

Eucla Jetty

Maritime Heritage Site Inspection Report

Compiler: Dena Garratt
Consulting Maritime Archaeologist
June 1994

Report - Dept. of Maritime Archaeology
WA Maritime Museum, No 84.

This project was partially funded under the National Estate Grants Program, administered by the Australian Heritage Commission and the Heritage Council of Western Australia.

© W.A. MUSEUM

Contents

Acknowledgments.....	1
Introduction	1
Background	1
Technical Data.....	3
Management Considerations	4
Description of Site.....	4
Site Identification Comments.....	8
Associated Shipwrecks and Land Sites.....	10
Assessment of Site Significance	10
Recommendations	11
Further Comments.....	11
References.....	12

Figures

Figure 1. Map: WA SH 52-14, Eucla.....	1
Figure 2. Chart Excerpt: BA 1059, Doubtful Island to the Head of the Bight	2
Figure 3. Eucla Jetty , March 1994.....	4
Figure 4. Eucla Jetty looking west.....	5
Figure 5. Stone abutment.....	5
Figure 6. Rail bogey	6
Figure 7. Railway line	6
Figure 8. Bottle lying alongside jetty timbers	7
Figure 9. Trawling bobbin	7
Figure 10. PWD <i>Plan of Eucla</i>	8
Figure 11. "Eucla Jetty on an unusually busy day...".....	9
Figure 12. "Eucla Jetty c1900".....	9

Acknowledgments

This project was partially funded under the National Estate Program, a Commonwealth-financed grants scheme administered by the Australian Heritage Commission (Federal Government) and the Heritage Council of Western Australia (State Government).

Introduction

The purpose of this site inspection was to make a preliminary assessment of the extent of the submerged remains of the Eucla Jetty and to produce a photographic record of the site and any associated material on land.

Background

Compiled from the records of the Department of maritime Archaeology, (MA).

Site Name: Eucla Jetty

File Name: Jetties and Port Related Structures

File Name: Eyre

File Name: Heritage Council of WA

File No: MA 2.93

File No: MA 102.91

File No: MA 13.93

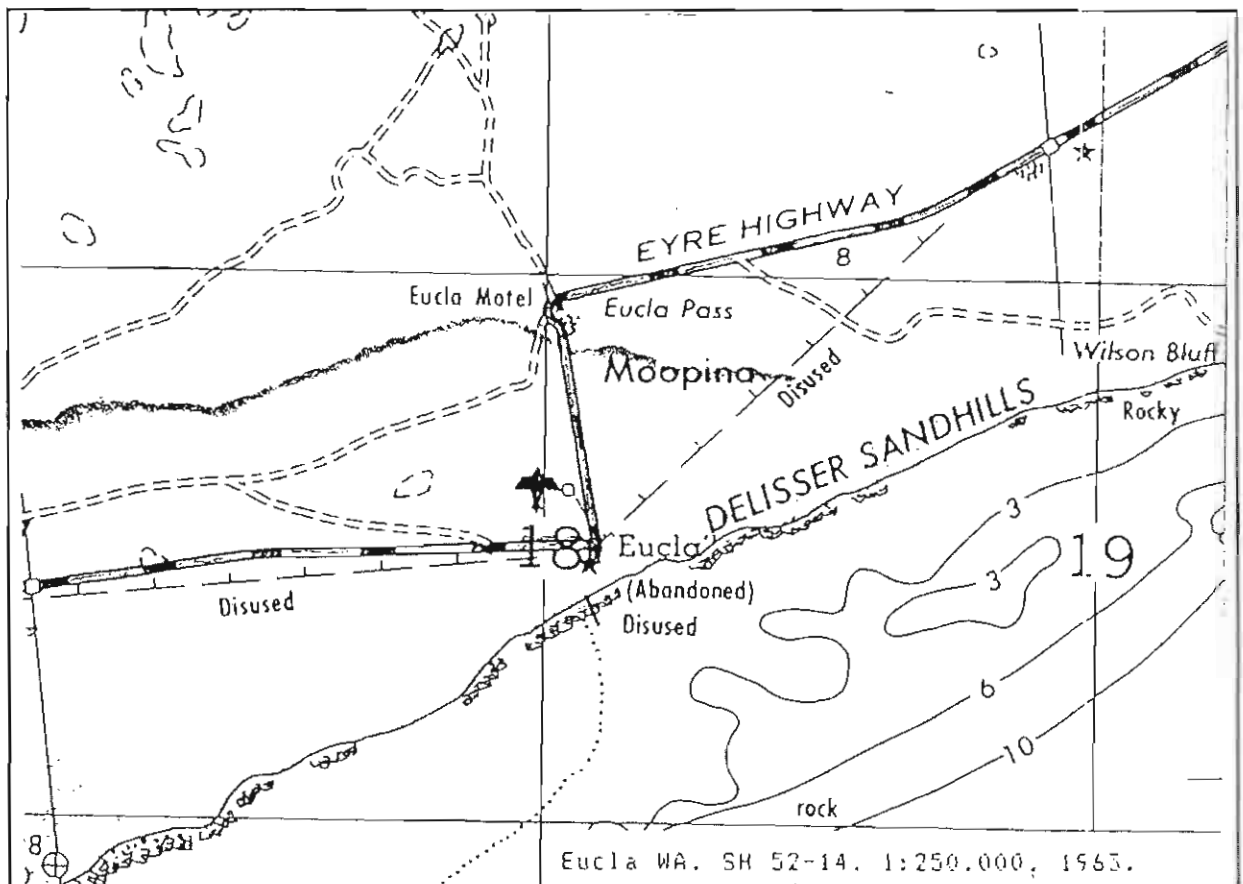


Figure 1. Map: WA SH 52-14 Eucla 1963. 1: 250 00 (enlarged to 1: 125 000).

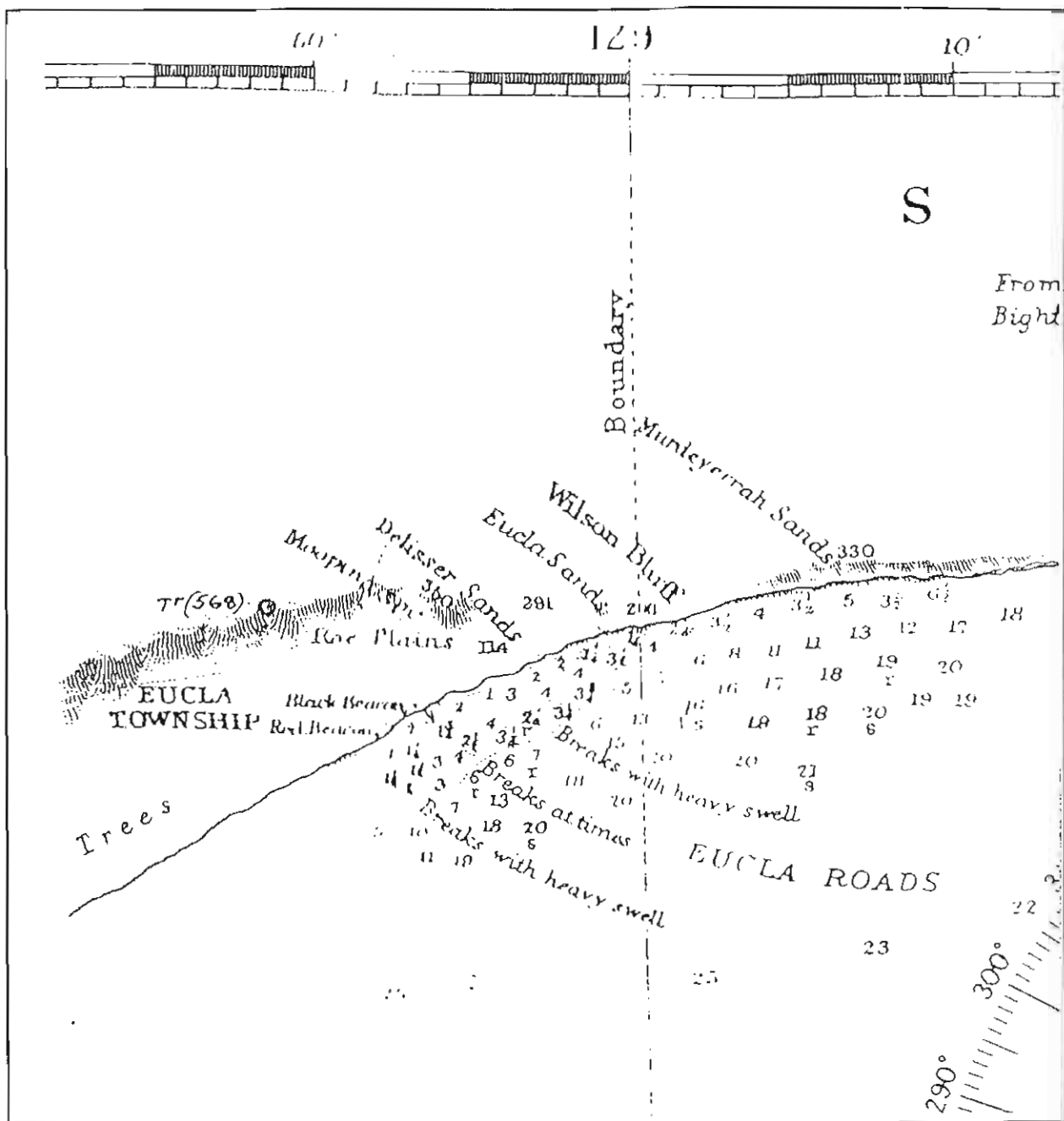


Figure 2 Chart Excerpt: BA 1059, Doubtful Island to the Head of the Great Australian Bight, 1881; 1897; 1901, 1: 610 000 (enlarged to 1: 305 000).

Technical Data

Date of Inspection: 30 March 1994

Personnel: Denis Cumming, Dena Garratt, Bob Richards, Ray Shaw

Approximate Location: 1.5 km south of the Eucla Telegraph Station.

Charts: BA 1059, *Doubtful Island to the Head of the Great Australian Bight*,
1: 610 000 (x2=1: 305 000), 1881, 1897, 1901.
Balladonia & Eyre Sl, 1: 500 000, 1970

Maps: *Forrest SH 52-W*, 1: 500 000, 1970.
Eucla 4634, 1: 100 000.
WA SH 52-14, Eucla 1: 250 000, 1963.

Historic Plans: PWD *Eucla* (nd)

Latitude: 31°43' 47"S **Longitude:** 128° 52' 46"E **Var.** 1° 52' 00" E

Directions: From Eucla Roadhouse, follow the sign marked "Old Telegraph Station." The first part of the track leading down the face of the escarpment is extremely rough and precipitous and requires caution when negotiating this section. The track terminates at the Telegraph Station and a drive of approximately one km over sandhills is required to reach the jetty, which lies to the south of the Station.

Site Photographs:

B/W: U/W Film No. 1, Neg. No. 6-36
Film No. 2, Neg. No. 15-30

Colour:

Slides: EJ/1-3 & U/W EJ/1-6 (D. Garratt)

Video:

Historic: "Eucla Jetty c1900" (*Proceedings*, Vol. XIX, p163)
"Eucla Jetty on a busy day" (*Proceedings*, Vol. XIX, 1917-18)

Site Conditions on Inspection:

Swell: Nil

Visibility: 1.5 m

Current: Nil

Sea-bed coverage: Seagrass meadows with sand patches

Chemical Measurements:

Temperature:

Salinity:

pH:

Dissolved O₂:

Corrosion potential:

No measurements were deemed necessary in this instance, however all measurements should be recorded if a full archaeological investigation of the site is undertaken.

Biological Data:

Colonising fauna and flora: *Posidonia* seagrass meadows cover much of the sea floor. The jetty piles have been colonised with several species of seaweed that will be identified if further research is undertaken.

Site Condition and Integrity: There is substantial remains of the jetty structure still in place. The general shape and dimensions of the structure is clearly evident from the shore. The remains of the earthworks and jetty abutment are partially obscured in the first line of dunes and are in a poor state of preservation.

Management Considerations

- (i) Natural forces: The site is prone to violent storms but the jetty piles are not subjected to the damaging forces of ocean swells as the beach is protected by a line of offshore reefs. Seagrass meadows extend out to sea along much of the coastline of the Great Australian Bight, resulting in a dampening effect on the swells rolling in from the Southern Ocean.
- (ii) Present and future human forces: Apart from the ever-present risk of vandalism, there is, at the moment, little apparent threat from human forces, as the site is rarely visited. The low visitation rate can be attributed to;
 - (a) the remoteness of the site
 - (b) access limitations, (The site is accessible to WD vehicles only).
 - (c) lack of public awareness about the existence and/or location of the jetty.
- (iii) Projected general site stability: The structural integrity of the remaining jetty structure does not appear to be in any immediate danger from either environmental or human forces. However, in the long term, the jetty timbers will continue to be degraded by biological and environmental agents.

Description of Site

The original jetty structure extended out into the Bight in a southerly direction for 151 m (495 feet). The section of the jetty spanning the beach from the rail abutment to the high water mark has gone, including the timbers from the abutment, (probably salvaged). The last three rows of piles that formed the head of the jetty have collapsed. One lone pile standing out to sea marks the location of the head of the jetty. With an average distance between the rows of piles of 4.5m, it can be estimated that 13.5m of that section of the jetty has collapsed. However, with approximately two thirds of the jetty piles still in place, the overall dimensions of the structure can still be determined from shore. At low tide it is possible to walk and wade for approximately half the length of the remaining jetty structure. Sections of decking and one post from the original railing are still in place.

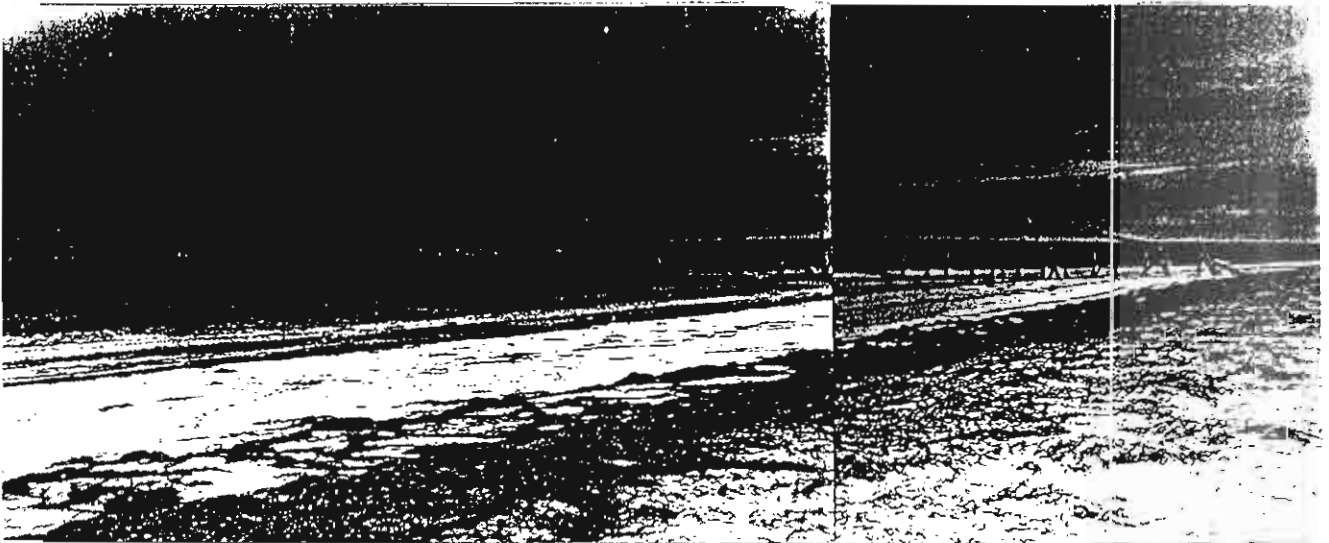


Figure 3 . Eucla Jetty March 1994. (D. Cumming)

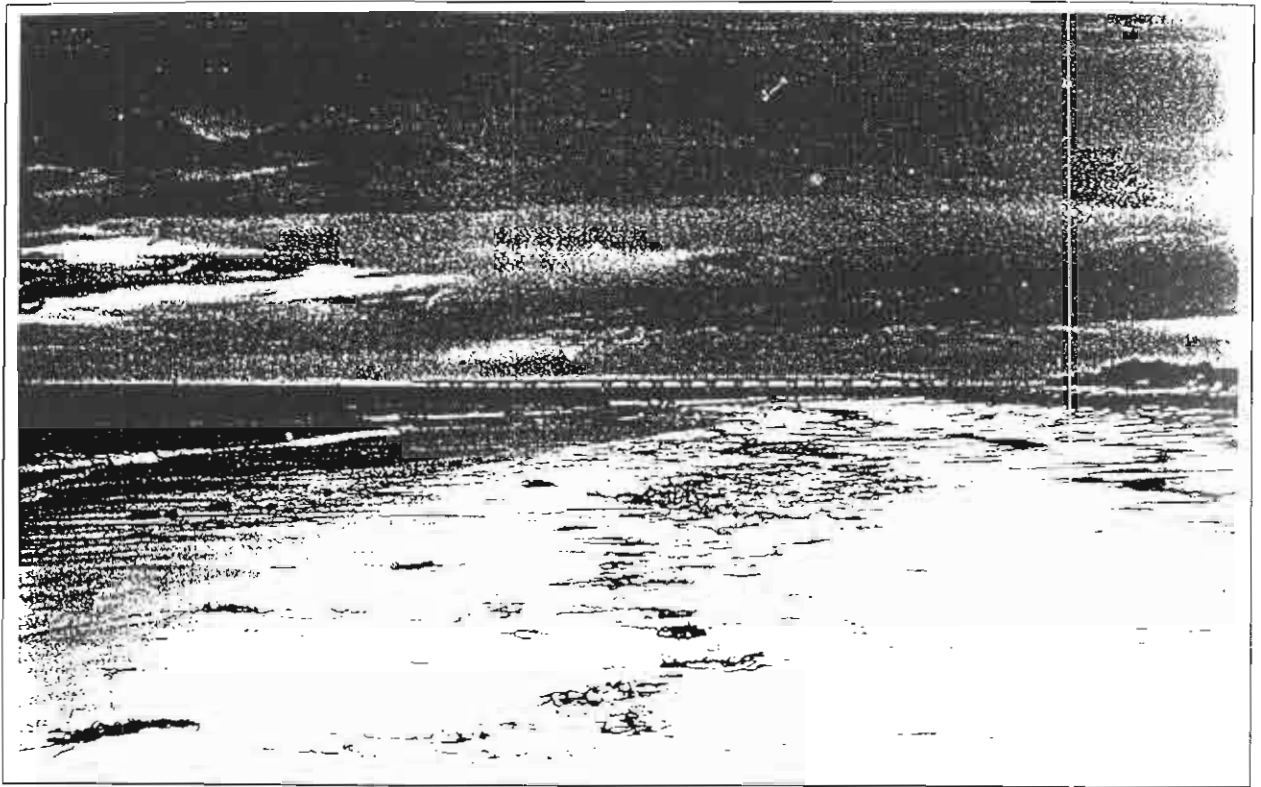


Figure 4. Eucla Jetty looking west. (D. Cumming, 1994)



Figure 5. Stone abutment. (D. Cumming, 1994)

As well as jetty timbers, many artefacts are lying in this area. They include: a bogey wheel with a diameter of 1 metre, (*Figure 6*) rail line, (*Figure 7*), a section of piping, flanged at one end with a diameter of 40 cm, a metal frame approximately 2m x 3m, bricks and several beer bottles dating from the 1880s -1890s, (*Figure 8*). A trawling bobbin similar to the one shown in *Figure 9* was found on the site. This item is a modern artefact that appeared long after the jetty was abandoned.



Figure 6. Rail Bogey (D. Garratt)



Figure 7. Railway line. (D. Garratt)

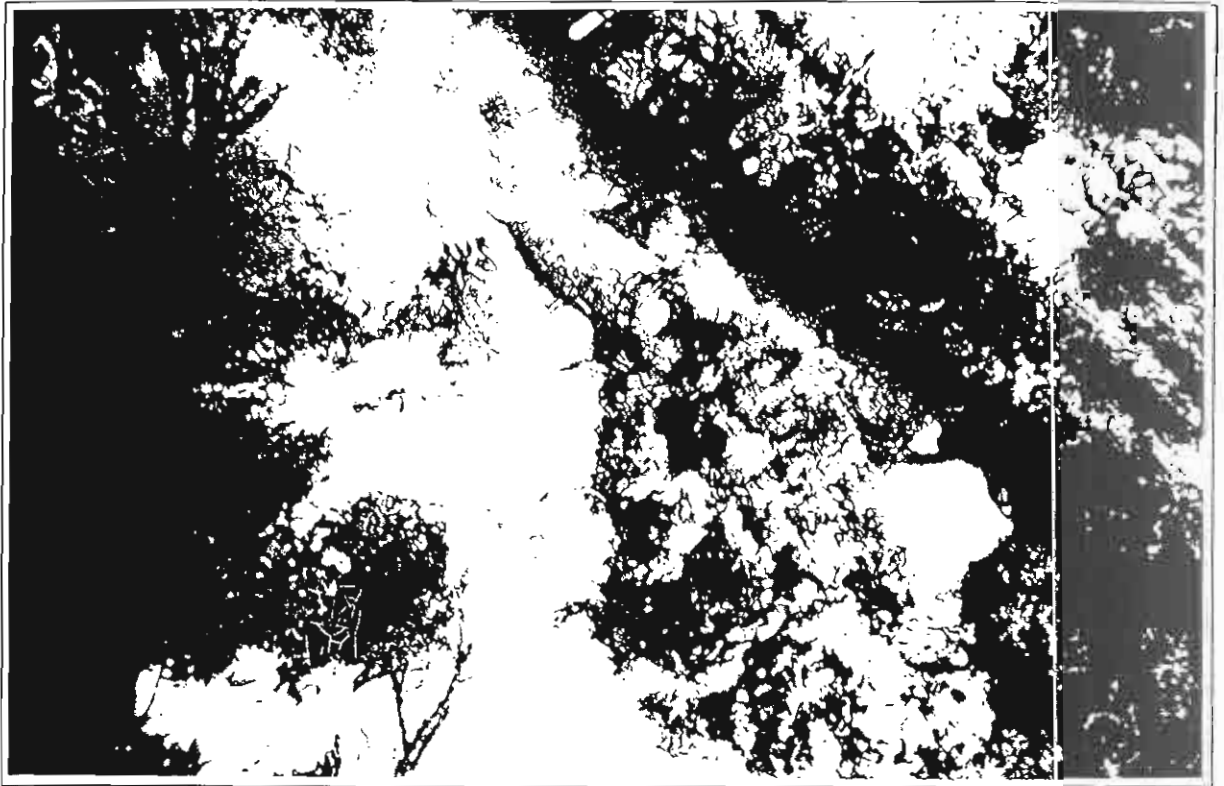


Figure 8. Bottle lying alongside jetty timbers. (D. Garritt)

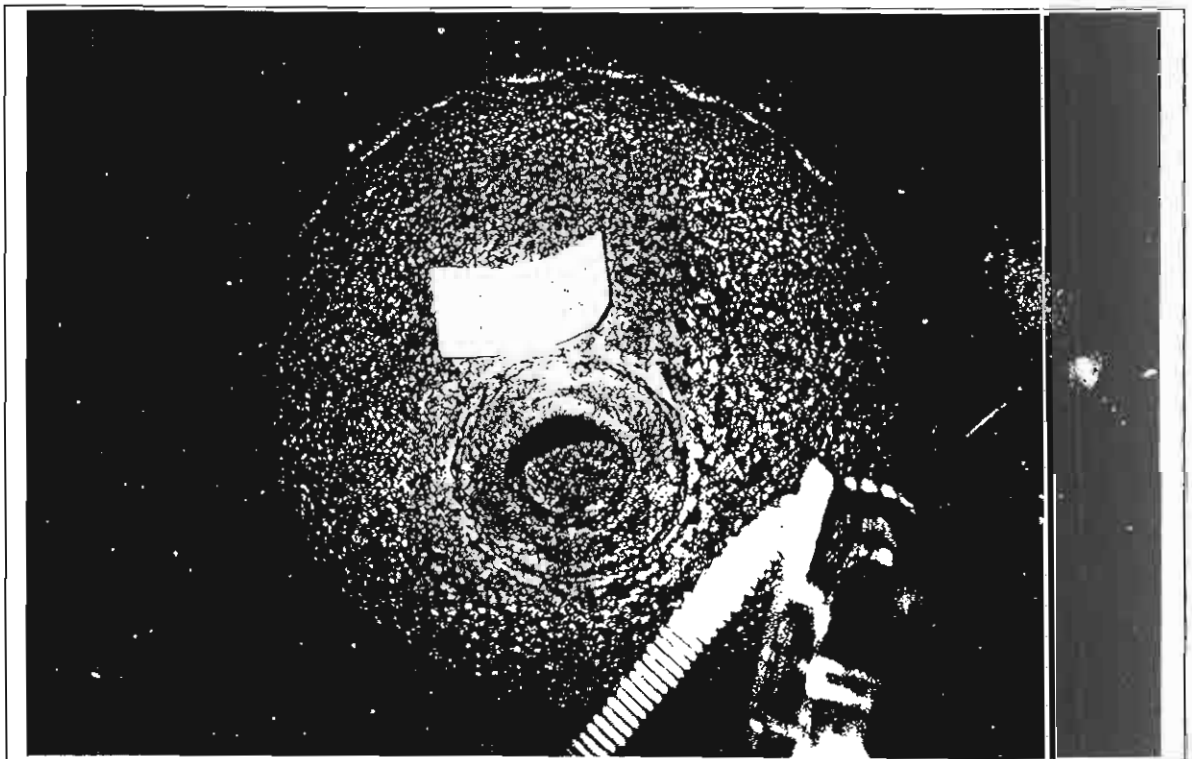


Figure 9. Trawling bobbin. (D. Garritt)

Site Identification Comments: (From research notes compiled by D. Cumning).

Telegraph Station at Eucla opened in 1877. Ten years later, Ballie, Davies and Wishart built the jetty. Tenders were called for leasing the jetty and tramway in 1898. In 1902 the slopes of the tramway cutting were covered with seaweed to prevent drift and a goods shed was built for the tramway in 1906-7.

The jetty remained in regular use until the telegraph station was abandoned in 1926.

References

Australian Pilot, Vol. 1, p100.

Government Gazette, 1887, p727.

Public Works Department, *Report*, 1902; 1906-7.

Le Page, John, *Building a State*. Water Authority of Western Australia, Leederville, 1986.

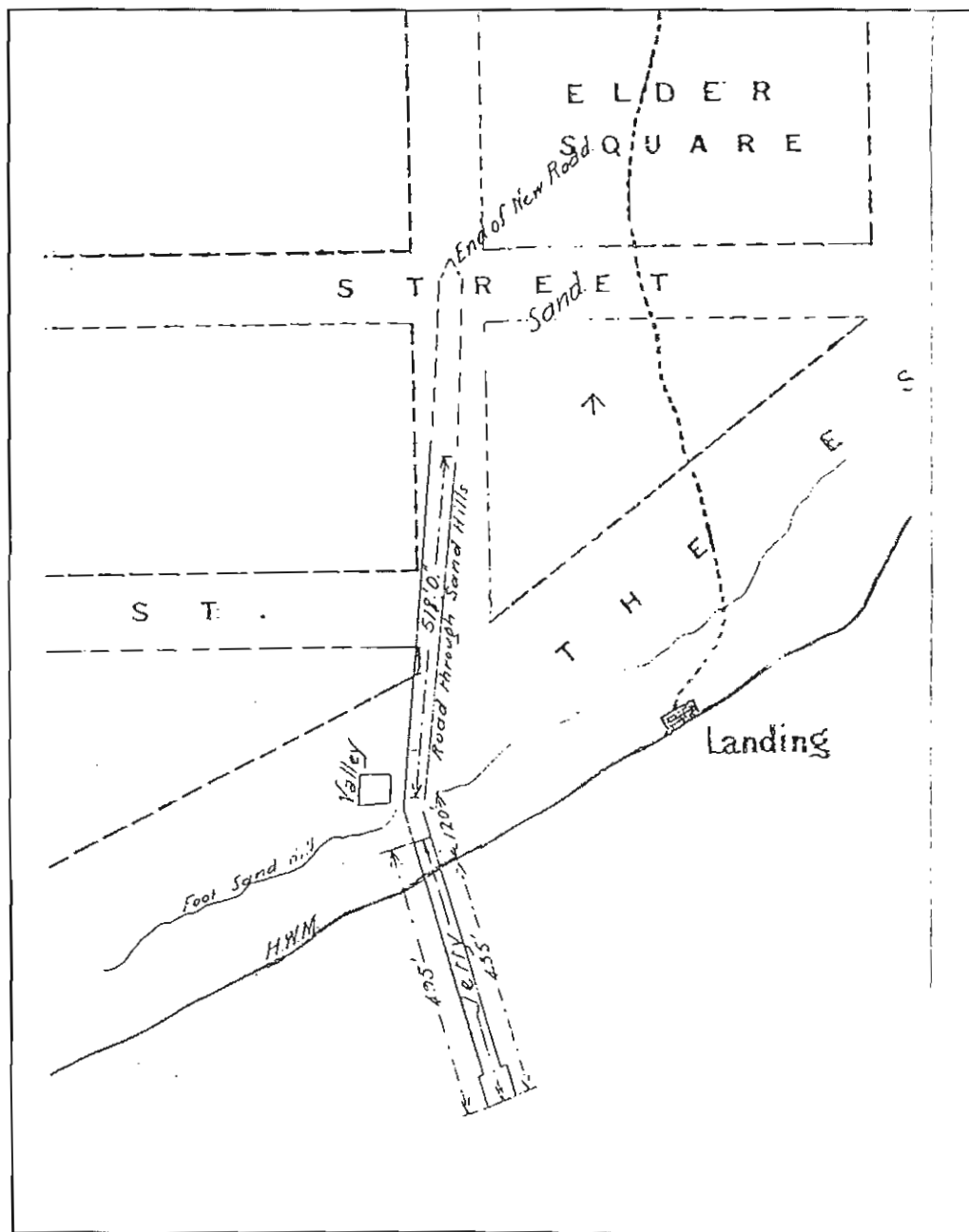


Figure 10. Detail of the over-all dimensions and layout of the Jetty.
PWD *Plan of Eucla*. (nd)

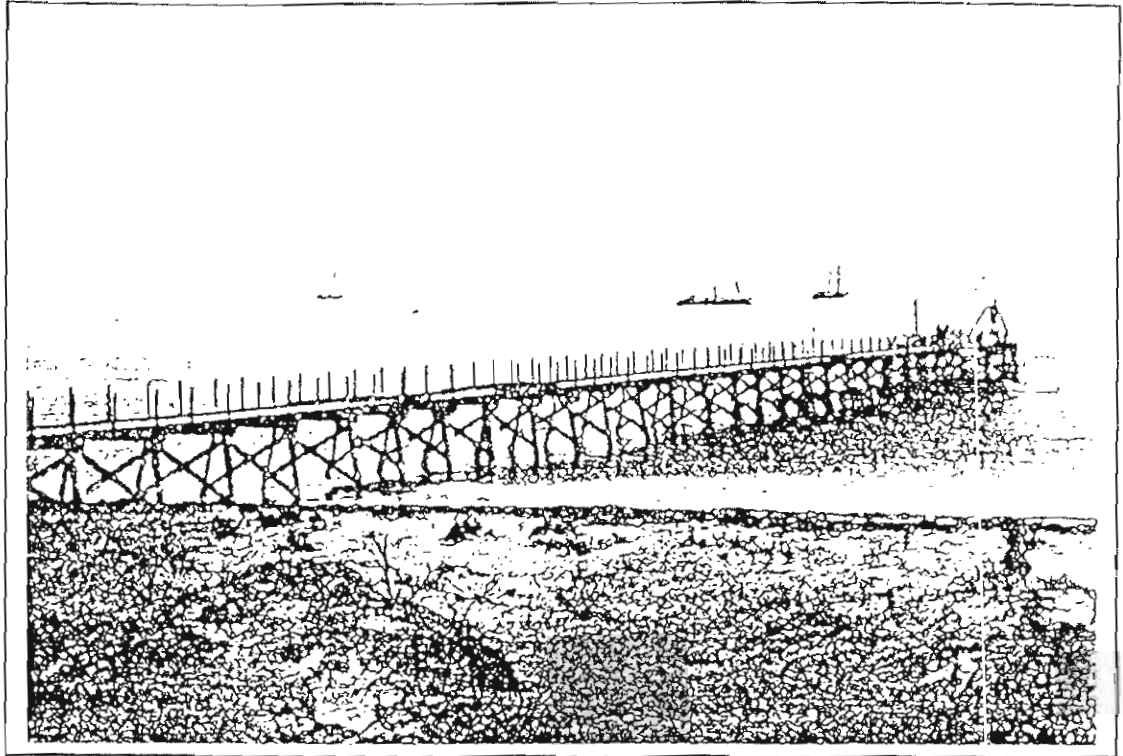


Figure 11 "Eucla Jetty on an unusually busy day, the only time three vessels were anchored there at the same time." (Source: *Proceedings*, Vol., 1917-18).

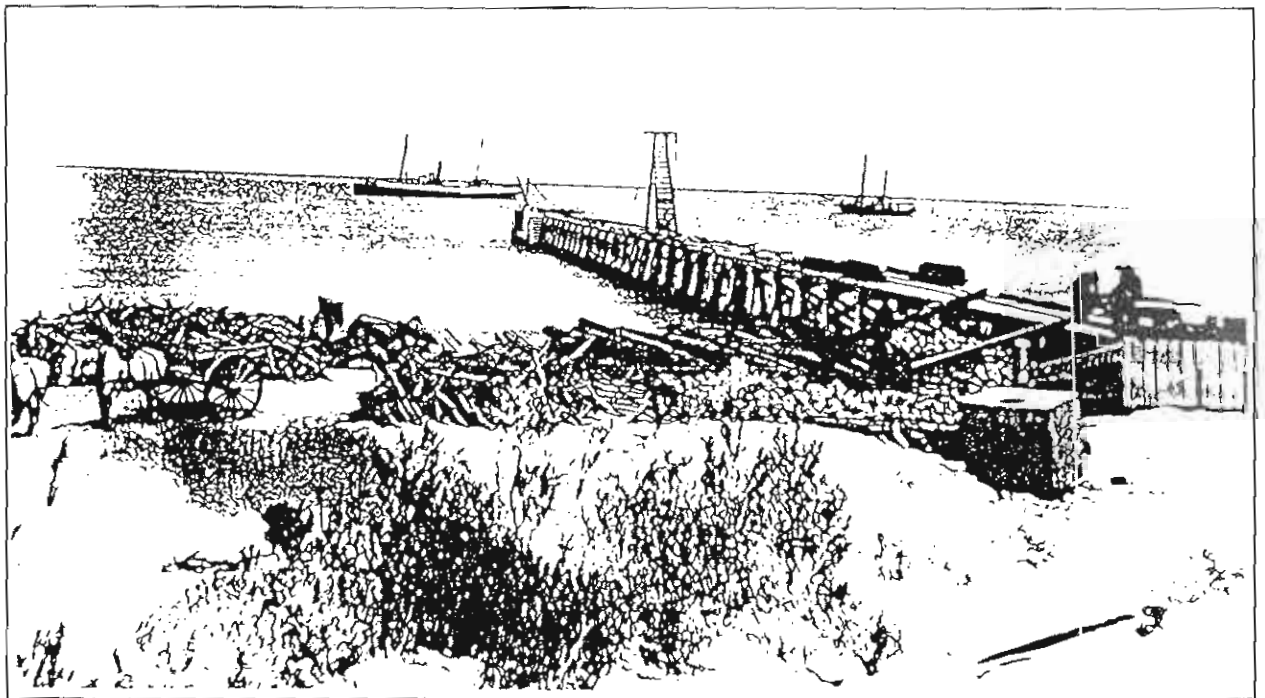


Figure 12 "Eucla Jetty, c1900". (Source: *Proceedings*, Vol. 1971-18, p163).

Associated Shipwrecks and Land Sites

Pontoon Barge

In the past year a steel pontoon barge has been washed up onto the beach at the high water mark some 90 metres to the west of the jetty. Details of this wreck can be located in Wreck Inspection Report No. 117.

File Name: Area - Eyre

File No: 102.91

File Name: Wreck Inspection Reports

File No: 93.73

Landing

Eucla Telegraph Station

Assessment of Site Significance

- (i) Historical: The Eucla jetty and the nearby landing represents an important physical reminder of that remarkable engineering achievement, the overland telegraph. The jetty served as the only link with the rest of the world for the local population. It played a significant role in the maintenance of the Eucla Telegraph Station and was the outport for the region's wool and sandalwood trade.
- (ii) Technological: The structure is representative of the style of jetty construction from the mid to late 1800s. (See also Hamelin Bay Jetty).
- (iii) Scientific: Information on corrosion rates can be gained from the iron artefacts on the site.
- (iv) Educational: Heritage remains have the potential of being a focus for educational activity if properly marked and documented.
- (v) Recreational: The clarity and depth of the water on the site is ideal for snorkelling. There is sufficient material visible on the seabed to make the site interesting for divers.
- (vi) Cultural: There is undoubted cultural significance in the remains of the jetty and the landing. They represent the point of contact with the rest of the world and a focal point for commerce and social activities for the residents of the Eucla district.
- (vii) Archaeological: The site has the potential to be included in a comparative study of jetty sites, particularly with regard to deposition and distribution patterns along jetties.
- (viii) Rarity: One of only four jetties of this type in Western Australia that has retained substantial structural integrity.
- (ix) Representativeness: The structure is representative of the style of jetty construction in the late 19th century.

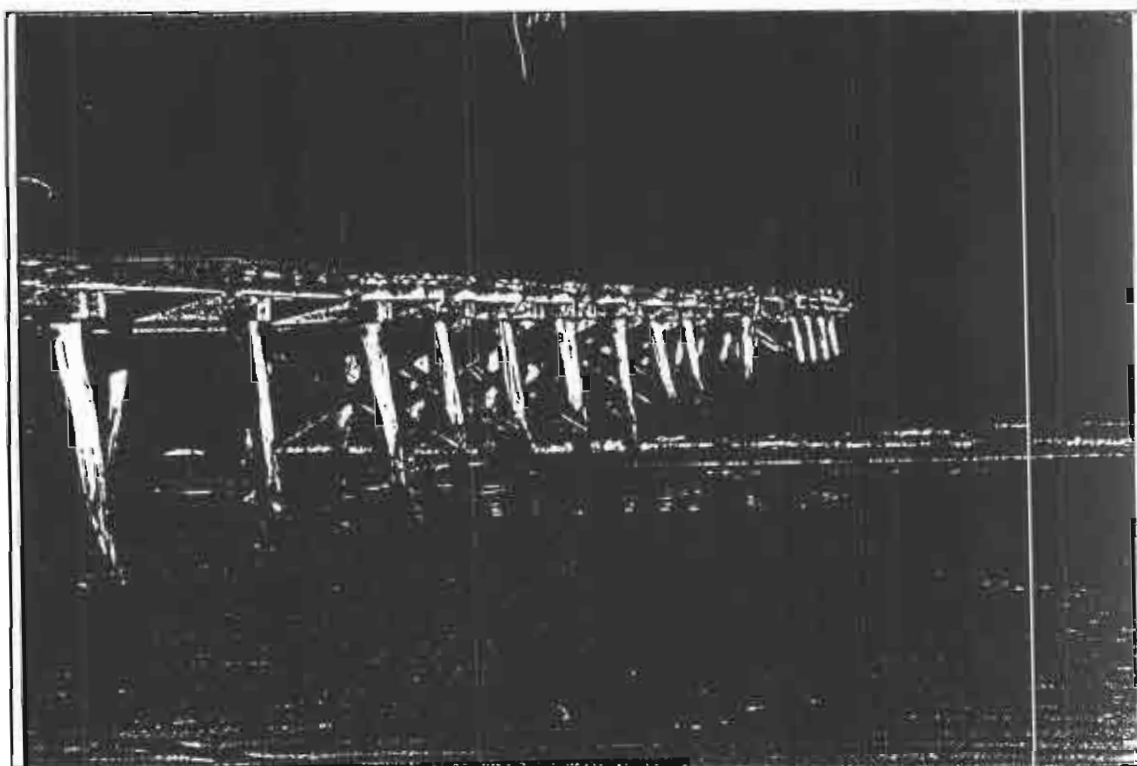
Recommendations

The options are:

- (i) Recommend that the site be gazetted as an Historic Site.
- (ii) Erect a marker at the site that will include interpretive material.
- (iii) Consider an archaeological survey of the jetty site, with provision for the rehabilitation of the excavated areas and the conservation, display and interpretation of any artefacts recovered.

Further Comments

Regardless of the outcome of the above, it is recommended that the Eucla Jetty be more widely publicised as a reminder of an important era in the development of WA's engineering heritage. Further to this, the significance of the jetty in relation to the telegraph station should be highlighted in the displays at the Eucla Museum.



Dena Garratt
Consulting Maritime Archaeologist
Maritime Archaeology Department
WA Maritime Museum

References

Australian Pilot, Vol 1.

Eucla Recorder, 1898, 1899.

Government Gazette, 1887.

Le Page, J., 1986, *Building a state: the story of the Public Works Department*. Water authority, Perth.

Public Works Department, Report, 1902; 1906-7.