

# New port coming up

CAMERON ENGLAND

Ships return to Port Augusta

WORK has started on a new \$100m port at Port Augusta, on the site of the former Northern Power Station.

Port Augusta Operations (PAO), which is building the new facility, said it would be named Port Playford “in recognition of former premier Sir Thomas Playford and his role in the establishment of the Leigh Creek coalfield and Port Augusta power station”.

The power stations at Port Augusta were shut in 2016 and decommissioned. Mining company Cu-River bought the site from Flinders Power in 2019.

PAO, which is an Australian-owned company associated with Cu-River, received development approval for the project in December last year and said yesterday site offices were being built.

A locally-based construction manager had been appointed, and a manager to lead construction and commissioning of the site, which would be used to export iron ore and potentially other commodities.

“PAO plans to invest more than \$100m at the site over the next 18 months, unlocking \$160m worth of existing assets currently under-utilised at the disused site, which is approximately the size of the Adelaide CBD,” the company said.

“PAO plans to load commodities on to shallow-draft self-unloading vessels at the facility’s wharf, via existing rail links, to ... ocean-going bulk carriers.”

The company said it was aiming for first shipments in late 2023, a return of commercial shipping to Port Augusta for the first time in five decades.

Operations director John Fullerton said the company was aiming to get export rates up to an initial five million tonnes of iron ore a year, before a further expansion to 15 million tonnes.

The first ore was likely to come from the Cairn Hill mine and Peak Iron’s Peculiar Knob mine, the latter of which is currently exporting through Whyalla.

But having a new bulk commodities port in South Australia provided a new route to market for the vast iron ore reserves in areas such as the Braemar iron ore province in the northeast of the state, Mr Fullerton said.

“We are confident that other opportunities will emerge to fully utilise the site, which will become a significant and strategic asset to the Port Augusta region,” he said.