



Lake Butler Marina Fact Sheet: Historical Overview & Funding Arrangements

History of Lake Butler Marina

- Pre-2000: The Lake Butler Marina was a functional maritime asset managed by the South Australian Government, consisting of key infrastructure such as the main channel, sheet piling, wharf structures, and breakwater. These are now referred to as “legacy assets.”
- 2000: Ownership of the marina was transferred to the District Council of Robe by the State Government. As part of this handover, Council was provided a \$740,000 contribution to assist with future maintenance of the infrastructure.
- Post-2000: The Council undertook significant development of the marina, installing floating berths and associated infrastructure (e.g. pontoons, straddle jetties, and utilities). These are considered “non-legacy assets.”
- 2005–2024: A Commercial Lease and then a Head Lease–Underlease model was introduced to govern marina berth occupation. Initial underleases were for 99 years, which has since been revised to 35 years under new leasing arrangements to ensure more flexibility and compliance with legal standards.
- 2024–2025: A comprehensive review of marina operations and governance was undertaken, resulting in the endorsement of a new underlease model, improved definitions of permitted uses, and greater clarity around maintenance responsibilities and fee structures.

Funding Legacy Assets: The Administration Fee

What Are Legacy Assets?

- Entrance channel
- Wharf structures
- Sheet piling
- Fuel wharf
- Breakwater

What Are Non-Legacy Assets?

- Floating pontoons and berths
- Utilities
- Straddle jetties (excluding the carrier and boat ramp)

What is the Administration Fee?

- Paid annually by Underlessees as part of “Outgoings”
- Funds Marina Costs (management, administration, and maintenance)
- Contributes to a Sinking Fund for contingent maintenance liabilities

Can the Fee Be Used for Legacy Assets?

- Yes. Legal advice confirms:
- There is no restriction in lease documents limiting the fee to non-legacy assets
- The fee covers all marina infrastructure, legacy and non-legacy
- It may be used for capital improvements, not just maintenance or renewal

Why Is This Important?

- Some users have suggested the fee should only apply to floating berths
- Legal and strategic advice confirms that Council can—and should—apply a holistic funding approach across the full marina asset base

Interdependence of Legacy and Non-Legacy Assets

While the Lake Butler Marina is comprised of both legacy assets (like the channel, wharves and breakwater) and non-legacy assets (such as the floating berths and utilities), neither set of infrastructure can function successfully in isolation.

- The legacy assets provide the foundational access and protection—without a navigable channel or breakwater, vessels cannot safely enter or berth at the marina.
- The non-legacy assets enable modern functionality and user experience—without them, the marina would not meet the needs of today's commercial fishers, recreational boaters or tourism operators.

As such, the marina must be managed as a single, integrated system. Funding, maintenance, and renewal strategies must reflect this interdependence to ensure the entire precinct remains safe, accessible, and commercially viable.

