

Angler hurt in night fall through jetty

By RICK HOLDEN

More sections of the hazardous Rapid Bay jetty, south of Adelaide, will be sealed off after a fisherman had a serious fall on Wednesday night.

Adelaide Brighton Cement requested an immediate examination of its former loading facility by the Department of Transport, amid fears someone could be killed.

The department was erecting a temporary barrier late yesterday.

Mr Peter Medhurst, 27, of Harrogate, was walking along the southern span of the jetty, 70km south-west of Adelaide, with two friends about 10.30pm when he disappeared between the planks.

As he fell, Mr Medhurst hit his head on the wooden sleepers, tearing an ear and momentarily losing consciousness.

"All I remember is waking up underneath the water," he said yesterday.

He swam for about 80 minutes against the tide until two friends were able to throw him a bucket

which he used for flotation.

"I'd hate to see a kid fall through there, it's just not safe," he said.

The popular fishing and scuba diving structure has deteriorated considerably, since it was abandoned by Adelaide Brighton Cement more than four years ago.

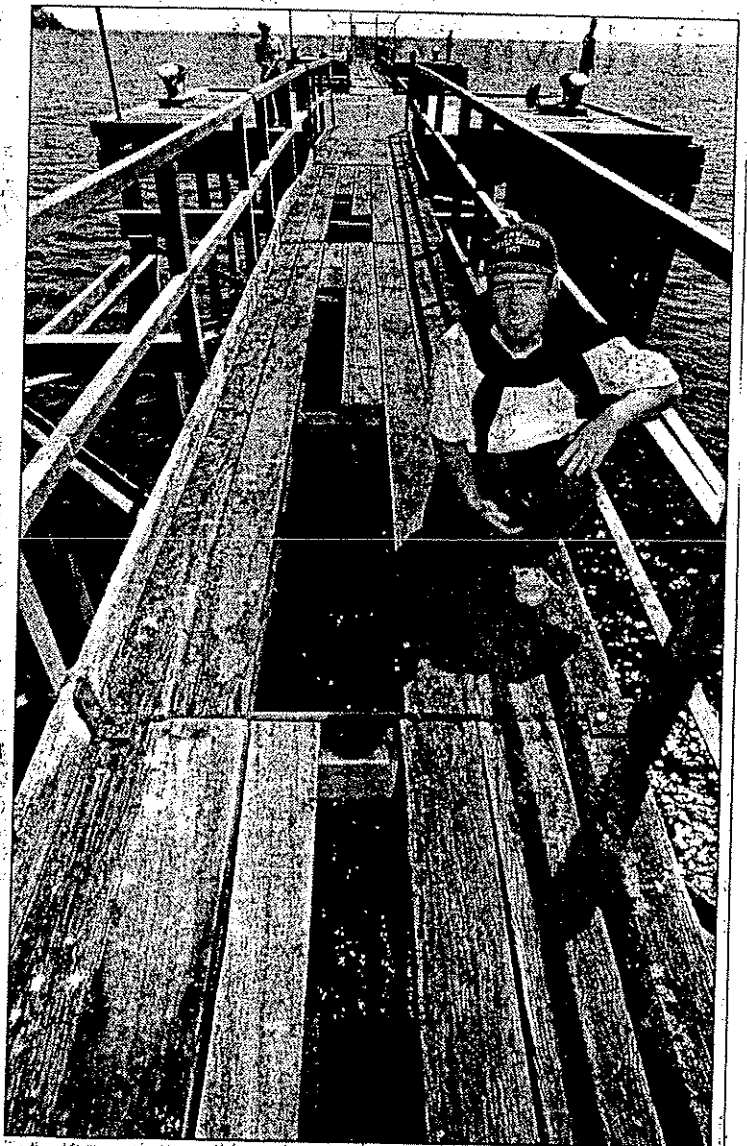
Some sections of the southern span have previously been fenced off by the Department of Transport due to storm damage and vandalism.

Adelaide Brighton Cement's manager at Birkenhead, Mr Tom Douglas, said the jetty had been "a major concern for some time".

He said maintenance was the responsibility of the Department of Transport's Marine Facility section, which owned the structure.

However, he would arrange for an immediate inspection.

A department spokesman confirmed the jetty was on the State Government's list of recreational jetties due for an upgrade.



Angler Peter Medhurst yesterday at the jetty gap through which he fell six metres into the water. Picture: BARRY O'BRIEN