



Minister pledges speedy approval

JOSH BURROWS

MINES and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore has pledged to expedite the resources approval process.

Mr Moore said the red tape surrounding the process of approving mine sites needed to be cut away because it had been a major burden to the State.

"I intend to overhaul the approvals process to enable timely decision making for the industry," he told the *Geraldton Guardian*.

The Minister is planning to meet Mid West industry representatives and departmental staff on a regular basis to for-



Rob Jefferies

mulate the best way for the State and the industry to move forward.

"My priority issue at the moment is a complete overhaul of the approvals process in order to raise levels of certainty and confidence in the resource sector by focusing on the best ways to help industry push ahead with developing our vast natural resources," he said.

"The mining and resource sector is the engine room of this State's economy and as such

needs responsible and experienced management — something the previous Labor Government failed to deliver."

This decision follows Mr Moore's criticism of the previous Labor administration after the release of Auditor General Colin Murphy's report, "Improving Resource Project Approvals".

The Auditor General found that the ex-Government's recent efforts to streamline the State's cumbersome resources approval process in 2003, which had cost \$37.4 million, had largely failed.

Mr Moore said the Government intended to review the system thoroughly and the Auditor General's findings would be taken into account.

Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance chief executive Rob Jefferies said the benefits of streamlining the approval processes would be substantial for the Mid West.

"Projects will be able to get up a lot quicker. It will also mean there will be a lot more confidence from the overseas market and overseas partners that are typically in the Mid West iron ore industry," he said.

"We had the chance to brief the Minister prior to the election, so we know he has a good understanding of the industry."