

ADVOCACY AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2021



FEDERAL

\$100M Extension of Junior Minerals Exploration Incentive (JMEI)

Following strong advocacy by AMEC, the Federal Government has extended the Junior Minerals Exploration Incentive with a further \$100M to be allocated over the next four years. The program has already seen \$100M allocated between 2018 and 2021, and will now continue until 2024. AMEC provided considerable input into the design of the JMEI which has been critical to attracting private investment into greenfield exploration.

\$2B Critical Minerals Fund

AMEC has campaigned for the Commonwealth Government to provide other sources of support for critical minerals projects. This is to help offset the impact of the Foreign Investment Review Board rejecting or deterring overseas investment in critical minerals projects. This advocacy has resulted in the Federal Government establishing the \$2B Critical Minerals Fund in 2021.

Foreign Investment Review Board Reforms

AMEC has strongly opposed further barriers to foreign investment in Australia's mineral industry, which puts new projects and the continued development of our industry and economy at risk. AMEC continues to argue against further changes that discourage foreign investment into Australia's mining and exploration industry.

Research and Development Tax Incentive

AMEC fought changes to the R&D tax incentive that would have reduced the support provided by the program to industry by \$1.8B over 4 years. Prior to the last Federal election AMEC strongly opposed these changes, which saw the legislation referred to committee for review and deferred. Ultimately, these proposals were dropped by government with the onset of COVID-19.

Reforms to Export Finance Australia (EFA) and the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF)

The Commonwealth announced reforms to Export Finance Australia (EFA) and NAIF which will provide broader powers to finance transactions serving Australia's national interests and priorities. AMEC has advocated for reforms to enable EFA to provide equity finance, to allow our Government's export credit agency to better support export-linked Australian businesses via debt instruments, similar to credit agencies in the USA, Canada, China and Japan.

Critical Minerals Investment Document

AMEC has developed an investment document outlining Australian critical minerals projects presenting investment opportunities, across a range of commodities and jurisdictions, from greenfield mineral exploration to project development. The document has been translated into Chinese and Japanese, and shared with Australia's Government trade offices to showcase investment opportunities in Australian projects and companies.

Diesel Fuel Tax Credit

AMEC continues to advocate for the retention of the Diesel Fuel Tax Credit, which is vitally important to the mining and exploration industry. AMEC will resist any changes to the scheme.

Potash and Brine Guidelines

AMEC facilitated the drafting of a brine reporting guideline to increase the transparency and certainty of reporting of brine deposits on the ASX. These guidelines were subsequently accepted by JORC as the recommended methodology for measuring brine minerals.

Exploring for the Future

AMEC advocated for the extension of the Exploring for the Future program, with the Commonwealth committing \$125M to continue the program to create greater pre-competitive geological information to unlock future mineral discoveries. The program is already delivering significant help for explorers in targeting new mineral resources.

Exploration Incentive Scheme / Co-funded Drilling

AMEC continues to strongly promote the financial, social and scientific benefits of co-funded drilling programs to all State and Territory Governments. With new programs and funding commitments announced in most States and Territories in 2021.

Mining Engineer added to Priority Migration Skilled Occupation List

AMEC has advocated to the Commonwealth Government for the inclusion of a range of skilled occupations on the Priority Migration Skilled Occupation List, succeeding in having Mining Engineer added. Work continues to see the list expanded to include Mineral Exploration Drillers, and other in-demand roles.

Federal Policy Platform to maximise Australia's resource potential

AMEC has developed a comprehensive platform for supporting and growing Australia's mining industry. It covers a

range of key industry issues including supporting exploration; investment attraction; streamlining assessment and approval processes; fiscal policies that support growth; energy and emissions reduction; and workforce and skills.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mining Act Legislation & Regulations

AMEC has been heavily involved in the most comprehensive review of South Australia's mining legislation and regulatory framework. AMEC has consistently advocated for the development of the legislation, and has met with the Premier, the Mines Minister and relevant Ministerial and Departmental staff to ensure the Government reintroduced the legislation unchanged.

Identification of Groundwater Resources and Multi-user Infrastructure Corridors

\$5.6M has been allocated to the identification of groundwater resources in priority mining regions and the development of a business case for multi-user infrastructure corridors. AMEC has called for this investment to support growth in key South Australian regions currently constrained by access and infrastructure issues.

Critical Minerals Strategy

AMEC successfully advocated for a critical mineral's strategy so that South Australia can take advantage of the significant investment and development opportunities on offer. In response, the Government committed \$800,000 to identifying gaps in the critical minerals supply chain.

Explore the Gawler

Government has committed \$5M over three years to continue the "Explore the Gawler" challenge following calls from AMEC to develop a crowdsourced competition to use big data to discover future mines.

Right of Veto

In 2020, AMEC won important commitments from the Premier not to introduce 'right of veto' provisions into mining legislation, as was being called for by the agricultural industry.

Accelerated Discovery Initiative

AMEC has successfully advocated for the extension and increase to the Accelerated Discovery Initiative. An \$11.5M boost and three-year extension to the innovative co-funded investment scheme will extend program to a total of \$21.5M available in co-funding.

Expansion of Landowner Information Service (LIS)

The 2021-22 South Australian Budget announced the \$1.65M four-year extension of Rural Business Support's LIS until 2025. This will enable the independent service to broaden its service to focus on industry participants and Local Government as well as landowners. AMEC supported this extension as the Independent service is an effective resource mineral exploration companies can refer landowners seeking information to.

Copper Strategy

AMEC has successfully advocated for a refresh of South Australia's 2016 Copper Strategy. The collaborative effort between Government, Industry, research institutions, community groups and Aboriginal stakeholders was a concerted effort to increase the State's leading-edge copper industry. Its revival will better position South Australia, with a pipeline of copper projects, to meet global demand for the critical mineral.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Security Reforms accepted

Following direct advocacy from AMEC, changes have been proposed to the security framework for exploration as part of Mining Exploration and Geoscience (MEG) Exploration Package of reforms. The proposed reforms include changes to group securities which reduce the amount of securities payable by up to 50% for group securities and reducing the security deposit threshold for the minimum security.

AMEC NSW Land Access Toolkit Released

AMEC released the comprehensive NSW Land Access Toolkit for Exploration to support landholders and explorers negotiate access for exploration. This toolkit includes an industry guide, template land access agreement, fact sheets and a video to explain mineral exploration methods for the community. This toolkit is the first of its kind in NSW.

Annual Report Release Policy

Following extensive consultation with AMEC and other industry stakeholders, the Annual Report Release Policy (previously known as the Sunset Clause) was finalised. The policy details the process for the public release of annual reports and associated data from 'live' tenure that were lodged five or more years ago in NSW.

Cooperative Drilling Program has been extended

Following direct advocacy from AMEC, the NSW Government announced Round 4 of the Co-operative Drilling Program with a total funding of \$2.2M.

NSW Critical Minerals Strategy

Following direct advocacy from AMEC in the Pre-Budget submission in March 2021, the NSW Government has committed to, and announced a Critical Minerals Strategy.

TASMANIA

Exploration Drilling Grants

AMEC secured election commitments for the continuation of the Exploration Drilling Grants initiative and following the election the program was extended through to 2025, providing \$1.5M to support greenfields exploration in the years to come.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Low Impact Notification & Streamlining

AMEC has long advocated for the introduction of low impact notification in WA. The Government's introduction of the Mining legislation amendment Bill is the culmination of a decade of advocacy. Reforms include a single approval instrument for mining activities across multiple tenements and the Eligible Mining Activities process, which will aim to streamline low risk activities through an automated authorisation pathway. This will reduce the Government and company's administrative burden without impacting the strong environmental protections currently provided in legislation.

\$125M for Approvals Officers

Following strong AMEC advocacy the WA Government has committed \$125M to key Approvals and Regulatory agencies to address the administrative delays in providing approvals.

Aboriginal Cultural Heritage reform

AMEC prepared a detailed response to the WA Government's draft of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill and has been an active stakeholder in the reform process. AMEC has advocated extensively for substantial changes to the draft Bill to ensure the proposed reforms strike the right balance between protecting cultural heritage and economic development. AMEC will be further engaged in the co-design process for the regulation and other supporting documents.

Diamond Royalty Rate

AMEC successfully advocated to the WA Government to lower the royalty rate for diamonds from 7.5% to 5% so that all companies pay the same rate as those under a State Agreement.

Lithium Royalty Relief

AMEC secured a financial assistance package from the WA Government for lithium spodumene producers. The package provides a 50% deferral of royalties for a twelve-month period,

to be repaid over the following two years. The program has helped those companies survive a temporary low-price environment and prevent further mine closures and over 400 job losses in the lithium industry.

Minerals in Brine - Tenement Fees Reduction

AMEC helped secure a 90% reduction in the tenement fees for mineral in brine tenements, due to the low impact, large scale, and long life of these projects. This attracted a disproportionately high mining lease rental that rendered these projects uneconomic. The existing rental rate of \$18.70 per hectare was reduced to \$2.32 per hectare for the first five years of the lease; and \$4.64 per hectare from year six onwards.

Minerals in Brine Amendments

AMEC advocated on behalf of the emerging mineral in brine industry to reduce the cost impost of the mining rehabilitation fund for minerals in brine project evaporation ponds. This resulted in winning a reduction from \$52,000 per hectare to \$20,000 per hectare. The area included in the calculation was also substantially reduced to only the areas needing rehabilitation, further reducing the costs.

Regulation 169: Agents and Representatives

Parties appearing before the Warden in the early stages of Part IV Proceedings can now be represented by either a lawyer or an agent without seeking special leave. Amending Regulation 169 has been a key advocacy outcome sought by AMEC members.

Plan for our Parks

AMEC has directly assisted members during the consultation and negotiation process. AMEC helped secure excision for all mining operations and achieved either an excision or a lower conservation estate classification for a number of member companies that highlighted a concern with the proposed park boundaries.

Mining Warden

AMEC successfully advocated for an additional Mining Warden to expand judicial capacity to meet burgeoning demand for hearings, which has extended listing dates out a full year. AMEC will continue advocacy work to support the Warden and drive further efficiencies.

WHS Regulations - Mining

The standalone Mining Regulations under the new WHS Act represent the importance of safety to our industry. This separation was advocated for by industry. AMEC was a strong voice to the consultation process, and continues to drive the importance of well-consulted on Regulations and non-statutory codes of practice.

QUEENSLAND

Common User Infrastructure - Demonstration Plant

AMEC proposed the State Government support the construction of a Common User Demonstration Plant for mineral processing. Initially for vanadium, the plant could also process copper, cobalt, HPA, graphite, lithium, phosphate and silicon. The State Government has now committed \$10M to construct the facility.

Environmental Risk

AMEC highlighted the low risk and low impact of exploration on the environment, as well as the fact that surrendering exploration Environmental Authorities was approximately 90% of the departments applications. The Residual Risk guidelines now state that 21 or less exploration bores are considered 'pre-assessed' as low risk and a residual risk calculation is no longer required.

Queensland Resource Industry Development Plan

AMEC ensured our members' views were strongly represented in the stakeholder consultation phase of the development of the QRIDP. Focusing on the 'development' part of the QRIDP, AMEC highlighted the developing and exploration opportunities in the sector and the challenges throughout the exploration to development life cycle. Advocacy continues as the Plan is further developed.

Historic Mines

The brownfield opportunities with historic mines is a staple opportunity for AMEC Members. AMEC contributed member feedback to the mining regulator policies, increasing the likelihood of these sites becoming commercially available. Highlighting the progressive rehabilitation opportunities for these types of projects has also been an important part of this advocacy work.

Collaborative Exploration Initiative - expanded minerals, geography and frequency

Recent rounds of the initiative were focused on 'New Economy Minerals' and the region of the North West Minerals Province. AMEC's advocacy has sought for the expansion of the geographic area to be wider and to cover more mineral types, which was subsequently delivered by government. The CEI has also been boosted by \$10M over the next four years.

Safety

The unique role that explorers and junior miners have in the sector has been less understood than other parts of the sector. Raising profile of challenges of junior miners and explorers and helping government understand this part of the industry continues to be a focus for AMEC.

CopperString 2.0

AMEC has been advocating for the continued development of the North West Minerals Province, and associated infrastructure, to unlock the potential new mining projects. The Queensland and Commonwealth Government has now committed initial funding toward the CopperString 2.0 high voltage transmission line connecting the North West Minerals Province to the National Electricity Market. This critical energy infrastructure will lower energy costs and benefit both existing and emerging producers.

Improving Resource Approval Efficiency

During the 2020 State election, AMEC won a commitment from the Qld government to review the efficiency and timeliness of resource approval processes, including the reduction of duplication between assessing agencies. AMEC continues to work with the State Government to improve resource approval processes and assist Queensland to remain globally competitive.

VICTORIA

AMEC Victoria Committee and new Advocacy Agenda

AMEC established the Victorian Advisory Committee, holding its inaugural official meeting in August. The Committee aims to build advocacy momentum in the state amid heightened interest in the local minerals industry and is chaired by Chris Cairns (Stavelly Minerals) and deputy Matthew Gill (White Rock Minerals). The Advisory Committee is now developing a new advocacy agenda for Victoria.

Government consultation extended

AMEC is a charter member of the Victorian government Minerals Industry Reference Group and recently formed Ministerial Industry Consultative Group. AMEC continues to consult widely with other government departments and industry stakeholders on a range of issues that directly impact members, including land access, rehabilitation, legislative and policy reform, and cultural heritage.

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Environmental Reform

In recent environmental legislative reforms, AMEC successfully advocated to narrow the open standing provisions provided for all community members in the draft legislation, to only proponents and those directly affected. AMEC continues to be closely engaged in representing industry views to the Ministers and Departments during this major ongoing reform process.

Critical Minerals and Mineral Investment Strategy

AMEC called for a NT Critical Minerals Strategy and launched an industry plan for the Territory. The Government adopted much of this plan in delivering its own strategy. AMEC is currently working with Government on its implementation and to develop a broader mineral investment strategy.

Mine Management Plans: Exploration and Mining

AMEC successfully persuaded the NT Government to streamline the Mine Management Plan for Exploration. This has made it easier for members and led to much faster approval timeframes. The Government has now also agreed to streamline the MMP for Mining, working with AMEC members to reduce the document's page count from an average of 155 to around 30 pages.

Mining Remediation Fund

AMEC advocacy has ensured that the Mining Remediation Fund has remained separate to consolidated revenue and has prompted Government to develop a strategy, and form a panel to guide the expenditure of the fund on appropriately prioritised legacy sites. Prior to AMEC's intervention, the Fund had gathered \$23M without a transparent method of acquitting its expenditure.

Major project status

AMEC has been advocating for the adoption of the WA lead agency model, to improve co-ordination of project approvals and timeframes. The Operation Rebound Report has adopted this recommendation and AMEC is working to persuade Government to begin implementation.

Prioritisation of Tanami Road sealing

AMEC, working with members, has identified key areas of the Tanami Road that should be prioritised by government for sealing, to lower the impact this rugged track has on mineral exploration. AMEC has supported the NT Government to secure Commonwealth Government funding.

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION OR
TO TALK TO ONE OF
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OR VISIT

www.amec.org.au