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## Call for interest tipped on Port Bonython plan

### CAMERON ENGLAND

THE State Government is expected to call for expressions of interest to build a deep water port at Port Bonython on the Eyre Peninsula next week.

In its quarterly report released yesterday, Western Plains Resources said it expected the Government to advertise for expression of interest "on or about May 5".

"The Minister for Transport Energy and Infrastructure (Patrick Conlon) has announced that expressions of interest will be called shortly for the construction of a deep water port in the northern end of Spencer Gulf at Port Bonython, 25 km from Whyalla, that will be suitable for the export of iron ore," the company said.

A spokesman for Mr Conlon said that Port Bonython was probably the most suitable port for iron ore exports.

"Ultimately, it will be up to the market as to what kind of thing they put on the table," he said.

"We've agreed that we're going to fund expressions of interest and see what the market comes up with."

The spokesman said an open day would be held at Port Bonython this Sunday about the potential project.

Western Plains is one of four members of the Port Bonython Bulk Users Group formed recently to push for the development of Port Bonython, funded by private money.

The Resources and Energy Sector Infrastructure Council, also formed recently in South Australia, was

involved in the process and was examining ways mining companies and all levels of government could collaborate on this and other projects, to ensure the state had adequate infrastructure to take advantage of its mineral wealth.

Western Plains, Centrex Metals, **IMX Resources** and Iron Clad Mining are collaborating to drive the Port Bonython project, in a bid to unlock the value in their respective iron ore projects on the Eyre Peninsula and near Coober Pedy.

There is community opposition to exporting iron ore through Port Lincoln, and a previous plan to export through OneSteel's port at Whyalla was rejected by OneSteel last year.