



Strength in numbers



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YILGARN iron producers are set to unite to ensure better infrastructure outcomes to benefit the Goldfields.

The Yilgarn Iron Producers Association will hold its inaugural meeting early next month and has received a positive response from infrastructure and development bodies for its establishment.

YIPA is expected to operate as a group of producers or potential producers and explorers in the region, seeking to achieve infrastructure such as rail and better Esperance Port access for efficient export of its member companies' materials.

Junior explorer Mindax is assessing its infrastructure needs to connect its Mount Forrest asset, which the company estimates could contain a 2.8 billion tonne magnetite resource, according to *The West Australian*.

It has been instrumental in creating the association and hopes to develop a collective infrastructure strategy with the eight other companies in the area that expressed interest in participating.

This means rail infrastructure to the Shire of Menzies or to Leonora and rail transit routes through Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

Goldfields-Esperance Develop-

ment Commission chief executive Rob Hicks said chairman Graham Thomson and himself had recently met Mindax executives to discuss the association.

"If these companies will be transporting their product by road freight to Leonora or Menzies and then railing it to Esperance, communities will be impacted," he said.

"In our region there will be a critical need for upgrade of rail and road infrastructure because of this growth in the Yilgarn and the GEDC wants to see better quality rail infrastructure.

"Part of this would be to develop the railway loop around Kalgoorlie-Boulder."

The company's managing director Greg Bromley said the objective of the group was to find common ground and put forward a more consensual view of how things could happen in the area.

"It is not going to be a Mindax club; we see our role mainly as facilitator – we posed the question and we will set it up and get it rolling," he said.

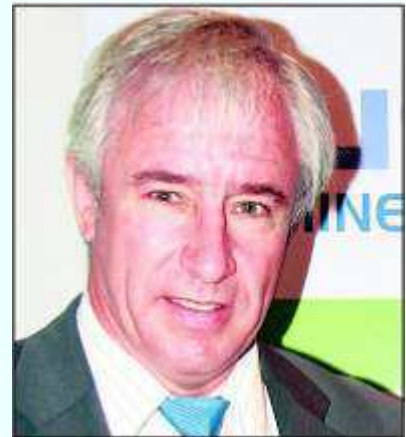
"There was a very strong response from infrastructure people who would like to see this happen – the WestNet rail authority and the Port

Authority were the principal ones.

"I can see why they are enthusiastic. It would perhaps be better to deal with a collective rather than individuals."

Mr Bromley said once Mindax transported material from the mine site to public infrastructure the quickest way was through Menzies and to construct a rail link would have value to the several other companies with operations in the region.

Mindax came into the Yilgarn area as a gold explorer six years ago, but in that time it has shifted to iron ore as its principal focus.



Robert Hicks