

MEDIA RELEASE

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Esperance Port Focussing on the Future

The extent of Esperance Ports Sea and Land's (EPSL) efforts to clean up the Port and Esperance townsite, as well as improve its operating systems and equipment, were outlined today in court.

The Port appeared in the Esperance Magistrates Court today prior to its sentencing on six charges relating to lead carbonate exports and nickel concentrate odour in December 2006 and March 2007.

EPSL Acting CEO Neil Pearson said the Port's Board and management were sorry and deeply regretted the incidents to which it has pleaded guilty.

"The Port acknowledges and apologises for the concern our actions have caused the community and our staff," Mr Pearson said.

"Although there was never any deliberate wrongdoing by anybody at the Port, errors were made and we have accepted our share of responsibility by pleading guilty to the charges.

"We are all focussing on restoring the community's confidence in our operations."

The Port accepts that the environmental processes and procedures in place at the time of the incidents, were not effective to control issues that arose from the condition of the lead carbonate delivered by Magellan Metals. It has taken significant steps to redress what occurred and has new robust environmental practices and procedures in place, developed in consultation with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC).

In 2009 the Port commenced a capital works program with a budget of up to \$110 million. This work includes upgrading of the loading circuit that handled lead carbonate and nickel concentrate to enable the handling of nickel concentrate to continue in the short term, and the development and installation of a world class handling and storage facility.

The Port has already completed a number of infrastructure upgrades, including;

- Repairs to the conveyor galleries;
- Installation of an air management system in the concentrate storage facility;
- Upgrade of the transfer towers to manage or eliminate dust emissions;
- Replacement of the conveyor galleries, skirts, curtains and scrapers;
- Remedial work on the kibble loading infrastructure;
- Strengthening the ship loader to enable a new telescopic chute to be fitted so that the chute can be extended further into the hold of the ship; and
- Undertaken interim works to enclose the nickel concentrate loading circuit.

“The Port is a very clean, efficient and highly monitored operation that the community can have confidence in,” Mr Pearson said.

The Court was told the Port worked closely with the DEC to ensure any lead within the Port's premises has been removed. About \$10 million has been spent cleaning the Port's premises, including publicly accessible areas of Port property such as Port Authority Park.

It also cleaned a number of homes, cleaned 423 rainwater tanks and distributed more than 270 water filters.

The Port will reappear in the Esperance Magistrates Court on 30 October at 9am for sentencing.

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