

# Time has come for WA to process its resources: Barnett

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A Liberal government would establish WA as a mining and processing hub under a new plan to commission two world-class industrial sites and expand the State's natural gas supplies, Opposition Leader Colin Barnett promised yesterday.

At a time when WA was on the cusp of a major turning point in its economic history, Mr Barnett told *The West Australian* the need to maximise the State's resource-rich economy had never been greater.

He said two Government-controlled but privately funded industrial estates, built north of Geraldton at Oakajee and south of the Burrup Peninsula at Maitland, would encourage manufacturing companies to establish value-adding industries in WA.

"We've got the natural materials, we've got the market and closeness to Asia, but we need to recognise that the companies that add value are not mining companies or petroleum companies," Mr Barnett said.

"We need to have world-class industrial estates with large areas of land

serviced by port, power, water, rail, road transport, with towns, with people around them and designed to world's best practice so there are wide buffer zones, clean, modern high-technology industries and common treatment of waste material.

"We've been trying for 50 years to turn mining companies into manufacturing companies but we're never going to do that. What we need to do is get the manufactures to come here. Do that and this State will . . . reach economic maturity and we won't only be a leading mining State, we'll also be a leading manufacturing State."

The former resources minister said the Oakajee estate, which could take advantage of its proximity to the gas pipeline, deep-sea port and the regional centre of Geraldton, could be completed within five years.

Mr Barnett conceded that the little-enforced "further processing" clause under the State Agreement Acts had failed to promote downstream processing because manufacturing was a completely different

industry which required a high level of expertise. He also said the energy intensive, value-adding industry would need WA's natural gas reserves to be utilised with extensions to the gas pipeline through the South-West and near the Browse Basin projects.

"We need pipelines across WA," he said. "We need to be able to move gas around so that we can process up here and all over the State. And we need to have a price advantage; we need to make sure that the price of natural gas is well below world market prices."

Mr Barnett said a major LNG project at Maitland would launch the growth that was needed in the area to establish an industrial site. He attacked the Carpenter Government for failing to take WA's economy into a new era of economic maturity.

"Labor has had a fantastic opportunity but they haven't capitalised on the boom," he said.

"They've missed the opportunity but we can still catch it."



Having a dig: Colin Barnett says the Government is not capitalising on the boom.