



Mid West must seize the day

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THE Mid West is at a cross-roads and must seize opportunities quickly or risk economic decline, says local businessman and councillor Rob Jefferies.

Addressing yesterday's Economic Summit delegates in Geraldton, Mr Jefferies said the Mid West must move quickly to

secure economic growth and prevent social decline.

"Fail to act and face a

declining economy and escalation of the social problems facing our community," he said.

Mr Jefferies called on the Mid West to capitalise on the prosperity of the current market and share the spoils with the more disadvantaged in the community.

He said while the Mid West community as a whole is ageing the indigenous population is rapidly growing and is "seri-

ously growing and is seriously disadvantaged".

The current local economy gave an opportunity to turn-around the disadvantaged in the community and develop a skilled labour force.

"We must start by securing economic growth and then ensure jobs and opportunities, resulting in wealth and social benefits flow fairly," he said.

Mr Jefferies called on action within the community to make





a meaningful change in the Mid West.

“Absolute determination is needed to make any meaningful change,” he said.

“The region may never see an opportunity of this nature again.”

According to the recently released Government’s Strategic Review of the iron ore industry in the Mid West, the region has been labelled with an evolving economy.

The review said mining contributed 45 per cent of the

region’s gross profit. Agriculture was the next largest contributor at 10.5 per cent.

So looking forward the Mid West would rely on mining and agriculture to survive.

The review described iron ore as the one “bright light for the long-term future” of the Mid West.

“The only means of growing the prosperity of the region is undoubtedly the continued development of the iron ore industry,” the review said.

However, Mr Jefferies said our major industry is at threat from the Government’s environmental approvals processes.

“It has never been so difficult to progress projects and developments as it is now,” Mr Jefferies said.

“Even in the face of significant social imperatives and with strong community support.

“The Mid West is at a crossroads and we must move forward.”