



**HD** Anketell deepwater port plan unveiled in WA Government bid to 'unlock potential' of West Pilbara

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The Western Australian Government has unveiled a master plan for a multi-user, multi-commodity deepwater port in the Pilbara, which has the potential to be the biggest port in Australia.

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Although currently unfunded, the State Government has been actively planning the development of the port so it is "ready to go" for potential investors.

WA Premier Colin Barnett said access to port space was increasingly rare in the Pilbara.

"Development of Anketell Port will help unlock the potential of the West Pilbara by aiding further development of the state's natural resources," he said.

Dampier Port Authority chief executive Steve Lewis told ABC Rural the port would encompass 4,300 hectares of land and eventually include eight berths.

"We now have a master plan that actually shows where the berths are, how the approaches will be done and where the channel will be," he said.

"The first **company** building there will build at least two berths and that will grow over time as demand for **iron ore** increases and eventually it will be built to eight berths.

"**Iron ore** is such a rich resource up there that will continue to have decades of demand from the world."

Master plan to lure investors despite falling **iron ore** price

Mr Lewis said the master plan would act as a reference for potential financiers of the project.

"The Premier has been very active in organising and seeking funding for the port and that will follow its own course," he said.

"The release of the document today is to allow all of those interested parties to have a very clear view of what the State Government expects for that port."

Mr Lewis said the vision for the port would not be affected by the **iron ore** price dropping below \$US90 a tonne, the lowest point since September 2012.

"This is an ultimate design plan, so it doesn't need to be reviewed depending on the **iron ore** price," he said.

"It's really the speed in which it's built that will be impacted by **iron ore** prices and demand.

"Along with the privately owned ports, I'm sure we'll very quickly see more than a **billion** tonnes of **iron ore** going out of the Pilbara over the next few years, so a very major source of **iron ore** on a world scale."

A native title agreement over the land was signed with the Ngarluma people in March and an Aboriginal heritage survey is currently underway.

The development of four berths at the port with an export capacity of 115 **million** tonnes a year has already been given state and federal environmental approval.

The Environmental Protection Authority has said although the development of the port would result in permanent losses of habitat, the approval has conditions that will help minimise the environmental impacts.

Aquila willing to accept Baosteel/Aurizon takeover bid

Meanwhile, the **company** with the rights to build the first berths at the port, Aquila Resources, has indicated its willingness to accept a \$1.4 **billion** takeover bid.

Aquila has a 50 per cent **stake** in the West Pilbara **Iron Ore** project, which includes a proposal to develop a mine near Pannawonica, a rail line and berths at Anketell Port.

Last month, **Chinese** steel maker Baosteel and Australian rail freight operator Aurizon submitted a proposal to buy out Aquila, which if accepted would give Baosteel and Aurizon the rights to develop the **iron ore** project.

Aquila's board today recommended its shareholders accept the offer in the absence of a better proposal.

Last week, Australian **company** Mineral Resources submitted a higher bid to take over Aquila, however the two could not reach an agreement on terms and conditions.

The Baosteel/Aurizon offer expires on July 11.

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