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Communication key for Port Spencer grain port project

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PENINSULA Ports is planning further community engagement with the Tumby Bay and Eyre Peninsula communities about its Port Spencer project as further questions and concerns have been raised by locals.

The organisation held a Tumby Bay Community Consultative Group meeting at Tumby Bay on Monday night before holding a farmers information evening at Cummins on Tuesday, which also involved representatives from ProManage Australia.

The consultative group meeting saw questions and concerns including environmental impacts on the surrounding site, whether the project was economically viable and efforts to communicate with locals.

Peninsula Ports chief executive officer Greg Walters said on the environmental impacts, the issues had been addressed in the Public Environmental Report, approved by the South Australian Government last month, with additional requirements for turbidity monitoring.

He said there was full confidence in the site and in the long term benefits of the port, which would have a low operating cost, and dis-

missed any claims it would be built up to be sold off later.

"We have confidence the port would continue operating through good years and bad years," he said.

Mr Walters said they found the people who attended the Cleve meeting to have been "very receptive" about the

project, the competition it would bring to the region and benefits to farmers.

Tumby Bay mayor Sam Telfer attended the Tumby Bay meeting and said there was still a level of contention about the project.

"The area around the port site has a significant com-

munity ownership aspect and the community want to ensure that there is as little impact as possible if a project was to go forward," he said.

Butler Tanks mixed farmer Mark Pfitzner, who also owns the Port Neill Post and Trade, is a vocal critic of the Port Spencer project and said Peninsula Ports did not offer anything new.

"Their misinformation has been found out, they're saying they've talked to the growers owning each side of the Lipson Cove Road, those growers were both at the meeting and said they had not been contacted," he said.

Positive comments about the project at the meeting included that it would help get more competitive prices for grain in the region, would help divert truck traffic away from Port Lincoln and open the door to further development projects.

Mr Walters said Peninsula Ports would be engaging further with the community in the coming months as it aims to start construction within the next month, pending final approvals.

Engagement will include with site neighbours on the engineering design for the upgrade of Lipson Cove

Road, the Council Technical Working Group (made up of Cleve, Lower Eyre Peninsula and Tumby Bay district councils) to fund and prepare a business case of the east-west road network on Lower Eyre Peninsula and the EPLGA to implement a road maintenance fund to support key road upgrades.

There are also plans to work with Tumby Bay District Council on a road maintenance agreement for Lipson Cove Road, begin funding support for community projects and to clean up Rogers Beach and maintain public access.