

Brookfield plan 'could expedite Oakejoe'

# Southern rail option



John Langouliant

## Port will go on! CEO

OAKEJOE Port and Rail CEO John Langouliant yesterday said he was optimistic the \$5.9 billion Oakejoe Port and Rail project "will proceed".

But he urged delegates at the Mid West Economic and Resources Summit to show patience.

"For a project of this size, we have made very good progress," he said.

"Those who say we should have started construction earlier need to remember that we need to have approvals in place.

"We can't move on construction without approvals."

Mr Langouliant said OPR expected heritage and environmental approvals in the next few months — and to shift its focus from engineering studies to contracts and procurement.

He said he was confident China's demand for iron ore would expand within the timeframe for project to succeed.

He estimated operating costs at \$5.45 per tonne which, compared to other greenfields projects, was "extremely competitive".

He expected to finalise talks with Crosslands, Karara and Sinosteel over supply chain agreements by the end of the calendar year.

— Gavin Box

### GAVIN BOX 9956 1041

BROOKFIELD Rail has revealed a \$500 million rail plan to link southern Mid West mines with Oakejoe Port.

In a presentation today at the Mid West Economic and Resources Summit, CEO Paul Larsen will advance his company's case for a staged development of Oakejoe.

Mr Larsen told the *Guardian* yesterday that a southern rail line would complement Oakejoe Port and Rail's northern rail plan and pave the way for the project to get off the ground faster.

The company has already started work on upgrading 200km of existing narrow gauge rail lines from Morawa to Narnungulu via Mullewa to both standard and narrow gauge — and with concrete sleepers.

The upgrade would link existing mine operations at Karara and Extension Hill, which are further advanced than northern mines Jack Hills and Weld Range.

The latter would be serviced under OPR's proposed rail route.

The Brookfield plan also opens the door to

connect to a national rail network via Leonora.

Narnungulu is 23km from Oakejoe, but the State Government

has identified a rail corridor from the industrial centre to the proposed mine site.

Mr Larsen said the company expected the upgrade to be complete within the next 12 months.

"We strongly support the Oakejoe port development but we think a staged development should occur," Mr Larsen said.

"Under this plan the southern mines could come on stream first and the northern mines could come online once they're ready.

"It helps Oakejoe get away earlier."

Mr Larsen said he rejected critics' claims that the southern rail route traversed too many curves and hills.

"In Queensland they move more than 150 million tonnes of coal through the same sort of terrain — hills and curves — no problem," he said.

TALLERING PEAK

MULLEWA

MARNUNGULLU

Existing WestNet Rail Narrow Gauge  
Upgraded WestNet Rail Narrow Gauge  
Proposed Upgraded WestNet Rail Dual Gauge  
Options connecting WestNet Rail & OPR networks

OPR Standard Gauge  
Proposed KML Dual Gauge

MORAWA

PERENJIORI

KARARA

EXTENSION HILL

### Rail connections:

A map of Brookfield Rail's southern Oakejoe rail link proposal

Mr Larsen said the company's \$500 million plus investment in the Mid West could facilitate more than 30 mtpa of iron ore deliveries into Oakejoe.

"We will be pushing ahead with the development of the Oakejoe to Narnungulu railway," he said. "It will help get tonnes to Oakejoe Port and will connect the rest of the State's rail network to the Oakejoe Port."

Earlier yesterday, OPR CEO John Langouliant said his company observed discussion of staged port and rail development "with interest".

"We can't forget the significant investment in the northern part of the region," he said. "The integrated nature of the infrastructure requires major rail in that area to facilitate capacities proposed."

Mr Brun said the population was estimated to double in 10 years and that the region had the land to accommodate a population of 230,000.

He also called on the Federal Government to use carbon tax revenues to provide infrastructure to unleash the region's potential as a world class green energy centre.

He said the current method produced false growth figures which resulted in Geraldton having a 120-bed hospital replaced by a new 66-bed facility which

— Gavin Box

## City touts economic potential

BIGGER than Bahrain.

That's the region's economic potential — according to City of Greater Geraldton CEO Tony Brun.

Mr Brun told delegates at the Mid West Economic and Resources Summit yesterday that Greater Geraldton's GDP was expected to rise from \$4 billion in the late 2000s to \$22 billion in the late 2020s.

"That's larger than

Bahrain," he said.

"We shouldn't undersell ourselves. We have huge GDP potential."

Mr Brun said the City realistically had the potential to become a Townsville on the west coast as a principal gateway to regional WA.

He said Oakejoe would be the best industrial port development in Australia "bar none", opening up international markets and the opportu-

nity to connect to east coast rail.

Mr Brun also used his address to again campaign for change in the way the State Government projected population growth for the region.

He said the current method produced false growth figures which resulted in Geraldton having a 120-bed hospital replaced by a new 66-bed facility which

— Gavin Box

Mr Langouliant said OPR was looking to build capabilities of at least 50 mtpa and more than 70 mtpa once the project was developed.

He said the region's interests would be less served having multiple rail entries into the port, as had been proposed in recent times.