

South Western Times Our View

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Confidence boost for SW economy

THE \$3.5 billion urea manufacturing plant at Shotts Industrial Park in Collie will likely further boost confidence in the South West's economy.

Said to be Australia's first and the world's biggest coal gasification and storage facility, more than 1700 jobs collectively will be created when the massive project gets off the ground.

Combined with the \$2.5 billion BHP Billiton Worsley Alumina expansion at Collie — where up to 4000 construction jobs will be created over the life of the project — this latest investment adds weight to the South West's economic credentials.

More importantly, as Worsley's expansion winds down, the urea plant project adds further momentum to major projects rolled out in the region, coupled with a likely resurgence in investment market confidence now Australia finally has a Government.

Understandably, environmental groups remain concerned by the scale of the project, particularly with heavy vehicle exhaust emissions and construction dust from the plant and Bunbury Port.

But the Federal Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts has thrown support behind Perdaman, signalling a new age for Collie as it further diversifies from a coal mining town.

The fact that Perdaman has engaged with major stakeholders, ratepayers, community groups and local Governments from the beginning of this arduous approvals process right to its completion highlights the integrity and understanding of this four-year-old company regarding public sentiment towards such a large-scale project.

It would be expected that this close and transparent communication with the community lasts throughout the life of the project.