

# Critical infrastructure projects in WA to cope with mounting population

/EINPresswire.com/ [Western Australia](#) has been blessed with a mining boom which has created rapid economic growth and the lowest unemployment rates in the country. A clear downside of this boom however has been the lack of infrastructure to cope with the immense surge of new residents. With election campaigns now moving into full swing, traffic jams, crowded trains and buses in Perth, inadequate housing and souring rental prices stand out amongst the key areas of debate as infrastructure requirements become more pressing than ever

An extra 78,000 people settled in [WA](#) last year to make it Australia's fastest growing state, with the East Pilbara having an unmatched 82 per cent growth between the 2006 and 2011 census. A recent report by Engineers Australia has revealed that engineering construction is at record levels, although a large amount of WA's economic infrastructure spending is on resource related infrastructure with water, sewerage, housing and other non-resource related projects lacking attention. Critical infrastructure will open up opportunities for those in the construction sector, with a number of major developments already in the pipeline.

The highly anticipated WA Gateway upgrade is expected to commence in April to improve access to Perth Airport and surrounding areas and the largest infrastructure project ever undertaken by Main Roads WA. Royalties for Regions are delivering a number of infrastructure initiatives across regional WA which includes the PortLink Inland Freight Corridor, the Gascoyne Revitalisation Plan, and the \$220 million Ord Irrigation Expansion Project developing around 7,400 hectares of agricultural land.

The Real Estate Institute of Western Australia recently revealed Perth's median house price of \$495,000 is just \$7,500 shy of Perth's all-time peak, and there is high demand for new housing across the state. The Brownlie Precinct Regeneration Project is now underway which will see 25 hectares of land developed into 1,500 affordable new homes, civic and community facilities, and commercial and retail opportunities. The Brownlie project is part of the state government's Affordable Housing Strategy and Directions 2031 and Beyond policy which will see up to 22,000 new dwellings built in the Perth and Peel regions by 2020.

Perth's public transport system which is severely under strain has been a major point of public anger, with continuing delays in the commencement of major projects. The Labor government has jumped on the opportunity to please voters announcing that the 22-kilometre Metro Area Express (MAX) light rail system would be underway in the first term and be completed by 2018 if

they were to win the March election. The light rail system is controversially not part of the Liberal government's election package to remain in power, with plans to instead expand the Graham Farmer Freeway tunnel by removing the emergency lane in an attempt to divert an extra 14,500 vehicles per day away from Riverside Drive during construction of the Perth waterfront project, Elizabeth Quay.

The Elizabeth Quay is one of the many urban development projects planned to revitalize Perth city, along with Perth City Link, the 40-hectare Riverside project which is expected to attract \$2 billion of investment to the area and the new 60,000 seat Perth Stadium. Kings Square in Fremantle is also due for a revamp with a new retail area and office spaces planned.

Suppliers and contractors to the construction industry will be eager to learn about the upcoming projects planned for the state at the 4th Annual WA Major Projects Conference. Being held on 16-17 April at the Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre the event continues to be the largest major projects and infrastructure conference in Western Australia, attracting over 350 delegates annually. Key speakers at the event include Sue McCarry from the Department of Transport, David Keenan of Siemens Ltd and Silcar, Kieran Kinsella – CEO at Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, Leo Coci – Executive Director of Infrastructure Delivery at Main Roads WA, Paul Roseair from the Department of Regional Development & Lands, and John Savell from the Department of Housing.

For more information on the WA Major Projects Conference 2013 please visit:

<http://www.waconference.com.au/>

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