



Emily 2021 - Port Spencer deep water port development

Goals for the year

Emily's goal was to use her Year 11 research project to investigate how the proposed Port Spencer deep water port development will affect the Lipson Cove ecosystem.

She gathered data via interviews with local experts and published datasets.

Her interviewees were Rochelle Berryman, a local farmer and ecological advocate with a lot of knowledge about Lipson Cove; John Read, a local ecologist with experience in collapsed ecosystems; and Emmalene Richards, a local indigenous woman who has a really good connection with Lipson Cove.

To understand the Lipson Cove ecosystem better, Emily used data from the Centrex Metals 2012 ecological assessment; the Atlas of Living Australia for information on the Lipson Island Conservation area; and the Peninsula Ports Public Environment Report.

Biggest success or achievement

Port Spencer is proposed on the headland between Lipson Cove and Rogers beach. The site was purchased by Peninsula Ports in 2019 and will consist of 14 grain bunkers and a 400m deep water jetty. Works haven't started yet.

Lipson Cove is about 1km in length, with two large salt pans and an island at the southern end. Many species rely on the area, with little penguins as a keystone species. A pod of 30 dolphins frequents the area and there are recurring whale visits. Hooded plovers and White-Bellied Sea Eagles are also endangered species that rely on the Lipson Cove ecosystem. There is a little reef between the coast and the island, so there are a lot of animals that will be impacted by this development.

Emily found that potential ecological impacts from the proposed port included noise pollution from the additional 30,000 annual truck movements in Lipson Cove; loss of habitat and migration patterns; loss of seagrass meadows which will impact fish populations; disruption of tidal flow, sand movement and water nutrients.

In 2021 Emily created a petition against the port development, which now has over 3000 signatures.

She researched the community's position on the proposal and found through comments in the local paper that many were against the development.

Emmalene and others believed there wasn't enough indigenous consultation, so many indigenous locals oppose it. Most locals agreed that the positive economic effects were not going to counteract the negative environmental impacts. There was a unanimous decision from the Ungarra Progress Association to oppose the port proposal.

Peninsula Ports want more people to support it and believe the economic benefits outweigh the negative ecological impacts.

Emily noted that Peninsula Ports think the community's response has been very late, but says it was late because the community didn't know what was happening

Next steps?

Emily is hoping to summarise her research into a brochure to share with the community.