



Bottleneck uncorked: YIPA secretary David Utting says improved access to the Esperance port is the key for the the expansion of iron ore production in the region. Photo: TIM SLATER

Iron producers welcome PM visit

THE Yilgarn Iron Producers Association has welcomed today's visit by Prime Minister Julia Gillard to Esperance, saying improved access to the port was the key for a huge expansion of iron ore production in the region.

Ms Gillard has been invited to the town by O'Connor MHR Tony Crook to inspect the port to provide her with a greater insight into its infrastructure needs and how Esperance would tie in to the PortLink project.

The Prime Minister will also be briefed on a number of other significant local infrastructure projects and meet with community leaders.

YIPA secretary David Utting said the Yilgarn province was "WA's next big thing" with thousands of jobs to be generated by additional mine and infrastructure upgrades which would

boost the economies of WA and Australia.

"The development of the Yilgarn Iron Province will greatly expand what is Australia's third iron ore region after the Pilbara and Midwest," he said.

Mr Utting said up to eight companies were looking at exporting iron ore through Esperance.

"YIPA members are keen to use an upgraded Port of Esperance to export iron ore to overseas markets," he said.

"The PortLink project uncorks a major bottleneck on the way from mine to port."

Mr Utting commended the Federal and State Governments for committing \$120 million for the port access corridor upgrade.

He said other YIPA members including Radar Iron, Hawthorn Resources, Fe Limited

and Legacy Iron Ore had advanced exploration programs and were also keen to access Esperance.

"Importantly, there are tens of millions of dollars being spent on grass roots exploration by YIPA and success here will support jobs and the local economy for generations to come," he said.

Mr Utting said the production of iron was set to increase greatly through ongoing exploration and resource definition.

Other iron ore companies including Cashmere Iron and Jupiter Mines also have plans to export from the port.

Esperance Ports Sea and Land is set for a two-stage, 20m tonne per annum upgrade to cater for the increased iron ore shipments.

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