



SHIRE AMENDS BANDY CREEK LAND USAGE

Canals may go ahead

By Hannah Siemer

ESPERANCE Shire Council has amended 50ha of Bandy Creek land from rural to special use, making the development of canals in the area a possibility.

One such possible development is Recherche Waters, which would see 283 lots created on the boat harbour.

Landowner Lee Warner said the canals would be developed using a lock system, a concept not yet used in Western Australia.

"It's a more expensive concept, but it has its advantages," he said.

"The canal is put in above the water level, water is pumped to the back of the canal and you get 100 per cent flushing all of the time.

"The lock system is available to the public, but they have to pay for the lock and so there's not traffic continually going by."

Though the Department of Planning and Infrastructure (DPI) has not yet received a formal application for a canal development, the department and Shire have been developing a structure plan for the land surrounding the Bandy Creek Boat Harbour.

"The structure plan is being drafted and will be presented to the Shire of Esperance in the coming days," said DPI senior communications coordinator Peter Beard.

"DPI also has a role to ensure any development does not impact on the long-term planning of the harbour and the commercial fishing industry, marine tourism operators and recreational boaters that use it.

"One of the principle objectives for the development of the district structure plan and the concept plan for the harbour is the retention of facilities and services for the commercial fishing industry, marine tourism and recreational boating, for both current and future needs."

Shire chief executive officer Mal Osborne said there was a lot of work to still be done before any such development went ahead.

"It's not just a simple matter of advertising [the proposal] for 90 days and going ahead," he said.

"There's a lot of work to be done environmentally."

But Mr Osborne said canals could help Esperance progress as a town.

"Having a good range of property locations is imperative to any developing community," he said. "Water based lots are a highly sought after product.

"There's a lot of work to be done by Recherche Waters but any land development is of value to real estate in this town."

Mr Warner said he too believed canals would be of great advantage to the town.

"Wherever a canal system goes in, boating activity increases.

"This increases the need for boat storage, boats, fuel, mechanics, the list goes on.

"Every canal development expands the marine industry."

Port Bouvard is another landowner in the Bandy Creek area.

They hope to develop canals to the east of the harbour in the future.

"The company continues to add value to its new acquisitions at... Esperance through ongoing planning and rezoning work," their website reads.

Port Bouvard is responsible for the canal developments in Mandurah and Hillarys.

The company's joint chief executive officer Jonathan Wroth said these were successful examples of such a development.

"The marina is underutilised," he said.

"What we're suggesting is looking at the opportunities to create a tourist/mixed use, residential precinct.

"It's now a matter of the private landowners and various government agencies having consensus on the vision and cooperating in regards to the process.

"As part of this process, it's critical that it incorporates reasonable understanding of uses in the precinct.

"[Bandy Creek] is an active fishing boat harbour and by no means do we want to exclude the commercial uses."



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BANDY Creek landowner Lee Warner shows where canal development Recherche Waters could be developed