



Mid West and Wheatbelt approvals to be fast-tracked

PROPOSALS ranging from major resource projects like Oakajee to small regional developments will be fast-tracked with a new approvals process.

The process will be streamlined without compromising environmental, heritage and planning approvals.

Agricultural Region MLC Brian Ellissaid he welcomed the Premier's announcement.

"A new 'lead agency' framework will determine which government department is the first point of call for a project," Mr Ellis said.

"The relevant department will then help the proponent through the approvals process across all agencies."

The Department of State Development is the lead agency for Oakajee.

Other lead agencies will include the Department of Mines and Petroleum, the Department of Regional Development and Lands, and the Department of Planning.

Mr Ellis said the lead agency framework would ensure that proponents know which agency is dealing with their proposal at any given time.

The lead agency will also provide the proponent with a customised level of service depending on the size, scale and significance of the project.

"This is particularly welcome in regional areas like the Mid West and Wheatbelt because it will ensure that smaller developers do not get lost in the system and are able to maximise their ability gain approvals," Mr Ellis said.

"It will also remove the fragmented

approach previously taken to approvals and will lead to more responsive and co-ordinated services."

Mr Ellis said businesses in remote areas would benefit from a new on-line monitoring service which will allow proponents of both large and small scale projects to track their application.

It will also enable government agencies to monitor the stage proponents have reached in their submission of relevant material for approval.

Mr Ellis said the new process would build on improvements already brought in by the State Government.

"This government has already reduced the backlog in mining tenement applications from 18,000 to 8,900 and doubled the rate of planning approvals," Mr Ellis said.

"In terms of environmental approvals, 445 appeals from 93 proposals have been assessed, including those on major and complex projects such as Gindalbie."

A Ministerial taskforce on Approvals, Development and Sustainability, established earlier this year, developed four Bills to streamline the approval system.

"The announcement of a streamlined, online approvals process is exciting news for the Mid West and Wheatbelt which is expected to expand rapidly in coming years," Mr Ellis said.