It's official: Waterfront vision to make leap from paper to reality

After years of planning and public consultation, funding has been secured towards realising the vision for transforming Bunbury’s waterfront.

Premier Colin Barnett and Regional Development Minister Terry Redman visited Bunbury on May 13 to announce $24.9 million in Royalties for Regions money towards revitalising the Koombana Bay foreshore and redeveloping Dolphin Discovery Centre.

Together, the two projects form the first stage of the Transforming Bunbury’s Waterfront plan, a crucial step in wider plans to breathe new life into the city’s underused waterfront areas.

“Bunbury will have a vibrant waterfront, new job and business opportunities, a revamped tourist attraction and enhanced open space community facilities – all connected back to the city centre,” Premier Barnett said.

“The overall project is expected to grow the city’s marine industry, unlocking exciting new employment and business opportunities in that sector.

“It is also expected to attract inbound investment, and cement Bunbury as a vibrant, sophisticated and forward-looking city,” he said.

South West Development Commission chief executive officer Don Punch said the overall project is expected to grow the city’s marine industry, unlocking exciting new employment and business opportunities in that sector.

Tourism boon

The Dolphin Discovery Centre will be transformed, inside and out, thanks to State Government funding. Here is a glimpse of how it could look once redeveloped.

Disclaimer: Stages 3a and 3b are subject to operational changes as the project develops.

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Look how far we’ve come – Progress to date

2013
A steering committee is formed

January 2014
A concept plan is released for public comment

November 2014
The State Government allocates $1 million in Royalties for Regions funds towards environmental studies

January 2015
A consultant is appointed to undertake strategic planning of the Outer Harbour/ Casuarina Boat Harbour

February 2015
A community workshop is held for people to share their ideas about transforming Casuarina Boat Harbour

March 2015
People are invited to have their say about how Casuarina Boat Harbour could be used in the future by completing a survey

October 2015
A vision for transforming Bunbury’s waterfront is released for public comment

November 2015
95 per cent of people who provided feedback during a consultation period in October 2015 indicated their support for the overall project

May 2016
$24.9 million in State Government Royalties for Regions is announced towards stage one of the Transforming Bunbury’s Waterfront project. As a result, the revitalisation of Koombana Bay foreshore and redevelopment of the Dolphin Discovery Centre will make the leap from paper to reality

An opportunity to breathe new life into Bunbury’s waterfront

Bunbury is often referred to as the City of Three Waters, but it is yet to fulfil its potential as a water playground and marine industry hub. Significant portions of prime waterfront land, stretching from Koombana Bay to Casuarina Boat Harbour and the Outer Harbour, remain underutilised.

The Transforming Bunbury’s Waterfront project represents a golden opportunity to take underused areas of the city and convert them into thriving, vibrant places that produce long-term community and economic benefits. In much the same way as the redevelopment of old industrial land into thriving residential and hospitality precincts at Marlston Hill and Marlston Waterfront positively changed Bunbury and people’s perceptions of it, this game-changing project is expected to afford the city a similar leap forward.

By improving the city’s shorelines for community use and providing the infrastructure necessary to stimulate the growth of the local marine and tourism industries, it is envisioned Bunbury will be further revitalised and its appeal as a place to live, work and invest greatly enhanced. When the project is completed, Bunbury will have a bustling marina complex, new job and business opportunities, a revamped tourist attraction, and enhanced public open space and amenity.

The project will be undertaken in stages, and will include:

- The revitalisation of the Koombana Bay foreshore and redevelopment of the Dolphin Discovery Centre
- Enhancement of public open space along Casuarina Drive
- Upgrades to Jetty Road
- The transformation of Casuarina Boat Harbour through the creation of a marina and marine industry facilities

An artist’s impression brings to life the vision for Casuarina Boat Harbour.

Koombana Bay foreshore will be rejuvenated.

A glimpse of what the Dolphin Discovery Centre could look like if redeveloped.

This image indicates the development possible at Casuarina Boat Harbour.

An amphitheatre is proposed for Koombana Bay foreshore.

Coordinating the vision

The vision for the waterfront needs someone to drive it. Which is why we have a steering committee.

The Transforming Bunbury’s Waterfront committee was formed in 2013 to provide advice to the State Government on what marine and shore-based facilities should be developed around the Bunbury Waterfront, including Koombana Bay, Casuarina Boat Harbour and the Outer Harbour. It is chaired by Bunbury MLA John Castrilli, coordinated by SWDC and includes representatives from a range of organisations.

For more information or to download the vision documents, visit www.swdc.wa.gov.au

The community were invited to attend a public information night in October 2015 to learn about the vision and have their say.