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Wesfarmers to Supply Gas to HIsmelt Project

Wesfarmers today announced an agreement with HIsmelt Operations, on behalf of participants in the HIsmelt Kwinana Joint Venture, under which industrial gases company Air Liquide W.A. Pty Ltd (ALWA) will supply oxygen and nitrogen for use in the proposed A\$400 million HIsmelt pig iron plant at Kwinana in Western Australia.

Wesfarmers has a 40 per cent interest in ALWA and manages the business, with the remaining 60 per cent owned by Air Liquide Australia Limited. ALWA will build a new air separation plant dedicated to the HIsmelt project.

ALWA's existing air separation plant was built in 1991 for an investment of approximately A\$35 million and has a capacity of 285 tonnes of oxygen and 400 tonnes of nitrogen per day. The new plant, to be built at a cost estimated at A\$45 million, will supply significantly greater volumes of both oxygen and nitrogen.

The Managing Director of Wesfarmers Energy, Mr David Robb, said that construction of the new air separation plant was expected to commence in the first quarter of 2003 with commissioning due in the fourth quarter of 2004.

“With the global technical support of our partner Air Liquide, we are confident we can fulfil our role in facilitating this most exciting project”, he said.

“The new plant, supplying gases to HIsmelt under a 15 year take-or-pay sales agreement, represents a major growth story for ALWA”.

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