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Study to look at rail option

AILISH DELANEY

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The draft South West Supply Chain Strategy outlines the details of the proposed rail option, which would see lithium loaded near the mine, then railed to Bunbury Port for direct export or to one of two processing plants in Kemerton and Kwinana.

A rail-based supply chain would also include new loading facilities at Greenbushes and new unloading facilities at Kwinana Bulk Terminal and Bunbury Port.

SWDC chief executive Mellisa Teede considered the upgrades to be critical components of the rail supply.

The State Government has allocated \$3.8 million to the preparation of a feasibility study for upgrades and new infrastructure

at Bunbury Port and Kwinana Bulk Terminal to support the possible reopening of the Greenbushes rail line.

"A pre-feasibility study has been carried out and what that found was the projected tonnages of lithium concentrate to be transported from Greenbushes supported the case to consider rail as a transport option," Ms Teede said.

"The next steps involve detailed design work, which is relatively costly.

"We wouldn't have carried through to this stage without having completed the preliminary work that indicated rail was a feasible option to explore further."

Ms Teede said the lithium mined at Greenbushes put the South West in the box seat to capitalise on world-demand for the product.

"The lithium industry is an economically significant resource sector for WA," Ms Teede said.

"We want to look at how we can support a first-class supply chain to allow the industry to grow alongside community expectations that amenity is maintained."

The study will be coordinated in partnership with Talison Lithium and Arc Infrastructure.