

Executive Brief

Organisation: Southern Ports
Position: Chief Infrastructure and Projects Officer
Consultant: Lindsay Woods, Principal
Date: October 2026

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in exploring the Chief Infrastructure and Projects Officer role with Southern Ports. As a trusted partner, we have produced this information to help you become more informed about the organisation's context, operations, strategy and culture.

About Southern Ports

Southern Ports is a Western Australian Government owned port authority working across four sites at Albany, Bunbury, Esperance and Perth.

The organisation underpins the state's economic growth and plays a pivotal role in facilitating more than 32 million tonnes of trade each year. While Southern Ports predominantly operates bulk export ports, its role in facilitating critical imports including project cargo and supporting cruise tourism is ever increasing.

Southern Ports works with its customers and port users to find solutions, connecting regional industries to global markets. Its trade facilitation is enabled by its commitment to its people and its internationally recognised asset management system, which covers its diverse infrastructure portfolio of 9,500 assets.

Beyond trade, Southern Ports is an integral part of its communities – building capacity and creating prosperity for its regions to deliver on its vision of *strong regional ports, strong regions*. Southern Ports employs more than 300 people, with almost 80 per cent of its workforce regionally based.

Southern Ports operates under the *Government Trading Enterprises Act 2023* (WA), in conjunction with the *Port Authorities Act 1999* (WA). An independent Board of Directors is its governing body, with members appointed by the Minister for Ports, Hon Stephen Dawson MLC. Its Executive Leadership Team reports to the Board of Directors and is accountable to the Minister for Ports.

The opportunity

Having successfully transitioned to a position of 'building the future', the organisation is implementing a bold redesign of its Executive Leadership Team and regional leadership model to deliver sustainable growth and capitalise on emerging trade opportunities across regional Western Australia.

A comprehensive leadership structure review was recently undertaken, and in response, the Board endorsed a redesigned Executive Leadership Team of five chief-level roles supported by three regional General Managers with enhanced operational authority. The key changes are designed to decouple long-term infrastructure planning from day-to-day operations, professionalise project delivery and position Southern Ports to transition from a 'licence to operate' to a 'licence to grow'.

Southern Ports has since sought to appoint exceptional leaders to three critical roles to support the delivery of its five-year strategic roadmap and position the organisation for its next phase of growth:

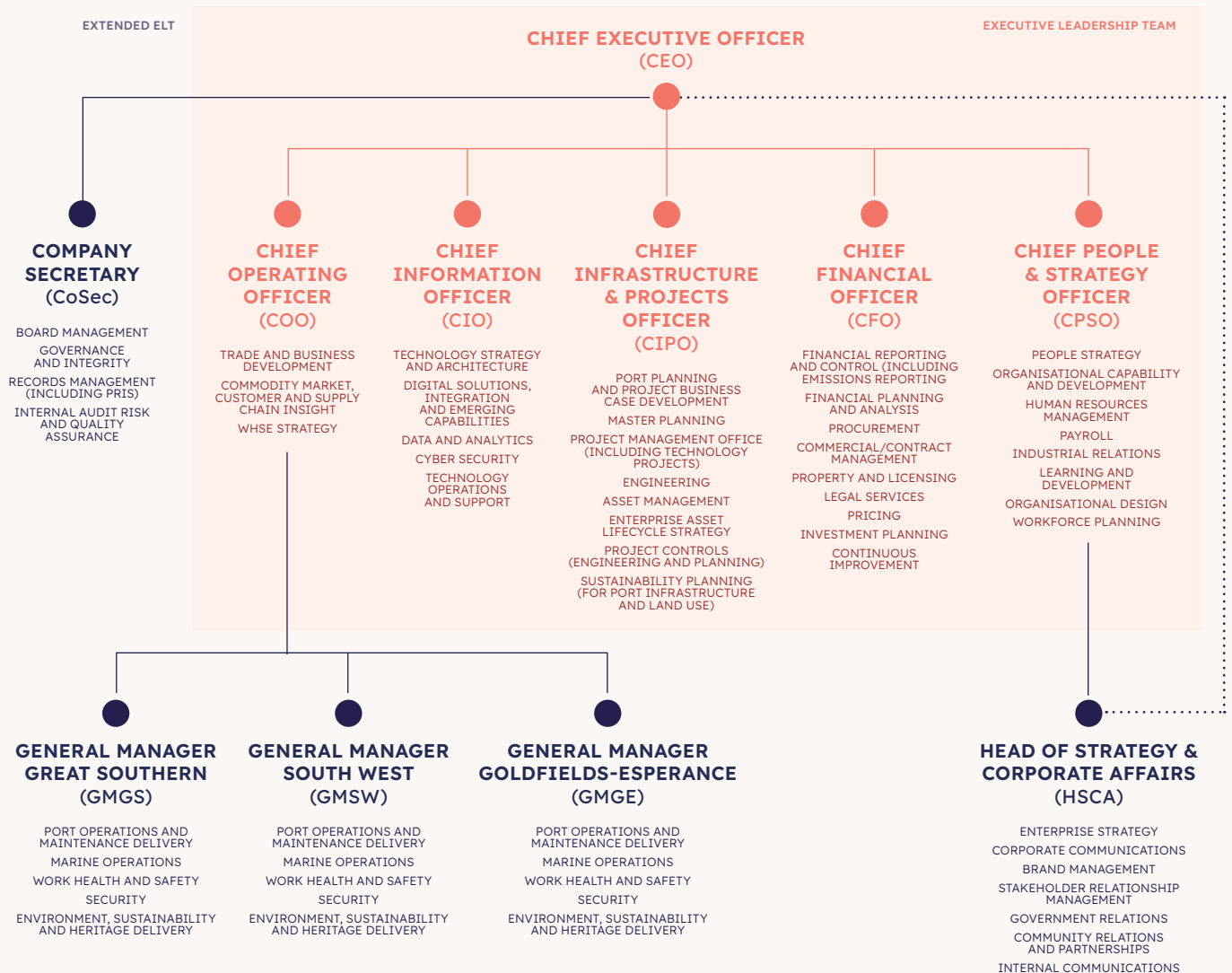
- **Chief Operating Officer** – reconfigured to integrate trade and business development with port operations, creating a single customer contact point.
- **General Manager South West** – strengthened regional leadership to match Bunbury's increasing operational complexity and growth trajectory.
- **Chief Infrastructure & Projects Officer** – consolidating oversight of the entire asset lifecycle from port planning through to project delivery.

Chief Infrastructure and Projects Officer

The Chief Infrastructure and Projects Officer (CIPO) is a new addition to the Executive Leadership Team, created to bring the entire asset lifecycle under a single point of accountability. Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, the CIPO will consolidate port planning, engineering, project delivery and asset management into one unified framework, providing the discipline and consistency needed to execute Southern Ports' capital pipeline and long-term development strategy.

The role establishes a centre of excellence for infrastructure investment, ensuring it is commercially aligned, technically robust and delivered to a consistent enterprise standard. The CIPO will work closely with the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer to align infrastructure development with operational requirements and financial rigour, with the Chief Information Officer to ensure technology-enabled projects meet enterprise standards, and with the Chief People and Strategy Officer to ensure stakeholder considerations, workforce capability and broader enterprise priorities are embedded into major infrastructure initiatives.

Organisational structure



Our ports

Southern Ports' ports are strategically located along the Western Australian southern coastline, readily accessible by a third of the state's mining and agriculture industry.

Port of Albany



5.7mt trade



171 vessel visits



36 people

**ABOUT
THE PORT**



The Port of Albany is located on Menang Boodjar, 400 kilometres south of Perth, within the Great Southern region of Western Australia. The gateway port offers four berths, leases for port-related industries, and access to port infrastructure and facilities. Adjacent to the city of Albany, the Port encompasses a landholding of 84 hectares surrounded by the waters of Princess Royal Harbour and King George Sound. Key commodities include grain, woodchips, silica sand and fertiliser. Alongside its trade operations, the Port is a premier cruise destination with significant heritage and tourism offerings and has a strong environmental and sustainability focus. As Western Australia's oldest port, it is historically significant to the region and state. This year, the Port marked its bicentenary, recognising 200 years of supporting trade, regional development and community in the Great Southern.

Port of Bunbury



16.9mt trade



418 vessel visits



81 people

**ABOUT
THE PORT**



Located on Wardandi Boodjar, 175 kilometres south of Perth on the waters of Koombana Bay, our Port of Bunbury is a gateway port with seven active berths. It provides leases for port-related industries and access to port infrastructure and facilities. Its strategic location, proximity to the Perth metropolitan area and expansive 470-hectare landholding position it to support the South West's growing industrial base and unlock future opportunities in advanced manufacturing, clean energy and emerging export industries. The Port handles a highly diversified mix of commodities including alumina, grain, spodumene, caustic soda, woodchips, mineral and silica sands, copper concentrate, sugar, fertiliser and scrap metal. It also welcomes cruise vessels and provides laydown capacity for breakbulk and project cargo.

Port of Esperance



9.7mt trade



184 vessel visits



127 people

**ABOUT
THE PORT**



Located on Wudjari Boodjar approximately 720 kilometres east-southeast of Perth in the Goldfields-Esperance region, our Port of Esperance is a gateway port offering full port and terminal services across three berths and a 75-hectare landholding. The Port handles a diverse mix of commodities including iron ore, grain, spodumene, petroleum products, woodchips, fertiliser, copper concentrate and nickel. It also supports container trade and welcomes cruise vessels. The Port of Esperance is the only deepwater port in southern Western Australia, and its multi-user iron ore export circuit provides a flexible pathway to market for multiple producers. As the region's second-largest employer, it also plays a significant role in creating jobs and strengthening regional prosperity.

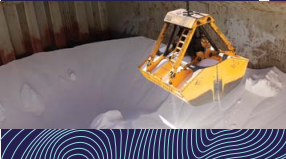
Vision and Values

Vision: Strong regional ports, strong regions.

 Put people first. Above innovation, above achievement, above ambition comes the safety and wellbeing of our team, our customers and our communities.	 Believe in better. We set the bar high, then go about raising it again every day. We are driven and determined, constantly striving for excellence.	 Embrace curiosity. Curiosity is a powerful tool. It leads us to look at things through new eyes. To explore new possibilities. To discover better ways of doing things for our customers and our communities.	 Find your voice. We don't judge failure. For it is only through failure that we learn to excel. So go ahead. Stand up. Speak up.	 Be greater together. We are collaborators. Champions of inclusivity. When we work together as one we can make great things happen. Together we are stronger.
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Strategic Direction

In 2025, Southern Ports introduced a bold new strategic direction, providing a clear framework to realise its vision of *strong regional ports, strong regions* – driving trade, empowering its people, strengthening its communities and embracing innovation to meet the evolving needs of its regions and to deliver value to the state.

STRATEGIC PILLARS AMBITION FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS	Proactive trade facilitation To drive trade facilitation, working collaboratively with customers and partners. 1 	High performance organisation To build an agile, future-focused culture that values workplace safety, equity, diversity and inclusivity; enhances employee experience and engagement; and engages best-in-class systems and processes. 2 	Enduring value To create enduring value for our communities and positively impact our regions through trust, engagement and the protection of heritage and the environment. 3 	Connection and future focus To forge opportunities for connection and drive business excellence through innovation, technology, and forward-thinking strategies. 4 
	FLEXIBLE CAPACITY We invest in flexible capacity to support current and new trade while leveraging our organisational strength to fund the growth of our assets.	SAFETY AND WELLBEING We cultivate mutual care and respect, where we prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our people and foster an environment where individuals contribute to the organisation's wellbeing.	ENRICHED REGIONS We develop the economic capability and resilience of our communities by facilitating trade through local employment, training, and business opportunities.	TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED PORTS We drive transformation through efficient, technology-enabled ports, leveraging near real-time data to enhance decision-making.
	CUSTOMER FOCUS We maintain a customer-focused approach that is responsive and balanced with commercial and risk imperatives to facilitate trade.	WORKFORCE EMPOWERMENT We ensure our workforce is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and mindset to thrive.	TRUSTED COMMUNITY PARTNER We strive to be a valued and trusted community partner through social investment, reconciliation and community development initiatives.	SOLUTIONS-FOCUSED We anticipate the evolving needs of our customers and communities and deliver innovative solutions supported by advanced technologies.
	TRADE ENABLEMENT We actively seek new trade opportunities beyond our current footprint and invest responsibly to diversify our services and stimulate new trade.	VALUE-ADDING EXCELLENCE We optimise our operations and services and implement efficient systems and processes to deliver value to our people and stakeholders.	CUSTODIANSHIP We safeguard the health of our assets by maximising their lifecycle, preventing degradation, and preserving their value for future generations.	ENERGY TRANSITION We advance Western Australia's energy transition by playing our role in the global clean energy trade and adopting leading sustainable technologies and practices within our operations.

Trade profile

Southern Ports facilitated more than 32 million tonnes of trade in 2026. Diversification continues to be a strong driver in Southern Ports' trade strategy, with our ports facilitating trade in bulk commodities, breakbulk and project cargo, and cruise operations.

The majority of Southern Ports infrastructure is dedicated to facilitating bulk commodity trades, connecting agriculture, mining and forestry industries to global destinations.

Bulk commodity imports and exports account for the majority of Southern Ports' trade profile across Albany, Bunbury and Esperance comprising 40 different commodities including alumina, grain, iron ore, spodumene, woodchips and caustic soda.

Southern Ports also has a key role in facilitating the state's transition to clean energy, primarily through the import of breakbulk cargo and the management of the largest and third largest lithium export ports globally (being the ports of Bunbury and Esperance respectively).

TOTAL TRADE



TOTAL VISITS



TOTAL EXPORTS



TOTAL IMPORTS



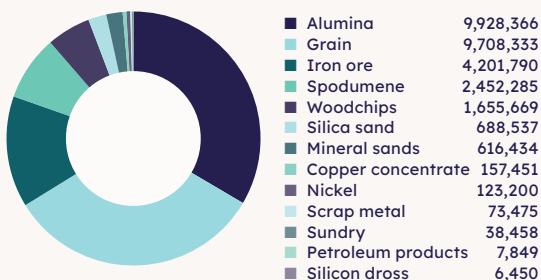
HIGHEST EXPORT COMMODITIES BY REVENUE YIELD



HIGHEST IMPORT COMMODITIES BY REVENUE YIELD



EXPORTS (TONNES)



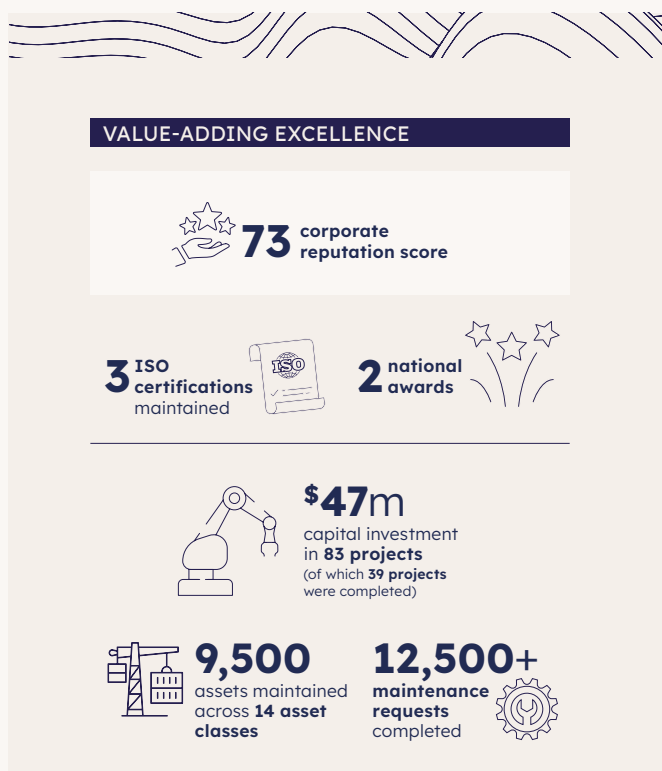
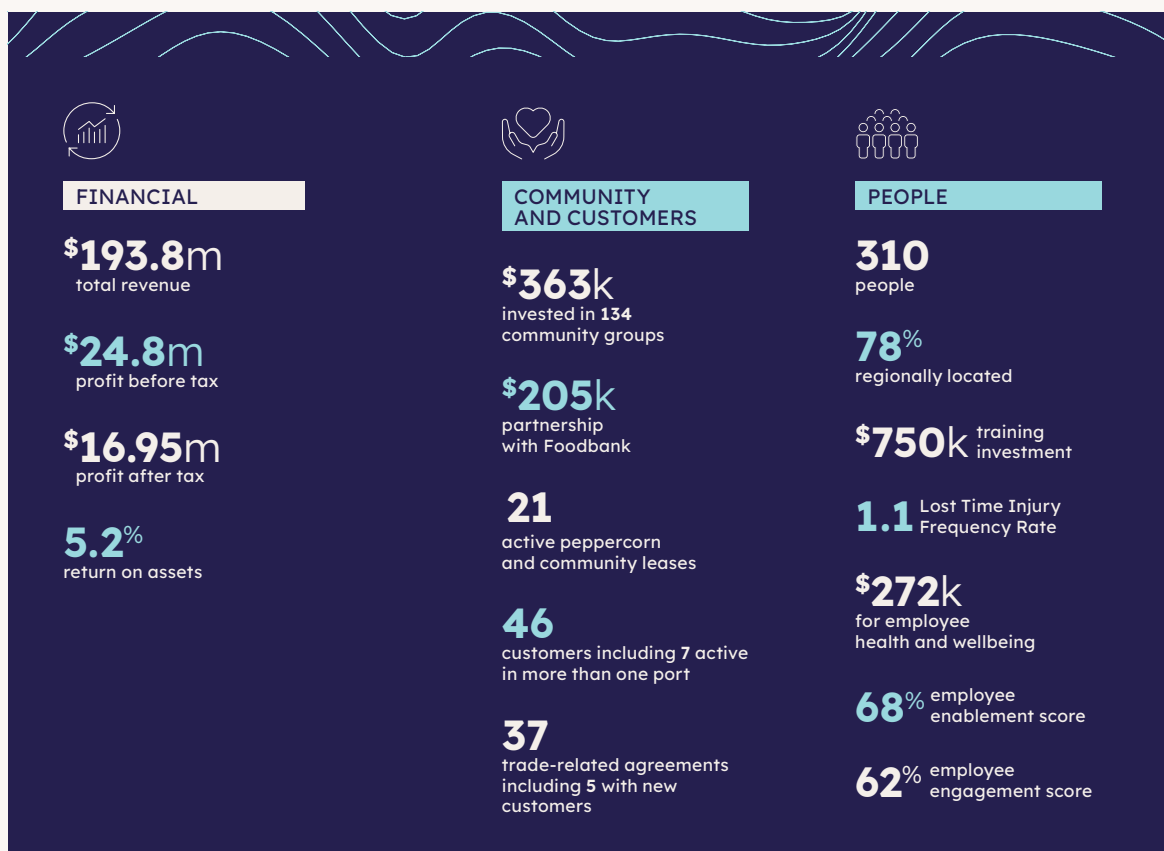
IMPORTS (TONNES)



Southern Ports' supply chain network



2026 results and profile



Executive Leadership Team

Keith Wilks, Chief Executive Officer

With three decades' experience in the port and maritime sectors, including many years at sea, Keith brings valuable operational experience in leading complex port operations, backed by proven strategic and leadership skills. Keith was appointed Chief Executive Officer in 2023. He was formerly Southern Ports' Chief Operating Officer for more than three years and has also held a range of senior and advisory roles at the Port of Newcastle, Port Authority of New South Wales and Svitzer.

Keith is a Director of Ports Australia, and holds a Bachelor of Commerce, Master Mariner certification, and a Diploma of Applied Science (Nautical Science) from the Australian Maritime College.

Aditya Asthana, Chief Financial Officer

Appointed as Chief Financial Officer in March 2024, Aditya joined Southern Ports after holding several leadership roles for large complex and geographically dispersed organisations such as Orica, Qantas and First Graphene Limited. With more than 20 years' international experience in finance and commercial management across Australia, Europe and Asia, Aditya's skills extend to strategic planning, business turnaround, major projects, capital raising, working capital management, mergers and acquisitions and risk management.

He holds a Bachelor of Business in Accounting and Finance and is a Certified Practising Accountant.

Monica Birkner, Chief People and Strategy Officer

Monica is a skilled corporate and business services professional with extensive public sector experience. Joining Southern Ports in 2020 after more than two decades in senior roles with the Northern Territory Government, Monica has high level skills in human resources, organisational design, governance, leadership, change management and strategic planning, backed by a strong understanding of policy and legislation.

She holds a Bachelor of Behavioural Science, a Diploma of Project Management and a Master of Business Administration. She is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Christian Lee, Chief Operating Officer (*appointed, commences October 2026*)

Christian has more than 20 years of operational leadership experience across infrastructure, mining, transport, logistics and the ports and marine sectors. He heads to Southern Ports from his role as Head of Asset Operations WA at APA Group, where he is responsible for the operation of gas transmission infrastructure across WA. He has also held senior operational leadership roles with Engage Marine, BHP and Kimberley Ports Authority, and has a strong understanding of ports and extensive experience leading high-risk, complex operations.

Christian holds a Master of Business Administration, a Graduate Certificate in Business, and project management qualifications.

Amber Smith, Chief Information Officer

Amber's extensive experience in the critical infrastructure and finance sectors spans two decades at the highest levels, including senior leadership roles at Australian Gas Infrastructure Group and the ASX-listed BNK Banking Corporation. Her skills extend to strategic planning and delivery, technology integration and innovation, operations management, risk management, project management, financial performance optimisation and people development.

She holds a Bachelor of Business Studies with Honours, an Advanced Diploma of Management, and relevant qualifications in change management, cyber security, enterprise architecture, project management and leadership. She is also a graduate of the London Business School Development Program.

Chief Infrastructure and Projects Officer (*Vacant*)

Board of Directors

Brad Geatches, Chair

Brad brings more than 30 years' senior executive experience in underground mining, airports and seaports. From 2007 to 2016 he was CEO of Perth Airport Pty Ltd and led a \$1.1 billion capital investment program that greatly expanded the airport's capacity and transformed the airport's customer experience. Prior to this, he was CEO of Cairns Port Authority, the operator of the Cairns airport and seaport, and CEO of Powercoal Pty Ltd, a company operating underground mines in NSW.

Brad served as Chair of Pilbara Ports from May 2019 to June 2024 and Deputy Chair from July 2024 to June 2026. He was also Chair of the Pilbara Ports Safety, Risk and Audit Committee from January 2025 until his departure.

He is a Director of Brisbane Airport, Canberra Airport and MATES in Construction WA.

Jane Cutler, Deputy Chair

Jane has a diverse range of experience in the resources, oil and gas, financial services, maritime, environment and technology industries. Her executive experience includes senior executive roles in public companies in the oil and gas sector, and as CEO of industry regulator National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority.

Jane has over 30 years of board experience, including with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority, ChemCentre, President of the WA Division of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, President of Institution of Chemical Engineers, and as a local government councillor.

Robyn Fenech

Robyn has an extensive background in regional economic development, tourism, agriculture and infrastructure planning. In addition to Robyn's experience managing tourism associations and working in business development within the water industry, Robyn has managed and owned a consultancy practice for over 20 years, which has built skills in strategic planning, governance, and industry and community consultation.

Robyn has been involved in strategy development and delivery within the South West region for many years, and was previously the Chair of the Bunbury Development Committee.

Veronica Jeffery

Veronica has more than 30 years of senior government leadership experience across diverse disciplines, in roles including Deputy Chief of Staff to Premiers Roger Cook and Mark McGowan, and Chief of Staff to Ministers in Transport and Planning and Culture and Arts. She has held executive positions at the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority and East Perth Redevelopment Authority where she played a central role in shaping and activating urban renewal precincts including Elizabeth Quay and Yagan Square.

Veronica's expertise spans strategic marketing and communications, stakeholder engagement and community relations, supported by strong capability in shaping policy and strategy.

Veronica currently serves on the Boards of the Arts and Culture Trust and Connect Victoria Park Inc.

Hon Ben Morton

Ben is a former elected member of Federal Parliament, representing the Western Australian electorate of Tangney. He served as a Minister in the Australian Government between 2019 and 2022, including as Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Minister for the Public Service, and Special Minister of State.

Before entering Federal Parliament, Ben worked for Western Australian builder and building supply company BGC, and was State Director of the Liberal Party of Western Australia between 2008 and 2015.

Ben is Chair of the Harry Perkins Institute of Medical Research, Chair of the Perth Bears Rugby League Club, Commissioner of the Insurance Commission of Western Australia, Director of Celebrate WA and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

David Welch

David is an experienced and well credentialed senior executive with a successful track record in the planning, development and operation of logistics and infrastructure supply chains for commodities markets, including coal, iron ore, grain and industrial products.

For a decade, he held senior executive positions within Aurizon Holdings Limited, including VP Iron Ore, VP Market Development and EVP Strategy and Business Development. He has had direct responsibility for strategy, business transformation and performance, commercial negotiations, stakeholder engagement, major projects, joint venture management, merger and acquisition and business development.

David was previously the Managing Director of The Millennium Group from 1998 to 2006 and was a marketing manager of CSBP Limited (part of the Wesfarmers conglomerate) in the development of mining reagent and agriculture products from 1989 to 1994.

Additional Information

Southern Ports website	Click here
Corporate publications	Click here
Southern Ports LinkedIn	Click here

Locations:

Perth	Level 4, 679 Murray St, West Perth WA
Bunbury	54 Casuarina Drive, Bunbury WA
Albany	85 Brunswick Road, Albany WA
Esperance	The Esplanade, Esperance WA

Position Information

Position title	Chief Infrastructure and Projects Officer
Department	Executive
Location	Albany, Bunbury, Esperance or Perth
Classification	Contract

Position Summary

The Chief Infrastructure and Projects Officer (CIPO) is accountable for the end-to-end planning, development and delivery of Southern Ports asset base, ensuring infrastructure investment is commercially aligned, technically robust and delivered to a consistent enterprise standard.

As a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the CIPO provides single point accountability for the asset lifecycle from concept and planning through to project delivery and operational handover, followed by sustaining asset management, enabling the organisation to execute its capital pipeline, long-term development strategy and asset standards with discipline and consistency.

The role ensures that port planning, engineering, project delivery and asset management are integrated into a unified framework, supporting safe, efficient and future ready port infrastructure.

Key Relationships

Internal

- Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- Executive Leadership Team
- Regional General Managers

External

- Relevant Federal & State Government Departments
- Customers and Port Users
- Industry stakeholders and supply chain partners
- Community and regional stakeholders

Key Accountabilities

Accountability	Major Activities
Strategy	• Ensure the effective execution of Southern Ports' infrastructure and port development strategy by aligning long term planning, engineering and project delivery with commercial priorities, supply chains and future trade requirements. • Lead the planning and development of Southern Ports' asset base, ensuring infrastructure investment is aligned to future trade demand, commercial priorities and long-term organisational strategy. • Ensure the effective delivery of the capital program through a consistent, enterprise-wide project management framework that drives performance, governance and value realisation. • Establish a unified approach to asset lifecycle management, integrating planning, engineering and delivery to enable seamless transition to operations and maximise long-term asset performance.
Leadership and Culture	• Lead the Infrastructure and Projects team and support Southern Ports cultural objectives by role modelling Southern Ports values and behaviours. • Champion the roll out and delivery of Southern Ports strategies and organisational improvement initiatives • Lead the Infrastructure and Projects team and the development of workforce plan to ensure that the operations function has sufficient capacity and capability to meet the current and future needs of the business.

Key Accountabilities	
Accountability	Major Activities
Asset Planning and Development	• Lead port planning and engineering functions to ensure infrastructure concepts are technically feasible and aligned with future demand. • Establish and maintain long-term development plans for each port aligned to trade forecasts and strategic priorities. • Ensure planning decisions reflect whole-of-life asset considerations. • Lead the port planning regulatory approvals process for proponent developments within the port boundary.
Engineering and Technical Authority	• Provide enterprise leadership of engineering standards, design integrity and technical assurance. • Ensure a single source of technical truth across all infrastructure projects. • Maintain oversight of engineering risk and compliance. • Ensure a fit for purpose asset management system is developed and maintained in accordance with ISO550000 series principles.
Project Management Office (PMO) and Capital Delivery	• Establish and lead an enterprise Project Management Office function including, frameworks, standards project controls commercial contract management. • Manage portfolio forecasting, prioritisation, sequencing, and resource alignment • Deliver capital and major maintenance projects through a consistent governance and delivery framework. • Ensure separation between project delivery and operational activities to maintain focus and discipline. • Partner with the ELT, Regional General Managers and Functional leads to ensure effective transition from planning to execution and handback to operations including change management. • Ensure consistent, effective project and contract management discipline is applied across all projects.
Sustainability and Heritage (Strategic)	• Embed sustainability and heritage into infrastructure planning and development. • Ensure long-term environmental and cultural considerations are embedded at design stage. • Maintain alignment with regulatory, community and stakeholder expectations.
Commercial and Executive Collaboration	• Partner with the COO to ensure infrastructure development aligns with operational requirements, supply chains and customer outcomes. • Work with the CFO to ensure capital investment is financially robust and contractually sound. • Work with the CPSO to ensure stakeholder considerations, workforce capability and broader enterprise priorities are embedded into major infrastructure initiatives. • Collaborate with the ELT to ensure digital and technology enabled projects align with enterprise priorities. • Collaborate with CIO to ensure technology projects are compliant to relevant regulatory requirements
Governance, Risk and Assurance	• Ensure robust governance frameworks for planning, engineering and project delivery. • Maintain oversight of infrastructure related risks including costs, delivery, safety and compliance. • Lead assurance processes and manage strategic and portfolio risks • Support audit, compliance, and regulatory obligations • Provide clear, timely reporting to the CEO, ELT and Board.

Selection Criteria
Leadership Profile
• Demonstrates enterprise leadership aligned to organisational values. • Builds alignment across commercial, operational and technical functions. • Leads with integrity, accountability and disciplined decision making. • Fosters a culture of collaboration, innovation and delivery excellence.
Essential
• Extensive executive leadership experience in infrastructure, engineering, capital delivery, asset management or related sectors. • Demonstrated experience leading large scale capital programs and complex project portfolios. • Strong commercial acumen with the ability to align infrastructure investment to strategic and financial outcomes. • Proven ability to establish and lead enterprise-wide project management and infrastructure planning functions. • Deep understanding of asset lifecycle management and engineering governance. • Experience operating in complex, multi-stakeholder and regulated environments. • Exceptional stakeholder engagement, negotiation and influencing capability. • Demonstrated ability to drive organisational alignment and reduce duplication across functions. • Demonstrated resilience and sound judgement in complex, high pressure environments, with the ability to manage competing priorities and sustain performance through periods of change. • Current C Class Driver's Licence. • Ability to obtain a Maritime Security Identification Card (MSIC).
Desirable
• Experience leading the enterprise asset management function in an infrastructure intensive business such as ports, transport, mining or similar. • Experience in integrating digital/technology into infrastructure and asset management. • Postgraduate qualifications in engineering, business or a related discipline.