



# Lithium refinery a jobs boost

| **Aiden Boyham**

Kwinana's journey to becoming a "lithium valley" continued on Friday when the State Government confirmed Western Australian Lithium was set to build a new refinery in Kwinana, with the new plant set to create more than 700 jobs.

The new plant, which is a 50-50 joint venture between Chilean lithium giant SQM and Kidman Resources, continues an influx of lithium investment in WA and the Kwinana Industrial Area in particular.

Subject to satisfactory studies, construction of the new WA Lithium refinery will start by the middle of next year, with about 400 jobs to be created during construction.

In addition, the company's lithium mine and contractor will create about 300 jobs during construction, with a further 150 jobs to be created during the refinery's operational phase.

Premier Mark McGowan said another processing plant in Kwinana was fantastic news.

"The decision of WA Lithium to progress this new downstream processing plant for lithium here

in Kwinana and the new mine south of Southern Cross is terrific news for WA," he said.

"Lithium is a large part of our State's future — it's needed for all

sorts of electric cars, mobile phones, iPads, computers, you name it.

"It's the product of the future and we are blessed to have so much lithium here in WA and what we want to do is make sure we not only mine it but we process it here."

Sites in Kemerton and Kalgoorlie were considered as other options for the new refinery, however Kwinana's strategic proximity to port facilities and other chemical companies made it the preferred choice.

Kwinana Industries Council director Chris Oughton said the announcement consolidated WA and Kwinana in particular as the world's centre for the fledgling battery storage industry.

"The Kwinana Industrial Area is a great place for the lithium, or more broadly the energy storage industry, to set up internationally competitive operations that add value to our State's raw materials,"

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# Refinery to turn city into lithium industry hub

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Mr Oughton said. “Locating the refinery in among the existing heavy industries will allow the company to benefit from the industrial synergies that exist and to tap into the very significant pool of engineers, technicians, process operators and tradesmen and women that form the large and experienced pool of people working in the area.”

The State Government also announced the Budget would include provisional funding of \$5.5 million to the Minerals Research Institute of WA.

“The State Government will continue to support the development of renewable energy technologies and the \$5.5 million in provisional funds will be made available to the MRIWA if it is successful in the bid to establish a New Energy Industry Co-operative Research Centre in WA,” Mr McGowan said.

Kwinana Mayor Carol Adams said the City was excited to host a second major lithium producer.

“The option signing by WA Lithium, which will see plans to build a refinery in Kwinana creating the potential of 400 much-needed jobs, is a huge boost locally as well as to the State’s economy when constructed,” she said.