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NEW RAPID BAY JETTY – AND HERITAGE TO BE SAVED

The State Government will spend \$3.9m on a newer and safer jetty at Rapid Bay, Premier Mike Rann announced today.

The new 260m jetty will provide access for recreational fishers and divers and will be parallel to the existing structure that has reached the end of its useful life.

The T-section of the existing jetty will be fully maintained to protect the fragile environmental system and safety will be ensured by the demolition of about 25m of the structure (from low tide) to restrict all access.

Premier Rann and Infrastructure Minister Patrick Conlon visited Rapid Bay today and said the new jetty was the “perfect mix” for locals, tourists and the wider community.

“The new jetty will feature a convenient launching platform for divers and adequate space for fisherman to continue accessing their favourite spots,” Premier Rann said.

“We are also committed to protecting the unique plant and marine life of Rapid Bay and consultation with a wide range of environmental groups will continue during the design stage, particularly as it will form part of the new Encounter Marine Park.

“The State Government recognises the importance of Rapid Bay as one of the world’s top dive sites for viewing the leafy sea dragon and the rich diversity of flora and fauna supported by the existing jetty.

“We are committed to ensuring access to Rapid Bay is maintained – particularly given its importance for the South Coast’s tourism industry.

“I am thrilled to be honouring this election commitment for the Rapid Bay community.”

Mr Conlon said the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (DTEI) had been working closely with local groups including Friends of Rapid Bay Jetty, local businesses, divers, recreational fishers, environmental groups and the Yankalilla District Council.

“The new jetty will be a concrete and steel structure to reduce the high maintenance costs of the current wooden structure and provide safe access for many years,” he said.

“Maintenance of the existing jetty has proved impossible due to the materials and design techniques used when it was built in the 1940s.

“Providing the community with a new jetty is more cost effective than demolishing all of the existing one and significantly reduces the risks of environmental damage.

“By leaving the existing jetty in place it can continue to provide shade – helping to preserve the unique plant and animal life attracted to the artificially created environment.”

Final designs of the new jetty are being prepared and are expected to be completed by December 2006 when broader community consultation can be undertaken.

Construction of the prefabricated sections of the new jetty is expected to start in Spring 2007 and erected when sea conditions will allow the construction equipment to safely work on site.