



# Taskforce on outer harbour formed

| Gareth McKnight

Planning Minister Rita Saffioti announced last week the formation of a taskforce to plan for an outer harbour in Kwinana — but it is likely to be a couple of years before any significant progress on the project will be made.

Named the Westport Taskforce, the group will be made up of experts from across several government departments and will plan for the long-term port, road and rail infrastructure needed across the region.

It will be chaired by Nicole Lockwood, who is a board member of Infrastructure Australia and chairwoman of the Freight Logistics Council.

Ms Saffioti told the Telegraph that the Government's commitment to the outer harbour was "rock solid", despite only \$6 million being included in the 2017-18 Budget towards the project's planning — significantly less

than the previously promised \$20 million.

The Planning Minister reiterated the Government's commitment to an outer harbour in Cockburn Sound at a Committee for Economic Development Australia function at Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre last Tuesday.

"The future outer harbour is a vital piece of economic infrastructure that presents an opportunity to increase local jobs across various industries," she said.

"The outer harbour has been supported by successive State governments and it is vital we get on with this after the previous government put planning on hold to push for its flawed Perth Freight Link project."

InfraNomics director Cameron Edwards, who has more than 20 years experience in the infrastructure industry and has been involved in port design in

Europe, also presented at the CEDA function. He called Fremantle Port a "stranded asset" and said a new facility in Kwinana was the "only solution" to provide economic diversification.

Mr Edwards said a port in Kwinana had the potential to "modernise WA's gateway to the world".

Ms Saffioti said it would be "one to two years" before the Westport Taskforce presented its findings as the Government had several other projects to be completed in front of the outer harbour.

Ms Lockwood, who also presented at the CEDA event, would not be drawn on timescales when quizzed by an attendee.

"However, what I can guarantee is good due processes," she said.

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