



MEDIA STATEMENT

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ALLIANCE MEMBERS LEADING THE WAY WITH ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

The Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance and its members are demonstrating their commitment to the environment in real terms, conducting extensive environmental research on rare flora and fauna species, particularly in the Banded Iron Formation (BIF) ranges.

Prior to exploration for mining in the region, relatively little survey and research work had been undertaken, so the information they are gathering is integral to effectively and sustainably managing the environment.

Alliance member Mt Gibson Iron Ltd is currently funding a multi-million dollar research program into propagation and trans-location of rare species.

According to Mt Gibson Managing Director Luke Tonkin, this research is showing an outstanding level of success.

"We have seen a 90% success rate after 24 months in a trial to re-introduce one rare flora species, *Darwinia Masonii*, back into the area," Mr Tonkin explained.

"In another case, we have discovered an estimated 12,900 additional *Lepidosperma* sp Mt Gibson plants, increasing the known population by approximately 73%."

Another GIOA member, Gindalbie Metals' is currently undertaking a research project working with the WA Herbarium to investigate new *Acacia* species from the Blue Hill Range, which has been the subject of its Karara iron ore project proposal.

"As a result of the *Acacia* research, one of the species has now been classified as a Declared Rare Flora, and the resulting paper was recently published in the scientific journal 'Nuytsia'," Gindalbie Community Relations and Environment Manager, Greg Kaeding explained.

"Additional research will be required to determine the distribution and abundance of the species in other areas of the Blue Hill Range, which will determine further requirements for protection."

As part of their approvals submission, Gindalbie have also shown their support for a proposed conservation park in the region by committing funds to assist its field management - an aspect that would otherwise potentially be financially under-resourced.

They are also proposing that a full time position with the WA Herbarium be established to carry out further taxonomy of flora of the BIF ranges, including description, identification, naming, and classification of different species.

“The analysis and research our members are currently undertaking is demonstrating the Mid West region can confidently progress to a world class iron ore province that provides significant social and economic benefits to the regional community in a way that maintains the region’s environmental integrity,” GIOA Deputy Chairman Rob Jefferies said.

Mr Jefferies said environmental responsibility did not stop with research but carried through at all levels of its members’ operations.

“To this end, we particularly welcome the completion of the Berth 5 ship loader, at the Geraldton Port,” Mr Jefferies said.

“The upgrade features enclosed conveyors and a totally controlled system to transport iron ore from shed to ship, capturing any dust internally so that the aesthetics of the Geraldton environment will be maintained.”

Media Contacts:

Rob Jefferies, Deputy Chairman, GIOA – Tel: 0407 447 923
Issued by: Warrick Hazeldine and Caroline Thomson, Purple Communications – Tel: 9485 1254

About the GIOA

The Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance was formed in December 2005 by a group of companies with iron ore deposits in the Geraldton/Mid West area of Western Australia. The primary role of the Alliance is to promote the development of a viable and successful iron ore industry in the region.

Iron ore is one of the most exciting new growth sectors to emerge in the diverse Mid West economy, which already includes a substantial mining sector. Spanning an area of more than 470,000 square kilometres, the Mid West region is richly endowed with iron ore and well serviced by road, rail and port infrastructure. Geraldton is the region’s commercial, administrative and service centre and is located just 400 kilometres north of Perth.

Membership of the Alliance has now expanded to eight companies, each of which is exploring, developing or expanding its iron ore projects. Collectively, the members have the capacity to develop a substantial new iron ore export industry, delivering significant economic benefits to both large and small regional communities. The members are:

- Mount Gibson Iron Limited
- Midwest Corporation Limited
- Murchison Metals Ltd
- Gindalbie Metals Ltd
- Golden West Resources Limited
- Atlas Iron Limited
- Royal Resources Limited
- Asia Iron Holdings Limited

The members of the Alliance have agreed to cooperate in all key areas of the industry’s development, with particular focus on infrastructure, statutory approvals and Government/community relations.

While all members of the Alliance have different development strategies, each recognises the benefit of promoting common-user infrastructure, advocating the region's infrastructure requirements and working closely with stakeholders.

Geraldton and the Mid West is currently the second fastest growing iron ore producing area in Australia and, given supportive Government policies and the goodwill of local communities, the area could be transformed over the next decade into the second most significant iron ore producing region in Australia, exporting some 50-60 million tonnes per annum of iron ore products, including a significant proportion of value-added products such as concentrate/pellets.

The Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance has an Independent Chairman, Mr Clive Brown, a former Western Australian Government State Development Minister who, during his tenure, was responsible for all resource projects in Western Australia.

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