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Troy Buswell
Minister for Transport; Housing; Emergency Services

Thu 19 January, 2012

State commits to growth at Esperance Port

Portfolio: Transport

- ~ **Export capacity at Esperance Port to increase by up to 20 mtpa**
- ~ **Private sector interest sought to expand capacity for iron ore exports**

Export capacity at Esperance Port will potentially increase by up to 20 million tonnes per annum (mtpa) in a staged plan, with the State Government today formally committing to expansion of the port.

Transport Minister Troy Buswell said the Government would embark on a market sounding exercise to identify private sector interest in expanding the port's capacity for iron ore exports.

Mr Buswell said significant work had been undertaken to explore options to expand port capacity at both Esperance and Kwinana.

The Minister said the decision to expand capacity from 11 mtpa to about 20 mtpa in the first instance at Esperance Port instead of Kwinana was influenced by a recently completed study into the Yilgarn province's burgeoning iron ore industry and the fact that \$120million was being spent to upgrade the port's road and rail access.

"The study showed 11 of the 12 miners preferred Esperance over Kwinana in relation to their individual export needs," he said.

"The Yilgarn province is a rapidly developing iron ore region and, based on current iron ore prices, has the potential to earn the State up to \$150million a year in royalties which can be invested into schools, hospitals, roads, police and other essential services for the community.

"Currently about 12 million tonnes of iron ore comes out of the Yilgarn and it is a potential source of more than 15 billion tonnes of magnetite and one billion tonnes of high-grade haematite ore.

"This is a very exciting time for Esperance, however we need to act fast if Western Australia is to reap the reward of current high iron ore prices."

The Department of Transport would work closely with Esperance Ports Sea and Land on the port expansion proposal.

"Esperance Ports Sea and Land has a strong management team and the skills and capacity to proceed with a major project like this. Engaging the private sector will minimise costs and risks to the Government," Mr Buswell said.

Fact File

- ~ **Esperance handles more than 200 ships a year and more than 11m tonnes of trade**
- ~ **Discussions with the private sector regarding their willingness to invest in new bulk loading and storage facilities on behalf of Esperance Ports Sea and Land are expected to start early this year**

Minister's office - 6552 6400

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