



# Budget \$300m boost for Pilbara

**Liam Ducey**

FEATURES of the 2009-2010 State Government Budget were explained in emphatic fashion by Regional Development Minister Brendan Grylls at the Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce and Industry Budget Breakfast at the All Seasons Hotel last Friday morning.

With the Budget formally released by Premier Colin Barnett and Treasurer Troy Buswell on Thursday afternoon, Mr Grylls came to Hedland to deliver details on one of the key aspects of the Budget, the \$300 million Pilbara Revitalisation Plan.

The plan aims to modernise and transform Pilbara communities during the next four years with an immediate allocation of \$120 million to kick-start the program and a further \$60 million in each of the next three years.

But the plan is not without sacrifices and Mr Grylls told the audience that in order to maintain WA's Triple A credit rating in the current economic climate, strong cuts were made across the board.

The audience included Hedland Mayor Stan Martin, Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce president Bill Dziombak, Pilbara MLA Tom Stephens and representatives from BHP Billiton Iron Ore and Fortescue Metals Group.

"I've been involved from day one in finding \$7 billion in savings across this four-year budget cycle," Mr Grylls said.

"It has been a difficult task.

"There will be stories of winners and losers out of this Budget. The Liberal-Nationals Government has made sure that the Pilbara, which generates so much of Australia's

wealth, is a winner in this Budget.

"We've got industry right in the Pilbara, but we haven't got town or social amenities and I don't shy away from the fact that we need this to attract and retain important staff to your community.

"Too much of the Pilbara is about a 12-hour shift, go home, turn on the TV and leave after three years and spend all the money you've made somewhere else. We need to stop that."

Mr Grylls said the focus of the coming months would be to get matching funding from the Federal Government, industry and the trust funds of traditional owners to turn the Pilbara Revitalisation Plan into a billion dollar investment.

"That is the task I have set for myself and Tim [Shanahan, Pilbara Development Commission chairman].

"I believe it will be a much more strategic way to reinvest in the Pilbara redevelopment if we bring all the players to the table early and look and plan on the available money.

"This is about Royalties for Regions providing the first dollar, to hopefully leverage a further three.

"If we do that, the Pilbara Revitalisation Plan will be a billion dollar investment over the coming years."

The plan will also allocate \$35 million to cyclone-proof power-lines in the Pilbara.

But while the Pilbara may be a winner in the Budget, power is a loser with electricity bills expected to rise by \$750 during the next three years.

Hedland Mayor Stan Martin

described the Budget as "brilliant" but admitted the increase in electricity would hurt Hedland residents.

"Look, that's going to hurt up here," he said.

"The last Government put a moratorium or a stop on prices as an election promise and there were no rises for a number of years. It comes home to roost eventually.

"Electricity is already much higher in price than the metropolitan area and we do use a lot of it up here with air conditioning, and it [the price rise] is going to have a significant impact."

But Cr Martin said that with the influence of the Nationals, and in particular Minister Grylls, the Pilbara had finally been recognised as the lynch pin of WA's economy and was being treated accordingly.

"Finally a Government has recognised the importance of the Pilbara as a whole and it's ability to be the engine room of the Australian economy," he said.

"If this goes over the next four years or the next three years it will allow us to make these towns up here a place where people will be happy to live because the amenities and facilities they take for granted in other areas will be in place and there won't be that desire to go fly-in, fly-out.

"That's something we've been trying to sell for a long time and finally it's a revelation that the Government, or the Nationals with the balance of power, have ensured that this is going to take place. It's brilliant."

• See also page 16



**North West Telegraph**

Wednesday 20/5/2009

Page: 1

Section: General News

Region: South Hedland WA Circulation: 6,951

Type: Regional

Size: 529.23 sq.cms.

Frequency: --W----

Brief: PILBARADC  
Page 2 of 2



**Pilbara MLA Tom Stephens, Hedland Mayor Stan Martin, Port Hedland Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Bill Dziombak, Regional Development Minister Brendan Grylls, Pilbara Development Commission chairman Tim Shanahan and PDC CEO Stephen Webster at the PHCCI Budget Breakfast.**