

Friday, 24 October 2008

PORT BONYTHON A STEP CLOSER

Infrastructure Minister Patrick Conlon today announced the Spencer Gulf Port Link Consortium (SGPLC), led by Flinders Ports has been selected to undertake a feasibility study for the development and operation of an export facility at Port Bonython.

SGPLC has four months to demonstrate that it can:

- Successfully develop and operate the facility without any monetary contribution from the State Government.
- Address and manage all the social and environmental issues, which are of particular concern to the Whyalla community.

If the study proves that such a facility is viable, SGPLC will then need to apply for all of the necessary approvals to develop the project.

These applications will need to include a thorough environmental and social impact assessment with the opportunity for public comment before the project can proceed.

Mr. Conlon said the State Government expects the proposed development to be of the highest quality in both its design and operation.

“The Whyalla community is anxious that this and other proposed initiatives could have an adverse effect on their enjoyment of the Point Lowly peninsula and on the Giant Cuttlefish,” he said.

“It is expected that the environmental impacts can be addressed to the satisfaction of the Government and the local community.

“The State Government is committed to ensuring the local community continues to have access to the beach and coastline.

“The provision of infrastructure to support the mining sector is needed to attract continued investment to the resource sector in South Australia.

“Port Bonython has been identified by us and the mining industry as the most suitable location for a deep sea port.

“With up to 30 mines expected to come on stream over the next few decades, the mining industry has indicated that between seven and 13 million tonnes of ore could be exported through the new facility.”

It is expected that the port will be operational in about three years. Further details will be available when the feasibility study is completed early next year.

BACKGROUND

- The State Government called for *Expressions of Interest* (phase one) to test the market's interest in developing and operating a port facility to service the mining industry in May this year.
- Ten complying responses were received from national and international companies. Four consortia were short listed, with one consortium, SGPLC selected to proceed to the next stage.
- Port Bonython is the most suitable site in the State's north for construction of the port facility. The site:
 - Has sheltered deep water (20 metres) to cater for Cape-size vessels
 - Is close to the interstate standard gauge rail infrastructure and larger mine deposits
 - Is owned by the State and zoned for industrial (port). The State Government will provide a ground lease for the land and seabed to accommodate the facility subject to all normal development approval processes.
- The construction of a bulk export facility at Port Bonython is one of a number of initiatives proposed for the Point Lowly peninsula.

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