



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **the Premier and Cabinet**

Minister for Transport

Media Statement

26/3/09

First bagged lead about to leave Esperance port.

The first load of lead carbonate stranded at Esperance Port for more than two years is about to be shipped to southern China.

Transport Minister Simon O'Brien said 640 tonnes of lead carbonate sealed inside two tonne bags had been tightly packed and locked inside 26 shipping containers ready to be loaded onto a ship for export.

The remaining amount of approximately 8,000 tonnes of lead carbonate, comprising about 325 shipping containers, would leave Esperance on another ship in late April or early May.

"I am sure the removal of this first shipment of lead will be welcome news to the Esperance community," Mr O'Brien said.

"The lead carbonate has been carefully placed inside 338 special double-lined bags and packed and sealed inside shipping containers.

"This painstaking bagging process is being carried out in a negative pressure environment - a world-class technique to prevent dust escaping to ensure the protection of the community and environment.

"The bagging, sealing and vacuuming of the exterior of the bags, plus the process of packing the containers and storing them to wait for shipment is being overseen by a full-time auditor and is subject to regular inspections by Government agencies."

The Minister said it had been originally planned that all the lead would leave in the one shipment in April or May. However, space had become available aboard a ship exporting containers of nickel from BHP Billiton's Ravensthorpe mine.

He said the Esperance Port Authority had advised there had now been more than 1,800 bags filled with the equivalent of about 3,500 tonnes of lead.

Eyre MLA Dr Graham Jacobs welcomed the departure of part of the lead stockpile.

"This is a very positive step forward for the local community," Dr Jacobs said.

"Once the remainder of the lead is removed, the shed that has housed the material for the past two years will be cleaned and dismantled.

"In addition, over the next two years and on a progressive basis, Esperance will get a purpose-built bulk handling facility for metal concentrates to world's best standards."

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