

29 June 2023

## New measures will support implementation of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Framework

This morning's timely announcement of further steps to be taken by the State Government, to support the 1 July implementation of the new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act, has been welcomed by the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies (AMEC).

These include:

- The formation of an implementation group including Traditional Owners, industry and government representatives, to monitor the initial stages of implementation of the new Act and to work collaboratively to address any issues that may arise.
- An education-first approach for the first 12 months will be adopted by the State Government in regard to compliance with the new Act.

"The measures will smooth the transition to the new cultural heritage requirements and enable challenges to be addressed as they arise," said AMEC Chief Executive Officer, Warren Pearce.

"Western Australia's existing cultural heritage legislation was simply not good enough and had to change."

"And while the new framework may be imperfect, the new process can be made to work through the good faith efforts of Traditional Owners, industry and government."

"The 12-month review of the regulations previously committed to by government, will also ensure there is a reasonable period to review the effectiveness of the new framework, and make adjustments where needed."

"Industry has strongly advocated for an education-first approach to the new legislation, to enable industry and community members to come up to speed and to adapt to the new requirements."

"A similar approach has been successfully used to support the transition to the new Work, Health and Safety legislation in 2022, which saw Western Australia implement major changes to workplace safety."

"This approach assisted West Australian industry to make a relatively smooth transition to better safety practices, without compromising safety outcomes or causing significant disruption to industry."

"This is a sensible way to approach major changes, and one that AMEC and the mining industry has advocated for."

While many groups have advocated for delay, AMEC has supported the 1 July start date.

"We have been at this for five years. Further delay in the implementation of the Act, would only have created greater delays for member companies, and placed further demands on a system already under pressure."

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“The sooner we get the new framework established and operational, the sooner we will be able to work toward achieving better and more efficient outcomes, which is in all of our interests.”

AMEC has been working closely with the State Government, over the past several months, as the transition date approaches.

“We will continue to work with and support our member companies as they adapt to the new processes and will work with Traditional Owners and the State Government to resolve problems that emerge, to deliver a more efficient process that better protects cultural heritage.”

“Aboriginal cultural heritage deserves to be protected, and our industry understands that we have an important role working with Traditional Owners to ensure its protection, for the benefit of all West Australians,” said Mr Pearce

AMEC congratulates Mr Ken Wyatt AO on his appointment as co-chair of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Council with Ms Irene Stainton AO.

AMEC welcomes Jonathon Griffin, Karen Oborn and Denzyl Moncreiff to the Council and the reappointment of Dr Mark Bin Bakar as a Council member.

AMEC will shortly be releasing a range of materials and templates that will assist our members in working through the new process and framework. These materials will also be published on our website and will be publicly available for the use of other industry groups, their members, and the wider public.

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