



ASX and Media Release

Close of EOI period for the development of Port Bonython

Western Plains Resources Ltd (ASX:WPG) notes that Expressions of Interest closed yesterday for the construction of a terminal facility for the export of iron ore and other bulk commodities at Port Bonython near Whyalla in South Australia. The Spencer Ports Group consortium, which includes WPG, has responded by lodging a submission.

The six week invitation period set by the South Australian Government for submissions to its invitation to submit expressions of interest for the construction of a bulk commodities export facility at Port Bonython closed yesterday.

Media reports suggest there have been more than 60 enquiries about the project. Competition for this new port development business is expected to be strong.

WPG through its subsidiary Spencer Gulf Ports Pty Ltd (**Spencer Gulf**) has submitted a response on behalf of the Spencer Ports Group. The Spencer Ports Group includes Pacific Basin Ports, the proposed port operator, a division of Pacific Basin Shipping Ltd (**PBL**). PBL is a listed Hong Kong company with net assets of approximately \$1 billion. Amongst other things, PBL has interests in port operations in China and the Middle East. Its principal Australian office is in Melbourne. PBL owns PB Towage Pty Ltd, which operates tugs in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Western Australia. PBL is a strategic investor in ports and terminals of all kinds. The Spencer Ports Group's submission is supported by the Port Bonython Bulk Users Group, in respect of defined projects. Civil and marine engineering consultants, port operations consultants, public relations and communications consultants, and a rail track access company are assisting the Group.

The Spencer Ports Group's financial advisor is Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Limited (**ANZ**). ANZ has recently (January 2008) advised, structured and arranged finance for infrastructure businesses including raising in excess of \$1.6 billion in fresh capital for a new 30 mtpa coal terminal now being built for the Newcastle Coal Infrastructure Group, as well as transactions for Port Waratah Coal Services and the Pusan port in South Korea.

ABN 51 109 426 502

Level 9, Kyle House

27-31 Macquarie Place

Sydney NSW 2000

Telephone (+612) 9251 1044

Facsimile (+612) 9247 3434

info@westernplainsresources.com.au

www.westernplainsresources.com.au

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 **Western Plains
Resources Ltd**

WPG has no strong, long term ambition to be a shareholder in a port owning or operating company. However the Company believes it is in its interest to “have a seat at the table” while the scale, scope and timing for the port development are determined. If the Spencer Ports Group’s response is accepted by the South Australian Government, WPG will dilute its interest in Spencer Gulf to PBL and other investors including those introduced by ANZ. Members of the Port Bonython Bulk Users Group will also be offered equity in Spencer Gulf at that stage. The open access port will be operated on a first come, first served basis up to the 20 mtpa capacity of the port. No priority rights to port access will be afforded to port users by virtue of being a shareholder in Spencer Gulf.

WPG expects that there will be several highly credible responses lodged by other parties, in addition to that by the Spencer Ports Group. If one of those competing submissions is preferred by the Government to Spencer Ports Group’s response, this could also be a satisfactory outcome for the Company, depending on the approach adopted and the options implemented. WPG’s principal interest is to see the port built quickly and for the port user charges to be competitive with other open access bulk commodity ports elsewhere in Australia.

Further Information

For further information please contact WPG’s Executive Chairman Bob Duffin, on (02) 9251 1044 or 0412 234 684, or Heath Roberts, Executive Director and Company Secretary on (02) 9247 7359 or 0419 473 925.