

12 December 2023

## AMEC commends WA Premier on removing green tape

Today's announcement is a massive step forward to remove the green tape that has been holding back our industry and the State economy for years.

"Today's announcement from the Western Australia Premier sends the strongest message yet, that WA is open for business.

"It tells government departments, companies, investors, and the world there is opportunity in the energy transition and the time to seize that opportunity is right now" commented AMEC Chief Executive Officer Warren Pearce.

In October, the Premier ordered a short and sharp review, headed by respected former State Environmental Protection Agency boss Paul Vogel. His fear at the time (and shared by the exploration and mining industry) confirmed that *"our system is bogged down."*

Now to fix it. "AMEC has worked tirelessly, advocating to government for action on the massive delays faced by companies" and these legislative amendments will bring a more streamlined department response.

Clearing the way for important projects awaiting approval. Along with new powers for Environment Minister Reece Whitby, to require faster assessments for projects of 'State significance'.

"Premier Cook was true to his word in saying he would act swiftly, and he has. He has listened to the concerns of AMEC and our industry, in what was becoming a major deterrent to investment in critical minerals, hydrogen and renewable energy.

"It sends a crystal-clear message from the very top and our industry will continue to do what is required to protect our natural environment." said Mr Pearce.

With environmental approvals taking longer than ever, this is an important step if Western Australia wants to become a clean energy powerhouse. "It's not guaranteed approval, but it is a guaranteed decision" stated premier Cook.

"The Premier is getting on with the job and showing common sense. It's now time for the Environment Minister and his department, to reflect the will of the Premier and remove green tape strangling the approval process," said Mr Pearce.

Research from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry WA showed green tape was costing the State \$318b worth of investment projects and 106,000 jobs.

The extra \$18 million in funding from the government will be used to contract technical experts, including members with industry experience and scientific expertise. This includes a new Coordinator General, tasked to resolve delays for priority projects and providing updates to Cabinet on any arising issues.

But Mr Pearce pointed out, "It is important the extra funding and extra staff on deck are clear about their modus operandi – to speed things up." The exploration and mining industry isn't asking for, or expecting, shortcuts to environmental approvals. Instead, answers to applications in a timely manner.

“If implemented correctly, the proposed changes, with appropriately experienced leaders making key decisions, will ensure sustainable development into the future and kickstart new projects waiting for a green light.

“This is not only a win for our industry but for the state of Western Australia and in-turn the national economy,” added Mr Pearce.

The Premier mentioned he "needs WA to lead the game" during this energy transition. The question now remains, will the federal government take note and resolve the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) reforms and do their bit?

ENDS –

***AMEC CEO, Warren Pearce is available for interviews. Contact Ryan Rampling to organise.***