

Industrial hubs make mark on regional WA

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In the tough economic climate where cut-backs and job losses are prevalent, the push for industrial hubs in the State's South-West is being welcomed by local business groups.

The creation of industrial hubs will result in long-term job creation and sustainable business centres, according to the South West Chamber of Commerce's president, David Kerr.

He said infrastructure was needed to get industries into the region and when that happened jobs would follow.

In the same vein the State Government's land development arm LandCorp is continuing to develop industrial centres in the South-West.

The major centres include the Mirambeena Industrial Park and timber processing precinct near Albany, Kemerton Industrial Park north-east of Bunbury and the new Shotts Industrial Park in Collie.

LandCorp's business manager for industrial estates, John Habkett, said developing industries in the South-West would in turn develop jobs for the region and Kemerton Industrial Park was vying for more business.

Established north of Bunbury, with the Old Coast Road on one boundary, for heavy industries the Kemerton park is undergoing structure planning by LandCorp.

Mr Habkett said the planning hoped to achieve synergies between the companies that would operate in the industrial park, update environmental studies and allow for community consultation in the estate's develop-

ment.

Kemerton consists of 7500 hectares and its core land for the development of industries is 1200ha, with the rest acting as a buffer between its operations and surrounding areas.

Companies that already operating in the park include Transfield Services, Simcoa and Cristal Global.

Mr Kerr was encouraged that the Kemerton estate was building momentum saying it was a positive sign for the region.

He said establishing industrial estates would have a clustering effect for attracting a particular business which serviced industries in the area.

"It is certainly one of the strengths of this region," Mr Kerr said.

"It adds significantly to this region as it creates a situation where larger industrial business can be established and they are good long-term job providers."

He said the companies in the estate would use local suppliers for maintenance and services driving long-term employment.

The Mirambeena industrial estate has been established for nearly a decade but interest in taking up residence in the area has been reignited.

Mirambeena is 80ha and designed for large-scale operations.

It was established in the mid-1990s and the first company established was Mt Romance Sandalwood Processing, which also acts as a tourist attraction as it makes soaps and perfumes.

United Farmers also operates a fertiliser plant for the surrounding agricultural region.

LandCorp said two other com-

panies were looking to get into the industrial park — one is an agri-business that would include a potential aquaculture business and the other a sand and soil provider.

The Mirambeena timber processing plant incorporates 210ha and is zoned for timber-related uses.

There is an existing timber mill for wood chips run by Japanese group Albany Plantation Export Company.

LandCorp said the estate was all about acknowledging the local resources within the area and companies proposing to get into the area needed synergies with the timber industry.

Other companies to show an interest in the timber estate include a timber beams processor, a bio-fuel power station developer and another wood chipper.

The timber precinct is expected to contribute \$300 million to the WA economy and generate 220 direct jobs for the region.

Earlier this month the State Government released a new industrial park in Collie, with rail access to Bunbury port, clearing the way for a \$3.5 billion urea fertiliser plant.

Seven kilometres east of Collie's town centre, the park has one tenant, Perdaman Chemicals and Fertilisers, and four more sites will soon be available.

Perdaman aims to start construction by mid-next year, be exporting by mid-2013 and the project is expected to generate about 1500 jobs during the construction phase and 200 permanent jobs when operating.



Powering up: Transfield Services is operating in the Kemerton estate.