

SOUTHERN PORTS

Statement by Minister for Ports

MR D.R. MICHAEL (Balcatta — Minister for Ports) [9.12 am]: I update the house today on the Cook government's long-term support for our regions and the ports that service them. I recently had the chance to travel to the port of Esperance where I announced that that Esperance-based Mackenzie Marine and Towage had been awarded a 10-year licence to operate tug services at the port of Esperance. I also had the pleasure of meeting three generations of the Mackenzie family. In announcing this contract between the port of Esperance and Mackenzie Marine and Towage, the Cook Labor government has committed to more jobs, more investment and more experience in our ports. This announcement extends a 50-year partnership between the port of Esperance and Mackenzie Marine and Towage, securing 25 local jobs.

As the only deepwater port in southern Western Australia capable of hosting larger Capesize vessels, a minimum of three 70-tonne bollard pull tugs are required to operate at the port of Esperance. As part of this new agreement, Mackenzie Marine and Towage will provide three primary tugs, a backup tug and a further two tugs over the next four years, ensuring that the port of Esperance can continue to develop the economy of our state's south. This continuation of a generational partnership between the port of Esperance and Mackenzie Marine and Towage is the continuation of a partnership that saw tug service assistance provided to 450 vessels totalling 13.6 million tonnes of trade last year alone. The port of Esperance is a crucial port for our state's economy and is a hub for our state's iron ore and mineral trade. Partnerships like the one between the port of Esperance and MMT have facilitated our state's strong economy and the Cook government's position as a model for economic management across the country.

Of course, Esperance is not the only port in the Southern Ports family. It is important to note the crucial role that Albany and Bunbury also play in the continued diversification, development and growth in the state's south. Our Southern Ports directly employ almost 300 people across the south west and bring in over \$90 million in revenue to our state, providing jobs, security and stability for families throughout the regions. I commend the Cook government's continued support for our regions and in particular the ongoing support for the port of Esperance.