

# Western Australia takes bold move towards new container port

While much of the country has been paralysed by COVID-19 and its devastating economic impacts, the Western Australian State Government is investing in long-term planning for a future freight network designed to meet that State's needs for the next 50 years or more.

It has endorsed the Westport Taskforce's recommendation that a future container port be developed in the existing Kwinana Industrial Area, south of Perth, and it be connected by an uninterrupted freight corridor that effectively rings the city – taking heavy container trucks off suburban roads.

The recommendation has been more than two years in the making and is the work of a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary project office supported by an expert consultant team – an unprecedented cross-government, industry and community engagement.

An additional \$97.2 million has been committed to progress environmental works, detailed design and a final business case.

"Fremantle Port has served our State for the last one hundred years, it's now time to plan and build the next big piece of economic infrastructure that sets our State up for the next century," said Premier Mark McGowan in making the announcement.

Now is the time to plan and build the next big piece of economic infrastructure to set WA up for the next century. Some \$25 million of the \$97.2 million in funding has been allocated for planning, corridor design and community and landowner engagement along what will be the main road connection into the port (Anketell and Thomas roads).

One of the key decisions ahead will be the timetable for transitioning the freight task from Fremantle Port to Kwinana. The transition will occur either in one step by 2032, or over a phased period that will see



*Imagining a future container port: a computer generated image of one possible high-level design (indicative only)*

both ports share the freight task for a further 15 years.

Independent Chair of the Westport Taskforce Nicole Lockwood said the final recommendations both focus on Kwinana as the ultimate location of a new land-backed port capable of handling up to 3.8 million TEU in the long-term.

"Those recommendations were based on the outcome of years of work including a review of past planning, significant technical data collection, extensive consultation, two detailed multi-criteria analyses (MCAs), a rapid cost-benefit analysis and a strategic risk analysis," she said.

"Priorities such as the marine and terrestrial environment, commercial and economic costs and benefits, social impacts, heritage and land use were heavily weighted."

The Fremantle experience underlines the importance of supply chain infrastructure. Westport's planning allows for the efficient distribution of up to 2.6M TEU by road and up to 1.2M TEU by rail, by 2068.

The new port and upgraded rail corridors will remove network constraints and make expansion of Intermodal Terminal (IMT) facilities viable – a likely catalyst for private sector investment in IMT capacity and improved network integration.

The most rigorous investigation into WA's freight needs in the State's history marks a new beginning for the Westport team.

It will now apply the same evidence-based approach to far more detailed work to build a business case over the next four years, for consideration by Infrastructure Australia.

Detailed design, the protection of land for future port and supply chain connections, the environment, and industry and community engagement including with Aboriginal Elders and groups will all be priorities.

Ultimately, WA is working towards a 21st century facility, embracing the latest in port design to create the capability to take the world's largest ships, and new technology to increase efficiency and reduce environmental impacts.

The Westport Taskforce's final Stage 2 report is available at [www.mysaytransport.wa.gov.au/Westport](http://www.mysaytransport.wa.gov.au/Westport)



*Nicole Lockwood, Independent Chair of Westport*

