

SARAH BROOKES

MORE long freight trains will run through the Swan Valley, Toodyay Rd and Morrison Rd if plans to develop an open cut bauxite mine on private farmland gets the green light.

Bauxite Alumina Joint Ventures (BAJV), a partnership of Bauxite Resources and Yankuang Resources, said the Felicitas Resource, located in the Shire of Toodyay and parts of the shires of Northam and Mundaring, was expected to generate 230 million tonnes of ore, run for at least 25 years and inject around \$3 billion into the WA economy.

But Morangup resident Brian Dale, who is a member of the Avon and Hills Mining Awareness Group, said while he understood the need for responsible mining he did not support a mine on his doorstep.

Mr Dale cited dust, odour, noise, noxious gas emissions and an increase in road and rail traffic as negative impacts on the community. He said plans by BAJV to build a 15km conveyor from Wundowie through the heart of Morangup, under Toodyay Rd and to the Avon rail route would cause traffic congestion.

"In the short term trains will move ore to the nearest suitable port which will see many more trains, probably 3-4km long, crossing the level crossings in the Swan Valley and Toodyay Rd and Morrison Rd until the refinery starts in Northam," he said.

"Once the refinery

starts these long trains will pass through the heart of Toodyay on the way to the refinery carrying bauxite and then back through again carrying alumina to port."

But on its website BAJV said train lengths would be about 1.3km with 90 wagons and a loco at either end with four train movements a day.

BAJV chief executive officer Bill Moss said a formal assessment would be conducted into the feasibility of building a refinery next to the proposed mine, which could create 500 direct full-time jobs.

"Development of the refinery project will depend on work which is currently underway or planned for the mine such as mine planning work which will provide more accurate forecasts of bauxite grades and the preparation of representative samples for further laboratory characterisation work," he said.

"We don't believe there are any suitable sites for a refinery close to the mine and will conduct a formal site selection study as part of the refinery feasibility study at the appropriate time."

Mr Moss said BAJV intended to refer the project to the Environmental Protection Authority mid-year.

"We anticipate the approval process will take 18 to 24 months, with a further 12 months for construction," he said.

"In the meantime, we are undertaking a range of engineering and environmental studies that cover environmental and social impacts, economic viability, engineering, mine planning, logistics and infrastructure

options."

Mr Moss said the mine operation would create about 120 fulltime jobs.

"We expect that most of these positions will be filled by individuals who are already living and raising their families in the region," he said.

"Although we are not recruiting yet, we have had many experienced locals contact us with interest for employment.

"As the project progresses, we will publish more information on our Facebook page." City of Swan CEO Mike Foley said there was a range of businesses within the city, which service existing mining industries.

"So there is the potential for this proposal to provide new opportunities for local businesses," he said.

The Resources Hub recruitment specialist Dani Tamati said the impact of the current round of redundancies within the resources sector was far-reaching.

"Not only the employees but the families affected is immense within our industry.

"But a few new projects in the pipeline, including the proposal by BAJV, will provide a positive in the current market.

"This will provide a fabulous opportunity for not only local people but also those within the Perth metro area as it really is on our doorstep and is a perfect opportunity for drive-in driveout workers.

With the talent pool available there would be opportunities for those with experience and qualifications to apply.