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Interim Report to Juukan Inquiry is an important step

The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies' (AMEC) considers the Committee of Northern Australia's Interim Report to the *Inquiry into the destruction of 46,000-year-old caves at the Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia* is another important step in comprehending the incident at Juukan Gorge.

"The destruction of the 46,000-year-old caves at Juukan is a deeply saddening and regrettable event that has destroyed a site of enormous cultural and heritage significance, a site which cannot be replaced," said Warren Pearce, Chief Executive Officer of AMEC.

"The events at Juukan Gorge have rightly caused mining and mineral exploration companies to reflect on the processes, agreements and relationships that we have with traditional owners and aboriginal peoples."

"AMEC members continue to work to ensure the highest standards are being met with Aboriginal Cultural Heritage."

"The interim report reflects the challenges that have been faced by the Committee, as they have sought to understand the significant complexities of the interaction of State and Commonwealth legislation, the many different groups, companies and government agencies, a lack of consistency in process and agreements, and limited transparency of the processes and the outcomes."

"AMEC supports the Committee's recommendation that gag clauses with traditional owners are not appropriate and should not be used in agreements."

"AMEC opposes the Committee's call for a moratorium on Section 18s. A moratorium is not practical and does not consider the broader economic and social ramifications of delaying Western Australian development, including for Aboriginal people."

"AMEC and our member companies support strong protections for Aboriginal cultural heritage in legislation. In our view, a modernised legislative framework for the protection of Aboriginal Heritage in Western Australia presents the best path forward. AMEC has, and will continue to support, the process to create a new WA Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act as it extends into 2021."

"The Interim Report is an important milestone for industry's learnings from the tragedy at Juukan Gorge, the Final Report will present opportunities for all Australian jurisdictions," said Mr Pearce.

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