (removal of facility and site rehabilitation)
- Option 2 – Facility refurbishment to service 25 tonne vessels
- Option 3 – Facility refurbishment to service 40 tonne vessels
- Option 4 – New facility including potential alternative sites on Kangaroo Island.

The issues raised during this meeting include:

- Value of the slipway when vessels require urgent repairs
- Safety concerns if vessels needing significant repair attempt to reach the mainland
- Potential growth in demand for boating and maintenance as a result of upgrading the airport
- The design of the slipway limits the range of vessels that can be slipped

- Current operational restrictions on the existing slipway
- Closing the slipway without an alternative facility on Kangaroo Island will lead to loss of local businesses and employment.

During the design phase of the current Bay of Shoals Boat Ramp the Kangaroo Island Council convened a public meeting where interested parties debated and rejected a proposal to construct a commercial fishing vessel retrieval ramp, similar to those on the South East Coast that would accommodate a range of wheeled jinkers.

## **6.0 Preferred option**

Of the options which were consulted on for the future of the Kingscote Slipway and based on the associated technical reports and consultation with key stakeholders, the Department's preferred option is to decommission the slipway (Option 1). This is due to its poor condition, safety and environmental concerns, low patronage and viability of the asset (as outlined in technical reports).

## **7.0 Summary of impacts and analysis**

Closure of the Kingscote Slipway will enable the future development of the wharf area for community, commercial and recreational uses. Development of this type will bring economic and social benefits to Kingscote and the wider Kangaroo Island community. Closure of the slipway and removal of associated infrastructure would provide an unencumbered site more likely to attract private investment.

The proposal is likely to cost the commercial operator of the slipway as well as local boat operators, as there are no equivalent alternative facilities available on Kangaroo Island once the slipway has been removed.

### **7.1 Economic considerations**

Commercial investment in the wharf precinct would lead to job creation in both the construction phase as well as ongoing employment in the retail, tourism and hospitality sectors.

For example, the State Government is presently working with Bickfords Australia to develop a craft distillery and micro-brewery in addition to a visitor and function centre within the Kingscote Wharf precinct. Private investment like this into the Kingscote Wharf Precinct is expected to generate employment opportunities for the community during its construction and operation.

Closure of the slipway may impact on the productivity (through lost time and travel costs) of the small number of commercial vessel operators that will be required to use alternative slipways on the mainland. Yearly usage records and registration data indicate that some commercial operators are currently using facilities on the mainland.

The closest alternative maintenance facilities are at Wirrina Cove and Port Adelaide, where a wider range of parts and specialist services are available, and the slipway facilities are specifically designed to be accessible in all weather conditions. Other options include Port Lincoln, Cape Jaffa, Robe and Beachport. These are considered alternatives and are generally consistent with the distances commercial operators from other parts of the state are required to travel to maintain their vessels. For example, in some cases, operators in the far west of the state would travel more than 200 nautical miles to Port Lincoln to undertake maintenance activities.

### **7.2 Social factors**

The slipway is considered incompatible with potential development opportunities identified for the site. The proposal to decommission the slipway will provide a space that is less restrictive supporting a range of benefits for the Kingscote and wider Kangaroo Island community:

- potential creation of a shared community space which is a destination for locals and visitors; and
- employment opportunities from investment in commercial, tourism, retail and community facilities (ie. jobs created through the construction of facilities and operation).

The proposal will have an impact on the commercial operator of the facility and the small number of boat operators (average of 12 commercial and recreational vessels each year) due to increased travel time to alternate slipping options. Boats requiring unscheduled repairs will be able to anchor close to shore to undertake those repairs.

## 7.3 Environmental factors

The slipway doesn't meet the requirements of the EPA *Code of Practice for Vessel and Facility Management: Marine and Inland Water* due to the age of the facility. The work areas release untreated stormwater design into the marine environment which is not consistent with current standards.

Fencing the slipway to improve public safety would reduce the amount of public space within the wharf precinct and the area available for redevelopment. For this reason fencing is not supported by the Kangaroo Island Council Development Plan (consolidated 17 September 2015), or the Kingscote Urban Design Framework (2005).

## 7.4 Equity factors

Redevelopment of the Kingscote Wharf will increase opportunities for trade skill development and retention for young people on Kangaroo Island. Development on this site will also increase overall opportunities for the Kangaroo Island community to be engaged in employment.

## 8.0 Mitigation

Retention of the slipway will require a significant upgrade to improve its operational, safety and environmental performance to current regulatory standards. The estimated cost of the upgrade in 2015 is estimated between \$1 and \$4 million.

The Kangaroo Island Commissioner and Kangaroo Island Council are being engaged to develop a Transition Plan to assist current users to transition to alternative slipping options on the mainland.

## 9.0 Coordination

The Department will continue liaise with the following Government agencies in relation to the proposal:

- Department of Primary Industries and Regions, South Australia
- Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources
- Kangaroo Island Council
- Commissioner for Kangaroo Island.

Kangaroo Island Council has been comprehensively engaged in the formal consultation process and is aware of the condition, operational restraints and environmental risks associated with the existing slipway facility. This includes facilitating discussions and consideration of alternative options on the island, including at the Bay of Shoals.

## 10.0 Agency contact

Janey Mitson, Section Manager Marine Operations, Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI).