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## New Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill enters Parliament

The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies (AMEC) says that the Bill introduced to Parliament today will finally provide a long overdue update to existing heritage legislation in Western Australia.

“If enacted, this Bill will bring an end to Section 18 clearance processes and will set a new standard for the protection of cultural heritage in Western Australia,” said Chief Executive of AMEC, Warren Pearce.

“The Bill sets an extremely high standard for engagement and agreement making between our industry and traditional owners.”

“And while it will apply to all industries, the mining and exploration industry will clearly be the one most effected by the changes.”

Over the last four years, AMEC and its member companies have been participating in the development of new Aboriginal Cultural Heritage legislation through lengthy consultation processes with traditional owners, industry, and a wide range of stakeholders.

Much of the detail of how the legislation will operate is still to be determined through an ongoing co-design process, with traditional owners, government, and industry.

Critical to the interest of mineral explorers will be determining the new requirements for exploration activities, the arrangements and costs for heritage surveys and other services, and the timeframes for consultation and agreement making processes.

“These changes will be much more demanding on mining and exploration companies and will slow the process of exploration and development.”

“Industry will continue to call on both the Commonwealth and State Government to provide greater resourcing to prescribed body corporates (PBCs) for support in undertaking the significant new responsibilities they will be responsible for under this new legislation.”

“While much about this new process and how it will work is still uncertain, the mining and mineral exploration industry will approach these changes constructively and continue to work closely with traditional owners.”

“The true test for the success of this legislation will be in its implementation, and whether all parties can work together to reach agreements that balance the protection of cultural heritage and the shared opportunities that come from mineral exploration and mining,” said Mr Pearce.

ENDS



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