



Mid West Development Commission Media Statement

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Oakajee moves another major step forward

The Mid West Development Commission applauds the announcement that the Federal Government has committed \$339M towards the development of the Oakajee port.

Chair of the Commission Board, Ms Robyn Parsons, said the announcement in last night's Federal Budget was most welcome and moves the development of Oakajee including the port, industrial estate and rail link a significant step closer to reality. Ms Parsons also praised the leadership shown by the Premier in committing State funds to the project and securing matching Federal support.

Commission CEO Steve Douglas said that the development of Oakajee has been a major focus of the Commission and its Mid West Strategic Infrastructure Group for the past four years.

"The Infrastructure Group, Chaired by Commission Board member Garry Collins, has expended considerable effort in supporting Oakajee's development. The Infrastructure Group is also strongly focussed on supporting the development of other key infrastructure required by the mines which would deliver the tonnages necessary to underpin the Oakajee business case" he said. "That work is continuing."

Mr Douglas added that in these uncertain times, the announcement would provide a further "shot in the arm" for a Mid West economy that was holding up reasonably well, but showing signs of slowing.

Mr Douglas also noted the strong progress being made by Oakajee Port and Rail, and major miners including Gindalbie Metals, Asia iron, Murchison Metals and Midwest Corporation.

The next key milestone is the completion by OPR of a bankable feasibility study. Expected to be completed in March 2010, a positive commercial outcome would see construction of Oakajee get underway in early 2011 with first exports in 2014.

Mr Douglas also drew attention to the timely announcement by the Minister for Planning last week that a Mid West Planning Committee would be established. Mr Douglas said the Commission had been advocating strongly for more comprehensive planning in the Mid West for some time and was pleased this will now happen. Together with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and local government, the Commission will be an integral player on the Committee which will help deliver better regional planning and development outcomes.

The identification and development of strategic transport and services corridors, particularly those related to Oakajee was crucial. Also vital was the need for further planning to support communities to manage the expected growth in population and business activity.

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