

Esperance Port Multi-User Iron Ore Facility

Transport Minister Troy Buswell announced yesterday (Thursday, January 31) that the private sector interested in designing, financing, building and operating a new multi-user iron ore facility (MUIOF) at the Esperance Port can participate in a Registration of Interest and Pre-qualification (ROIP) process.

A market sounding exercise conducted in 2012 indicated a clear need to examine the possibility of increasing export infrastructure at the Port to handle an additional 10 to 12 million tonnes a year, up from the operating licence of 11.5 million tonnes per year.

Although this process does not guarantee that the project will go ahead at this time, the proposed MUIOF intends to meet an emerging demand for iron ore export infrastructure, particularly from the Yilgarn Region.

The multi user iron ore facility would be located entirely within the Esperance port boundary and would need to comply with all current environmental licences, which have made Esperance's iron ore handling operations among the world's best environmentally

The Port's rail network will be upgraded and strengthened to cater for the increase tonnages of iron ore being handled. The Port transport corridor is currently being upgraded to streamline transport movements, including rail, into and out of the Port.

Registration to pre-qualify to participate in a Request for Proposal (RFP) process is the first stage to identify companies and consortia with the experience and financial capability to undertake this project.

The ROIP will:

- Re-affirm the interest of those companies who indicated interest in the project during the market sounding exercise;
- Identify potential proponents;
- Bind potential proponents to a new participation deed that deals with probity and confidentiality matters; and
- Provide EPSL with information on the ability of proponents to meet the requirements to finance, design, build and operate the MUIOF.

Interested parties have until 5pm on Friday, March 1, to register.

Following the closure of registrations on March 1, applications will be reviewed by an evaluation panel comprising a range of technical advisors.

By the end of April, a short list of qualified entities will be invited to provide details on how they will progress the project, and they will be invited to submit bids for final assessment.

These will be assessed by the evaluation panel and the preferred proponent appointed by the third quarter of 2013. Construction of the MUIOF will begin in early 2014 and be completed by early 2015.

The RFP process commits the Port to a fair and competitive selection process and ensures the best possible outcomes for the users of the facility and the Government, which owns the Port.

The local community will be kept informed about the progress of the project and any issues and concerns will be dealt with.

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