



Indigenous employment policy a West Australian first

City initiative leads way

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THE City of Geraldton-Greenough is one of the first Local Governments in Western Australia to initiate an Indigenous Employment Policy.

The policy aims to improve outcomes for indigenous job seekers through pre-training, pre-interviewing and traineeship opportunities.

City of Geraldton-Greenough community development manager and a member of the City reconciliation committee, Neil Bennett, said the City was a major employer in the community and should lead by example.

"We have 400 full-time employees working at the City and only eight are indigenous, yet indigenous people make up 6-8 per cent of Geraldton's population," Mr Bennett said.

"This policy is one way the City

can take a lead role in Geraldton's reconciliation process."

Geraldton Iron Ore Alliance Deputy Chairman Rob Jefferies said the City's employment policy was a positive step forward.

"There are not enough opportunities offered to indigenous people in this region," Mr Jefferies said.

The minerals industry is the largest private sector employer of indigenous people, with five per cent of its direct workforce identifying as indigenous.

Mr Jefferies said the mining industry realised that there were barriers for many indigenous people that prevented them taking up employment and were currently developing an employment policy of their own.

"The Mid West Interim Regional Partnership Steering Group, formed in November last year, is working on a strategy for indigenous employment," Mr Jefferies said.

"We want the iron ore industry to be the leader in indigenous employment and the strategy will help create a capacity to develop pathways to jobs.

"This may include things such as job preparation, mentoring and cross cultural awareness," he said.

The City Reconciliation Committee is currently developing the policy for council and will vote on the proposal at the next Committee meeting on September 4.

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— ROB JEFFERIES,
GERALDTON IRON ORE ALLIANCE