

**4 September 2008**

### **Shire of Chapman Valley progresses plans for Oakajee**

Chapman Valley Shire is progressing plans towards the development of the Oakajee port and rail infrastructure required to support the Mid West's resource expansion.

Under the direction of the local Council, and new Chief Executive Dirk Sellenger, the Shire is confident that it will meet the challenges that lay ahead following the recent announcement of Oakajee Port and Rail (OPR) as the preferred proponent for the Oakajee port project.

Mr Sellenger said the Shire enjoys an excellent working relationship with OPR and is pleased with the government's recent announcement.

"We are looking forward to moving the project ahead in a timely and efficient manner", said Mr Sellenger. "The recent announcement has meant that we can continue to progress with plans to secure the necessary skills and resources required to carry out a project of this size."

"Our plan is to appoint additional staff when required to assist with the extra workload associated with the development and we will continue to build on the synergies between the public and private sector to meet the challenges of tomorrow."

Shire President John Collingwood said there is no room for complacency given the huge scale of the project, which is set to become one of the State's largest bulk commodity ports unlocking the potential of the Mid-West region.

"OPR believed the key factors in securing its nomination involved the appointment of experienced experts and a commitment to delivering the best outcome for the region," said Cr Collingwood.

"It is a successful approach that we are also undertaking to support the project. We are just as committed to the achieving the best possible environmental and social outcomes, which also includes keeping the community abreast of what is happening in our Shire. We look forward to continue to work in partnership with OPR, the Geraldton Port Authority and Landcorp to achieve the best possible outcomes."

OPR Chief Executive Christopher Eves welcomed the support of the President and Councillors of the Shire of Chapman Valley.

"OPR has discussed a broad agreement with the Shire which touches on a range of matters to enable the Shire to meet its obligations in relation to the Oakajee port project," said Mr Eves.

“Our immediate priority is the preparation of a Development Agreement as well as extensive discussions with State Government.

“Following the signing of the Development Agreement toward the end of the year, we will be in a position to advance our discussions with local governments and local stakeholders.”

- Ends -

For further information:

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