



Mid West set for take-off

A REPORT released on Wednesday outlining the economic benefits of a mining expansion in the Mid West has predicted 12,762 new jobs and \$32 billion for the State over a 25-year period.

Commissioned by the Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance, the report was prepared by Economics Consulting Services and drew together the social and economic impacts of the iron ore projects in the Mid West.

Economist and co-author of the report Dr Brian Martin said he had never seen anything like this before and that the numbers were dramatic. "This is our report and these numbers are as good as we get. They are not optimistic, they are realistic," he said.

The predicted economic impact of the mining in the region was said to produce \$2.5 billion for the Mid West over 25 years.

Alliance chairman Clive

Brown said the future of the Mid West was exciting to think about but urged the companies, Government and the community to act quickly.

"The challenge is to be timely while the demand is strong and the prices are high to establish an industry," he said. "We are looking at billions of dollars of investment over a short period to develop the mines ... increased population and, above all, opportunities for young people to acquire skills and secure long-term careers," he said.

Former Geraldton Mayor Ian Carpenter came out in support of the report and said it identified the enormous potential for the Mid West as an area of employment. This was echoed by the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry's chief executive Melanie Davies, who said the chamber was looking to create an economic development committee to help drive the boom.

Mr Brown said he was almost certain a second port at Oakajee, would be needed, requiring new infrastructure.

"The numbers presented today are very challenging, almost daunting. The State Government will be spending a lot of money," he said.

Mid West Development Commission chief executive Steve Douglas said the report was fantastic, while the Department of Planning and Infrastructure also welcomed the news.

"It shows the broad economic and social impacts of the iron ore industry for the region as a whole," said Ian Williams from the DPI.

"It gives a context for the infrastructure, such as the Oakajee port and railway, that is needed for the industry to grow in the long term.

"We look forward to reading the report in detail."



Bright future: Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance chairman Clive Brown with Economics Consulting Services' Dr Brian Martin.