

## FEDERAL

### **\$100m extension of Junior Mineral Exploration Incentive (JMEI) Scheme to 2024.**

AMEC advocated to ensure the continuation of the JMEI with a further \$100 million invested over 4 years to extend the program to the end of June 2025. The JMEI incentivises investment in eligible greenfield mineral exploration companies, by allowing them to convert their tax losses into a tax credit that can be used to attract new investors. In the first 3 rounds of the JMEI, participants raised \$342 million in additional capital, with \$70 million in credits allocated through the JMEI.

### **\$2 Billion extension to Critical Minerals Facility and Critical Minerals Development Program**

AMEC advocated for the expansion of critical minerals projects in Australia which resulted in \$50M allocated over three years to the Critical Minerals Development Program for competitive grants to support early and mid-stage critical minerals projects, as well as a doubling of the Critical Minerals Facility to \$4 Billion extesni

### **Skill Migration Cap Increased**

Continued advocacy from AMEC, and Australian industry, has seen the number of permanent migration visas available in 2022-23 rise from 160,000 to 195,000 places. This is to address parts of the Australian economy currently experiencing severe shortages, including the resources sector. This includes a big lift in the number of State and Territory visas, from 11,200 to 31,000 places, to help address critical needs in their jurisdictions.

### **Development of AMEC ESG Framework**

AMEC worked with members to develop a guidance document to help inform their approach to best practice Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) reporting.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### **Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act**

The WA Government has revoked the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2021 and revived the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1971. AMEC supported members through the anticipated, and were closely involved in the reversal, and the finalising of the changes to the 1972 Act.

### **Reduced Aboriginal Heritage Costs**

AMEC successfully advocated for a 5 year program that enabled holders of ELs and PLs to deduct the cost of heritage surveys and related costs, up to 50% of their tenement rental fees.

### **Eligible Mining Activities Framework**

Following 15 years of persistent AMEC advocacy, in 2022 the legislative underpinnings for an eligible mining activities (EMA) framework passed parliament. In 2023, AMEC worked with the Department to draft the regulations and policy framework. The EMA is a risk-based notification process for prescribed activities to be undertaken in a controlled manner in non-environmentally sensitive areas. The EMA promises to reduce the administrative burden on both the government and mineral exploration companies, while ensuring Western Australia's high environmental regulatory standards are maintained.

### **Resources Hub**

AMEC developed 'Resources Hub', an online platform to support mineral explorers and miners to continuously increase physical and psychosocial safety across their operations, in a practical and scalable manner. Resources Hub features a range of template policies, frameworks, risk assessments, training resources and initiatives used across member companies, for consideration to address and remove unacceptable behaviours including sexual harassment and sexual assault, from our industry.

### **True Fella vs Pantoro South PTY LTD**

The True Fella Pty Ltd v Pantoro South Pty Ltd Warden's Court decision on 24 August 2022 casts doubt over the validity of any exploration licence application that has not complied with a requirement to set out the work the applicant intends to carry out over the full five-year term of the exploration licence. Following AMEC advocacy, the WA Minister for Mines and Petroleum committed to ensure the security of granted exploration licences stating that the Government would take "any steps necessary to ensure the validity of granted exploration licences."

### **GDA:2020**

AMEC worked with Government to resolve an ongoing issue with the geodatum shifting relevant to the Western Australian land mass. Following necessary legislative amendment, the move to GDA 2020 will be the last geodatum update that is necessary to redraw the tenure map.

### **WHS Unit of Competency Extension**

AMEC successfully advocated for the recognition of, and extension to, the acceptance of WHS Risk Management Units of Competency (UoC) completed at RTOs in good-standing from 1 January 2018. With an estimated 30,000 workers across industry to undergo mandatory WHS risk management training, the 'grandfathering' of training will alleviate bottlenecks and cost pressures associated with the process.

### **Explorer Reference Pack**

AMEC's 'Explorer Reference Pack', developed in collaboration with Parabellum International under the WHS Peak Body Grant, provides members with a range of practical tools, resources and assistance, to transition to WA's WHS laws. Including templates for risk assessment, Mine Safety Management System (MSMS) resources, mines risk register, health and safety policy, incident report form, mine emergency response plan, sexual harassment checklist and policy, and a psychosocial incident investigation flowchart.

### **Mine Development and Closure Plan**

AMEC successfully advocated for the introduction of a streamlined Mining Development and Closure Proposals (MDCP) and Approvals Statements framework. The MDCP will be a single document that works to increase the efficiency of applications for mining operations and the assessment of these operations by removing the duplicate information required under the current process. The Approvals Statement will combine approved activities and conditions of a mining operations in to one document.

### **Regulation 169**

AMEC successfully advocated for amendments to the regulatory framework to all Agents to represent clients rather than (necessarily) a lawyer. This draws the law in line with current practice in the Warden's Court. Agents commonly represent parties at mention hearings, especially if a negotiated outcome is anticipated. Matters that escalate and proceed to hearings (whether the hearing of an interlocutory matter or a substantive hearing) will continue to be briefed to lawyers, except where exceptional circumstances can be shown. This amendment reduced uncertainty and cost of doing business for Industry.

### **Duty of Farm-In Agreements**

RevenueWA consulted on three draft of the Farm-in agreements Bill with AMEC's Corporate Regulation and Tax committee. The Bill passed Parliament on 1 November 2022. A Revenue Ruling defining mineral exploration expenditure has been published that AMEC advocacy has ensured will lead to no disruption in the financial and tax arrangements of joint ventures.

## QUEENSLAND

### **QLD's \$245 Million Critical Minerals Strategy**

AMEC was closely involved in the development of the Queensland Government's \$245 million Queensland Critical Minerals Strategy, which was launched by the Premier at the World Mining Congress in June 2024. AMEC was the only industry body recognised in the Premier's speech and thanked. During consultation AMEC actively advocated for actions that reduced time and reduce costs to get on the ground working. The key actions in the Qld Critical Minerals Strategy are:

### **5 Year \$55m Tenement Rental Fee Waiver**

AMEC advocacy has delivered current and new EPMs (all minerals not only critical minerals) free for the next five years, which began on 1 September 2023 and has been extremely well received by members.

### **\$75 million Critical Minerals Zones**

With Julia Creek / Richmond and Mount Isa being the first cabs off the rank, scoping is still underway, and AMEC will be consulted.

### **Establishing a Qld Critical Minerals Office in Townsville**

This will be a dedicated team charged with shepherding projects through the assessment pathway (not duplicative to the OCG process) and engaging with investment and stakeholders.

### **\$100 million Qld Critical Mineral and Battery Technology Fund**

Designed to incentivise domestic supply chain development, including:

- \$8 million for research and development in circular economy and mining.
- \$5 million looking at secondary perspective for the critical minerals.
- \$1 million to profile and promote Queensland as destination for investment.
- \$1 million to partner with industry to build ESG excellence.

# ADVOCACY AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2023

**Geological Survey of Qld (GSQ) - Collaborative Exploration Initiative (CEI) Round 8 Guidelines**  
Round 8 of the CEI Guidelines have taken on board feedback from AMEC on the Round 7 Guidelines, namely:

- Increase in funding of up to \$300,000 per program
- No penalty for submitting more than one application for a company or project
- No penalty for previously being successful

## Safety

Resources Safety and Health Queensland committed to complete the review of the Exploration Safety Guidance Note. This has not been reviewed since 2004; the current guidance note is not reflective of junior exploration operations. AMEC will be included in this consultation process.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### Voluntary Mineral Exploration Code of Conduct

AMEC advocated for the development of a voluntary Mineral Exploration Code of Conduct throughout the course of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Land Access under the Mining Act, in 2021. The Code was launched in February 2023, following consultation with AMEC and our members throughout 2022.

### Exploration Licence Regulation under GDA2020

On the back of strong AMEC advocacy, the proposed shift to Geocentric Datum of Australia (GDA2020) for the regulation of Exploration Licences (ELs) under the Mining Act 1971, will not shift tenement boundaries. AMEC's immediate response included Government and member engagement to highlight a range of possible pathways, impacts, and a future-proofed solution.

### Re-consideration of 18-year relinquishment of tenure consideration

As strongly advocated for by AMEC, Government will reconsider maximum lengths of tenure and models to ensure 'use it or lose it' principles can be applied across the state, without unintended consequences for the commercial realities of developing mineral projects. AMEC outlined to government a range of legislative and policy amendments to support this intent, without compromising the integrity of the robust legislative framework.

### Accelerated Discovery Initiative (ADI)

AMEC's advocacy efforts resulted in the Malinauskas Government's first budget including extending the Accelerated Discovery Initiative (ADI) co-funded drilling program by a further \$10M to 2025-26, to encourage mineral exploration efforts across South Australia.

### Critical Minerals South Australia (CMSA)

AMEC successfully advocated for the Geological Survey of South Australia (GSSA) to expand the understanding of South Australia's critical minerals potential, by re-examining the state's extensive drill core samples and historical records for the potential for other hosted minerals previously not searched for, including rare earth elements. This pre-competitive data will be published, to support the development of exploration projects across the state.

## 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. CMSA will utilise new GSSA-supported information to develop a critical minerals strategy to position South Australia as the jurisdiction of choice for companies, innovators and researchers in the critical minerals sector.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Extended industry funding for exploration and critical minerals

Following direct advocacy from AMEC, the NSW Government announced significant funding for the Critical Minerals and High Tech Metals Strategy, which included the funding of Stream 1 and Stream 2 grants. Additionally, AMEC advocated to extend the funding of the Co-operative Drilling Program and New Frontiers Exploration program that includes geophysical surveys as well as drilling, with an additional funding round.

### AMEC NSW Land Access Toolkit for Mineral Exploration

The AMEC NSW Toolkit has been updated to reflect recent legislative and regulatory changes and has been improved, with feedback from members. The updated Toolkit includes a comprehensive guide for industry members with step-by-step information on leading practice, fact sheets to help explain exploration to the wider community, with new fact sheets on rehabilitation and frequently asked questions, as well as an updated access agreement template that includes the option for a deed of entry.

### New NSW Critical Minerals and High-Tech Metals Strategy

The NSW Government is currently consulting on a revised Critical Minerals Strategy to provide certainty and direction for the industry as it continues to grow. It will include a sharper focus on domestic manufacturing, skills and training opportunities. AMEC attended the Ministerial Roundtable in October and has provided a detailed submission with the support of members that includes recommendations for the new Strategy to include an action plan and resourcing; collaborative government-industry funding; expanding the critical minerals list and streamlining NSW regulatory frameworks.

## VICTORIA

### Mining Resources & Sustainable Development Act 1990 (MRSDA)

Legislative reforms on the Mining Resources & Sustainable Development Act 1990 (MRSDA) are moving through the consultation period with AMEC providing important insights and member feedback in collaborating with government on the development and implementation of its proposed policy amendments.

### Critical Minerals Advocacy

The Victorian Government has previously announced a Critical Minerals Strategy, which included budget funding of \$7.4 Million over three years to search for and develop critical minerals in the state. Following direct advocacy from AMEC via a roundtable discussion with AMEC members and the Geological Survey of Victoria, several recommendations have

been discussed and reinforced to align with stated policies from other jurisdictions. AMEC continues to advocate strongly on this important strategic policy objective with regular updates and communication to industry and government.

## TASMANIA

### Engagement with Tasmanian Minister

AMEC maintains a strong and open dialogue with Tasmanian Minister for Resources, Felix Ellis. Minister Ellis has demonstrated considerable engagement and interest in the local resources industry and the priorities of the sector, with AMEC providing detailed briefs with follow up information on the status of the industry and key issues to the Minister with a focus on making Tasmania more cost competitive and attractive for investment.

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

### Major Royalty reform

Since 2017, AMEC has consistently advocated for a simple Ad Valorem royalty to replace the hybrid profit based and Ad Valorem system. In 2021, the Opposition took the commitment to shift to an Ad Valorem to the election. In 2023, the Government has adopted what AMEC has called for a simple Ad Valorem regime. AMEC has met repeatedly with multiple Cabinet ministers, the Treasury, the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade and the Opposition to achieve this reform.

### Maintained Water Exemption for Exploration Licences

AMEC ensured that amendments to water licencing in the Northern Territory left the five megalitre exemption for exploration tenements. AMEC advocacy ensured water licences from the Department of Environment, Parks and Water Security that duplicate existing regulation from the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade do not occur for all but the greatest of users.

### Legacy Mine Fund Legislation

After multiple years of AMEC advocacy for a separate legislative framework for the Mining Remediation Fund, the Government has drafted legislation for the MRF to be its own standalone fund. This legislation will also incorporate an earlier advocacy achievement, retaining all the interest in the fund.

### No Chain of Responsibility for Mining

Following the Pepper Fracking Inquiry in 2018 the NT Government committed to introduce a range of requirements for land access and liability for onshore natural gas companies undertaking hydraulic fracturing. AMEC has ensured the chain of responsibility legislation that would introduce a 'trailing liability' beyond the relinquishment of tenure were introduced into the Northern Territory did not extend to mining and mineral exploration companies.

### Mineral Development Taskforce

The Mineral Development Taskforce was formed in late 2021 by the Northern Territory Government. They were tasked with developing the strategy and regulatory options to accelerate significant private investment in mineral projects so the Territory could achieve the necessary economic growth to overcome its structural deficit. The Minerals Development Taskforce was the focal point of AMEC's advocacy in 2023.