

New Resources Minister touches down in Karratha

By Robert Hobson

AUSTRALIA'S North West is fast getting the attention it deserves from Canberra as an economic powerhouse.

This follows a two-day visit by Federal Ministers Martin Ferguson and Jenny Macklin to the region who are getting to grips with their respective portfolios.

Hosted by the Chamber of Minerals and Energy, the Ministers toured the mining and resources industry mine sites and projects.

CEO Reg Howard-Smith said that the visit allowed the industry to highlight the importance of the region to both the WA and national economies.

"CME welcomes the opportunity to demonstrate the achievements of the region's resources sector, and brief the Federal Minister on issues affecting

prospects for sustainability and growth," he said.

Resources and Energy Minister Martin Ferguson said he believed the resources boom was a logistical operation, and good management of the logistics would further benefit the national economy.

"I've been in and out of industries such as resources and transport – a lot of ways they're interrelated," he said.

"You get the logistics train right and work with the mining companies, then you start opening up investment in Australia and maximising exports."

He also said that cooperation between all levels of government and the private sector was important in further developing regional centres, such as Karratha.

"The national government is

not a Perth based concentration - we are having to look around the State, where we can value-add, with the private sector and with the WA government to create even bigger opportunities," he said.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin said that the resources boom provides a wide range of opportunities to local Aboriginal communities, and that her visit was to find out how the Federal Government could better support Aboriginal people.

"That's really why we are here, to learn what's been successful about helping indigenous people enter employment," she said.

Full story on Jenny Macklin's visit - page 15



New Federal Resources Minister Martin Ferguson at Woodside's visitor centre.