Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

Submission No: 002
Submission By: AMEC
Publication:

AMEC
ASSOCIATION OF MINING AND EXPLORATION COMPANIES

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9 December 2025

ATTN: HEIC Committee Secretariat

Health, Environment and Innovation Committee

HEIC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Health, Environment and Innovation Committee,

Re: Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment 2025 (EP(ES)OLA)

AMEC appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission on the EP(ES)OLA Bill. Our submission contains feedback provided throughout the consultation process to demonstrate the evolution and consideration taken by the Department of Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) Policy team. It has been refreshing to be actively consulted on Environmental Legislation before the Bill is introduced to Parliament. A strong environmental policy benefits both the environment and the resources industry.

The accompanying submissions were developed in close consultation with AMEC members over several months. The overall consultation process has been outstanding, with recognition and amendments made to address many concerns. Some of the outstanding concerns from the exposure draft, particularly with the wording of timeframes for PRCP audits, seem to have been addressed. The remaining concerns relate to the enhanced powers regarding forfeiture of property and various timeframes impacting amendments. AMEC believes DETSI would benefit from additional resourcing and training, and is working with DETSI to plan site visits for staff to gain firsthand experience of the industry they regulate.

We look forward to contributing at the Public Hearing, should the Committee invite us, and continuing collaboration on regulatory amendments following the Bill's passage.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Dickson, Head of National Operations – [redacted] | [redacted]

17 October 2025

Consultation feedback on exposure draft for a proposed Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment - EP(ES)OLA Bill 2025

Submission Summary

The opportunities addressed in the previous consultation paper – "Realising efficiencies and streamlining in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and other portfolio amendments" are exactly the type of reformative policy AMEC has been seeking for our members. We want to reiterate our strong support for these reforms. However, we also expressed some concern over elements of the portfolio contents, particularly about the logistical ambition of achieving the overall volume of reforms and specific changes that would be difficult to implement in a single comprehensive review.

Overall, AMEC expresses its support for numerous initiatives currently in progress and concurs with the decision to withdraw certain items.

Key Points

Proposals from consultation paper which are not progressing

The items not progressing were either not supported or only conditionally supported by AMEC. AMEC has no issue with these items not progressing.

Proposals from consultation progressing with variation

The variations made in response to feedback typically result in good improvements to the proposals. Further clarification in the guidelines will make these changes even more effective.

Proposals progressing consistent with consultation paper

AMEC supports several of the items progressing consistent with the consultation paper. However, there are some items that continue to be 'not supported' and will await the final bill and the committee process and provide further feedback at that point.

About AMEC

AMEC is a national peak industry body representing over 550 mineral exploration, mining, and related companies across Australia, with more than 80 members having operations primarily based in Queensland. Our members are mineral explorers, emerging miners, producers, and a wide range of businesses working in and for the industry.

AMEC's members explore for, develop, and produce minerals including antimony, bauxite, cobalt, copper, gold, graphite, lead, lithium, manganese, mineral sands (such as silica), molybdenum, nickel, phosphate, potash, rare earths, silver, tungsten, vanadium, and zinc.

Feedback Format

AMEC has presented our feedback in a table format. This reflects the suggested format provided in the consultation paper, *"Realising Efficiencies and Streamlining in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and Other Portfolio Amendments*," released on 10 June 2025, to which AMEC made a formal submission on 14 July 2025.

AMEC has reviewed those parts of the original consultation that have either been set aside and not progressing, are progressing but with modifications, or remain unchanged. This thorough review process demonstrates our commitment to the consultation and our dedication to understanding the implications of the proposed changes.

AMEC reiterates our support for the reforms. However, we have also illustrated that the points we advocate may pose challenges for the resource industry, and it is important to acknowledge the potential hurdles that may need to be addressed.

Proposals which are not progressing

Section Number and proposal	**AMEC Response/Feedback**
Part 1 – EP Act proposals to reduce regulatory burden, make the Act more responsive to emerging challenges and remove barriers to investment	
Proposal 1.4 - Provide a mechanism to codify 'best practice environmental management'	AMEC supports the decision not to progress this item, as it wasn't supported in our initial feedback. Reducing the inconsistent application of requirements for similar activities, such as waste management and emissions control, would be an excellent outcome of best practice environmental management (BPEM). AMEC underscores the importance of clarity in terminology. While the renaming from mandatory code to 'ERA code' is a significant change, it does not fully address the issue of 'standard criteria'. This precision in terminology is crucial for our industry understanding and effective implementation of the regulatory framework. If there is an amendment to allow the chief executive, who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the EP Act, to make codes of practice, will 'standard criteria' be

	removed from the EP Act? They would seem superfluous if BPEM were to be introduced.
Proposal 1.5 - Providing consistent general administrative requirements across approvals	AMEC supports the decision not to progress this item, as our concerns on the administrative burden were accepted by the Department.
Part 2 – Other proposals relating to Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans (PRCPs) *All parts of Section 2 are progressing or progressing with modifications.*	
Part 3 – Other proposals to amend the EP Act, NC Act and Water Act (chapter 3)	
Proposal 3.1 - Clarify that the definition of waters in the EP Act includes groundwaters	AMEC supports the decision not to progress this item, as it there was only conditional support in our initial feedback. Clarifying the definition should also be consistent across other legislation defining water in Queensland.
Proposal 3.3 - Enhance powers for a court to order confiscation of proceeds from environmental crimes under the EP Act	AMEC supports the decision not to progress this item, as it wasn't supported in our initial feedback. AMEC recognizes that this section posed challenges under the Criminal Proceeds Confiscation Regulation 2023; however, Sections 3.2 and 3.4 were kept intact. AMEC continues to advocate that the over-criminalisation of the EP Act 1994 is unnecessary.

Proposals retained with modifications

Section Number and proposal	**AMEC Response/Feedback**
Part 1 – EP Act proposals to reduce regulatory burden, make the Act more responsive to emerging challenges and remove barriers to investment	

1.1 Mandatory codes as an alternative to EAs for low-risk activities	AMEC supports the decision to progress this item with modification, as it was supported in our initial feedback. Recognition of stakeholder feedback on the similarities between the new codes and ERA standards and clarifying this in the supplementary information is very helpful. AMEC sought clarification on the amendments related to Financial Assurance and Resource Legislation during a meeting, and this was extremely beneficial in clarifying the potential outcomes if the Bill is passed. AMEC supports the following: • The requirement for financial assurance (i.e., surety) will be eliminated. Refunds of existing financial assurances will be issued once the legislation is passed. This change is extremely beneficial, reaffirming support for smaller operators. These funds directly aid in the commercialisation of small resource entities and start-up operations, boosting confidence in their potential success. • Additionally, amendments will allow for mining tenements under the Mineral Resources Act 1989, as well as other tenures, authorities, and licenses under the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, to be granted without an Environmental Authority (EA) when the activity can be conducted under an Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) code. AMEC supports these consequential amendments as they recognise low-risk activities and emphasise the need for streamlined administration to ensure economic success. For additional clarity, could the drafting of the Bill make it clearer that mineral exploration is included, as members' feedback was that it seems unclear and may only apply to small-scale mining? Should the community have any concerns about managing these low risk activities, there are other mechanisms that would more adequately cover more complex management. The s319C[1] of the EP Act's 'Duty to Restore the environment' financially covers more than the current

[1] Environmental Protection Act 1994

	process and would be a more suitable mechanism to manage areas that have semi-permanent structures, such as “The Gemfields”, where 4500 penalty units (or ~$75000) would better help cover the costs. Section 1.1 discusses "Proposal 10" from AMEC’s Government Policy Brief regarding Standard Conditions for critical minerals. The consultation paper estimates that out of the 9,300 environmental authorities (EAs) administered, over 30% may be suitable for conversion to mandatory codes without compromising environmental and community safeguards. AMEC supports this approach as it presents a low-risk alternative to the current environmental authorities, suggesting that these activities may not require financial provisioning. This perspective is further backed by amendments to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 and the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, which aim to enhance financial provisioning and resources legislation. The implementation of mandatory codes for low-risk activities provides an opportunity to streamline the regulatory process for Environmentally Relevant Activities (ERAs). However, it is essential that these codes do not impose additional conditions on existing ERAs. The phased implementation prioritises compliance with standard ERAs, particularly concerning exploration drilling, but more details are needed on which specific activities will benefit. Moreover, AMEC seeks clarification on how the common conditions for prescribed Environmentally Relevant Activities will be integrated into the new model conditions proposed in the consultation paper. As stated in AMEC original submission. The mandatory codes must: • Make it easier for exploration drilling to adapt to changing conditions e.g. if a drill site needs to be moved due to unforeseen on-ground conditions (within an already culturally cleared area), the “EA Holder” can do so under reasonable mandatory codes • Allow for Exploration drilling on a granted Mining Lease

	• Ensure designations such as 'low risk' have some statutory criteria to limit the inconsistent application of DETSI's officer discretion. The chosen wording in the mandatory codes should reflect and address these types of concerns • Eliminate duplicative legislation that causes confusion, such as Condition A14 in the Standard Conditions, contradicting the Australian Cultural Heritage Act for cleared areas if clearances are within 100 metres of undefined "Historical, Archaeological or Ethnographic sites".
1.3 Identify State's priorities for environmental protection – SEPPs	AMEC supports the decision to progress this item with modification, as it was conditionally supported in our initial feedback. AMEC supports the identification of the State's environmental protection priorities in the EP Act. We believe that aligning the SEPPs should make compliance and assessment easier. However, we also recognised the need for more cost-effective solutions for low-risk activities, which would provide the necessary flexibility for operators. Exploration drilling, a key activity in the resource sector, should not face penalties for incorrect mapping and should not be limited to mapped areas, especially when sensitive vegetation is present. Although out of scope, AMEC suggests creating a guideline for low-risk activities that allows for self-assessment and scales up as activities increase, similar to the rules in the Vegetation Management Act. We believe that this approach could significantly simplify the SEPPs listed in Box 1.3, avoiding unnecessary repetition and providing clear guidance for environmentally relevant activities. The reference list, as per Appendix 1 for proposed State environmental protection priorities (SEPPs), assists the Department and the resource sector in clearly defining matters that should be considered and protected. This has long been a pinch point due to the age and drafting intent in the various state legislations that must overlap and work together to define SEPPs. In some cases, the definitions and terminology are similar, if not identical, across various QLD legislations.

	The list is quite extensive. AMEC suggests that significant guideline support is required for end users when considering how it will be enacted, and plain English is needed for accurate and valued interpretation by the resource community. As *Schedule 1AA, State environmental protection priorities Section 3B* stands now, it is very complex. We believe that for State Environmental Protection Priorities (SEPPs) to progress, they need further consultation and the active involvement of all stakeholders, including the possibility of moving the Regulations.
Part 2 – Other proposals relating to Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans (PRCPs)	
2.1 Assist EA holders transitioning into the progressive rehabilitation and closure plan (PRCP) framework under the EP Act	AMEC supports the decision to progress this item with modification, as it was conditionally supported in our initial feedback. The recognition of unintended consequences in this legislation is commendable, but Section 2.1 fails to effectively assist EA holders in transitioning to the PRCP framework under the EP Act. For instance, when a company aims to restart a legacy mine site with existing permits, they often need to conduct exploration drilling to develop a mine plan and associated PRCP. While the intent is to prevent premature resource extraction, many rehabilitation efforts rely on economic viability, which can take years to materialize. Current conditions hinder potential rehabilitation due to outdated resource information in the context of re-commercialisation. The PRCP/ERC requires up-to-date environmental quotes, yet these quotes are often inflated or outdated since PRCP timelines span 5-10 years or more. They should only serve to demonstrate independent solutions not accurately calculated by the ERC Calculator. AMEC conditionally supports helping EA holders transition to the PRCP framework, but removing “mining activity” from section 431A of the EP Act will limit legacy site redevelopment. To address this, consideration should be given to allowing mandatory code activities in these situations or creating an option to ‘freeze’ the PRCP while data is gathered, with activities still covered under general environmental duties.

Proposal 2.3 - Provide a new category of approval for transitional applications for PRCP schedules	AMEC supports the decision to progress this item with modification, as it was conditionally supported in our initial feedback. Additional drafting materials provided on 15 October indicate that the original proposal to introduce a third category of approval for transitional applications concerning Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plan (PRCP) schedules could not be implemented within the scope of the amendments. As an alternative, a proposal has been made to clarify the interpretation of "achieving best practice management" for environmental authorities that need to obtain a PRCP schedule during the transition. It is imperative that we consider an expansion of definitions and details in accordance with section 126C(1)(e) and (i). *"For each proposed non-use management area, please state the proposed methodology for achieving best practice management to support the management milestones outlined in the proposed PRCP schedule for the area*. " This section primarily deals with non-use mining areas. Understanding what is deemed best practice management is crucial when drafting a PRCP, especially in the context of a transitional PRCP that addresses a previous entity's approach compared to a new entity's approach to 'best practice.' AMEC is eager to explore the concept of 'achieving best practice management,' seeking a clear understanding of the criteria and specific benchmarks that define it. We are particularly interested in understanding how this will impact the 'Statutory Guideline for Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans,' specifically sections 3.6 - Rehabilitation and Management Methodology.
Part 3 – Other proposals to amend the EP Act, NC Act and Water Act (chapter 3)	
3.4 Ensure adequate time is available to gather evidence in summary proceedings under the EP Act	AMEC supports this proposal, but has concerns about how it will be presented in legislation. This proposal should also consider that this tenure type is also a future resource opportunity.

3.11 Clarify chapter 3 of the Water Act parts d. to g.	Seeking additional clarification from the Department on 15 October 2025 was advantageous for understanding the specific amendment related to water, as well as AMEC's express desire to identify areas that currently require improvement. AMEC is supportive of the following key factors: • AMEC will also support clarification of land access arrangements, as it relates to water bore monitoring and/or baseline development and monitoring. • The role of OGIA is pivotal, as it sets the baseline assessment strategy and assigns responsible tenure holders to each obligation. This strategy is particularly effective when tenure holders are transitioning between ownership and operations, or when dealing with multiple or overlapping tenure arrangements. • It's important to note that the requirement for CMA tenure holders has evolved. They are no longer expected to prepare an individual baseline assessment plan.

Proposals progressing consistent with consultation paper

EPOLA proposal June 2025	**AMEC Response/Feedback**
Part 1 – EP Act proposals to reduce regulatory burden, make the Act more responsive to emerging challenges and remove barriers to investment	
1.2 Environmental risk basis to regulating ERAs	AMEC supports initiatives that promote low-risk exploration and mineral development. AMEC commends the Department for leading an objective assessment process for ERAs and partially addresses "Item 10" of its Government Policy Platform regarding Standard Conditions for critical minerals. AMEC conditionally supports a consistent environmental risk basis for regulating relevant activities. Proposal 1.2 aims to resolve inconsistencies in legislation for different activity classes and ensures that all activities requiring

	approvals are captured, including various infrastructure projects. AMEC believes that the proposed risk assessment framework by DETSI should align with the Australian Standard for Risk Management (AS ISO 31000:2018) as a minimum to avoid confusion with existing regulatory requirements in Queensland legislation. Such as: • Work Health and Safety Act 2011 • Mineral Resources Act 1989 • Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 1999 • Resources Safety and Health Queensland (RSHQ) The benefits of the ISO standard for risk include: • Transparency of process • Informed decision making and • Input to priority setting Most AMEC members already operate in highly risk-averse environments and have well-established, robust systems for addressing risk. It would be beneficial to align with existing standards while incorporating environmental considerations, avoiding the inadvertent creation of an additional tier of risk assessment and risk framework. This point has been emphasised by AMEC for some time, especially since the development of the Technical Report: Environmental Risks of Resource Activities. In August 2023, AMEC submitted a proposal suggesting that the Technical Report be made publicly accessible, as any benchmark by which the industry is measured should be transparent.
2.2 Clarify when offence provisions apply in circumstances where an application has lapsed Part B, clause 27. EP Act ss 751, 753,765B	AMEC does not support this proposal. In our accompanying Policy Brief, Proposal 16 proposes a “Capability Uplift” that would better serve DETSI and industry in addressing application delays. As previously submitted:

	Environmental approval applications are lapsing due to the Department's inability to assess them promptly. This issue needs addressing to avoid the proposed amendment. At a recent DETSI briefing, it was noted that only 22 of 66 transitional PRCPs for minerals have been completed, averaging about 3 months per PRCP. The Department's under-resourcing, a concern since PRCPs were introduced, is evident in budget data showing a decrease in FTEs since 2019. The 2019-20 Budget Papers reported 7772 FTEs in "Environmental Protection Services," while the 2025-26 Budget Papers show 7593 FTEs in "Environmental Programs and Regulation Services," representing an 18 FTE decrease. While the situation involves many staff and functions, it is unreasonable to penalise companies for application delays caused by DETSI's under-resourcing, as confirmed by feedback from AMEC Members navigating the process.
2.4 PRCP Audit - Part B, clause 14. EP Act s 285	AMEC supports this proposal, provided the language aligns with the consultation paper's intent to extend timeframes beyond 3-year intervals, i.e., no sooner than 3 years.
2.5 Allow for a new notice to submit a PRCP application following an EA transfer - Part B, clause 27. EP Act s 765A	AMEC supports this proposal and initiatives that address the challenges experienced during sales processes and provide potential investors with greater certainty. However, 20 days will not be sufficient time for the new holder to comply. It would be better if the 20 business days were used to negotiate a new timeframe for a revised or new PRCP Plan that meets the requirements of Section 431A and ensures that a new operator/EA holder has sufficient time to develop a plan that aligns with the statutory guidance.
2.6 Provide for removal of the public interest evaluation process - Part B, clause 15. EP Act ss 316PA, 316PB, 316PC, 316PD, 316PE	The current duplicative public interest evaluation (PIE) process does not benefit industry or the public interest. Generally, PIEs allow for contentious decisions to be reviewed with transparency. It is important that considerations such as economic, social and

	environmental matters are weighted proportionately depending on the elements supplied in the application. AMEC supports the removal of the duplicate PIE, with the focus being on the information currently required in section 316PA(2).
2.7 Clarify that EA holders who have fallen out of the PRCP framework due to a lapsed application may re-apply - Part B, clause 27. EP Act s 802	Section 2.7 appears to be a workaround for the larger problem of applications being refused and too much time being taken in the assessment process (see Section 2.2 above). AMEC supports this proposal but would also like DETSI to consider addressing the root cause of lengthy approval timeframes.
3.2 Enhance powers for a court to order forfeiture of property which may be used in the ongoing conduct of an offence under the EP Act. Part D, clause 14. EP Act ss 462, 463, 463A, 463B, 463C, 463D, 463E	AMEC does not support the increased criminality of the EP Act. More detail and time is required to review the complexities of these proposals. The proposed amendments regarding forfeiture, confiscation, and evidence gathering need thorough evaluation to uphold fairness, transparency, and economic stability. There's a risk of unintended consequences, such as legal uncertainty for past actions and potential impacts on investor confidence and economic growth due to vague enforcement timelines. Proposals 3.2 to 3.4 suggest a shift towards "criminalisation" by the Queensland Government. AMEC has expressed concerns that criminal law may not effectively address environmental issues, especially given Queensland's low prosecution rates for environmental offences. Such legal ramifications could deter investment and innovation in the mining sector. The current regulatory framework as rigid and inefficient. While modernisation is necessary, a command-and-control approach may not fit Queensland's unique context. Legislative amendments should focus on serious misconduct and establish clear standards for offences.

3.5 Clarify when the residual risks requirement lapses - Part D, clause 12 and 13. EP Act ss 273A, 276	Increased clarity for the residual risk requirement is not something AMEC members have expressed concerns about. AMEC supports the suggested changes to an absolute timeframe of 6 months to increase clarity, rather than a "reasonable period."
3.6 Amend the EP Act to ensure the information stage is not shortened when an amendment application is received	AMEC does not support this change as the root cause of timing issues should be addressed. If time management is an issue with EA Amendments, time could be saved by removing the public notification step a when applying to amend an EA for a mining activity relating to a mining lease. There is an effective tenure process at the outset of this process and the public notification step is an unproductive duplication. As AMEC has previously submitted in detail and verbally, one issue is that once an application is made, the eligibility timeframes and opportunities to manage information requests and extensions of timeframes are strictly governed by the act's timeframes. However, there is an incredible opportunity at the pre-lodgement phase of any application to address many of the systemic issues that plague both industry and the Department in this space. AMEC urges the government to explore opportunities to provide a robust pre-lodgement space that guides both parties in developing a sound proposal, rather than waiting for the application phases to begin assessment.
3.7 Provide greater clarity and consistency on the requirements for third-party accreditation programs under the EP Act - Part C, clause 3, section 318YE	AMEC is undecided on this proposal.
3.8 Remove requirements to publicly notify terms of reference for environmental impact statements	AMEC supports this proposal. Removing duplicative processes and reducing the confusion experienced by stakeholders during the process is a good step forward and does not diminish the intent of the terms of reference.

3.9 Provide consistency in authorised officer functions and powers where these intersect with the Planning Act	AMEC supports this proposal. Providing consistency in authorised officer functions and powers where these intersect with the Planning Act is not something AMEC members have expressed concerns about.
3.10 Clarify the dictionary definition of protected areas under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NC Act).	AMEC Supports this proposal. Clarifying the dictionary definition of protected area under the NC Act is not something AMEC members have expressed concerns about. As previously highlighted, there are clear conflicts between the use of the term and references to a 'protected area' within the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (NC Act 1992), specifically: • Part 4, division 2 section 28 and Part 4A, section 70B and Section 14 • Part 3 Interpretation [s 6] • Interconnection with *Biodiscovery Act 2004.* • Part 4 Protected areas [s 30] This can result in a definition that has a similar meaning but varies slightly across the relevant acts in Queensland that AMEC members must follow. As a result, navigating the approvals and licensing process can become more complex and convoluted than necessary, even when the goal is to address the same issues.

Consultation Process

The opportunities addressed in the previous consultation paper – "Realising efficiencies and streamlining in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and other portfolio amendments" are exactly the type of reformative policy AMEC has been seeking for our members. We want to reiterate our strong support for these reforms and the consultation process.

Subsequent meetings with the Department held on the 3rd September, along with stakeholder briefings 29th September and 2nd October, and the release of the following material on the 24th September 2025:

- Exposure draft of proposed Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 (EP(ES)OLA)
- Supplementary information to support reading the exposure draft

- Previous consultation paper - Realising efficiencies and streamlining in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and other portfolio amendments

And an additional meeting on 15th October and the follow up detail on Proposal 2.3.

Conclusion

The overall consultation process has been outstanding, with recognition and amendments made to address many concerns. AMEC supports many of the items progressing and supports the withdrawal of items also. Although, there are some items that continue to be 'not supported' AMEC will await the final bill and the committee process and provide further feedback at that point.

For further information contact:
Kate Dickson, Queensland Director – [redacted] | [redacted]
Amy Warden, Policy Manager – [redacted] | [redacted]

AMEC
Association of Mining and Exploration Companies

To: Departme Environment, Touri , Scie e d Innovation

Re: Consulta on paper – Rea sing effic e ci and strea l n g in the *Enviro ental Pr t c i n A 1994* a other po folio amendmen – June 25

ATTN: EPAct.Policy@detsi.qld.g .au

Date su

Submission summary

The opportunities covered in this consultation paper are exactly the type of reforms AMEC has been seeking for our members. Although there are good elements, we believe this is a good conversation starter, and we look forward to working with the Department further on the draft Bill.

Part 1 – EP Act proposals to reduce regulatory burden, make the Act more responsive to emerging challenges and remove barriers to investment

AMEC conditionally supports 4 of the 5 proposals in Part 1. Many of the proposals address concerns AMEC has been calling for changes on. However, Proposal 1.4 – "Provide a mechanism to codify 'best practice environmental management' introduces too much uncertainty with no clear timeframes.

Part 2 – Other proposals relating to Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans (PRCPs)

AMEC conditionally supports 6 of the 7 proposals in Part 2. Many of the proposals address concerns AMEC has been calling for changes on. However, Proposal 2.1 will not "Assist EA holders transitioning into the PRCP framework under the EP Act".

Part 3 – Other proposals to amend the EP Act, NC Act and Water Act (chapter 3)

AMEC conditionally supports 5 of the 11 proposals in Part 3 and is undecided on 2 of the 11. Many of the proposals are concerning, particularly the Proposals concerning the increased criminality of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act). Proposal 3.6 could be addressed with simplification and addressing the root cause rather than extending timeframes.

Introduction

The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies (AMEC) appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on the “Consultation paper – Realising efficiencies and streamlining in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 and other portfolio amendments – June 2025”.

AMEC members have extensive experience in navigating complex regulatory frameworks, including land access, environmental approvals, mining leases, and rehabilitation, throughout Australia. AMEC members' experiences and feedback are the main foundation of the feedback provided in this submission.

About AMEC

AMEC is a national peak industry body representing almost 550 mineral exploration, mining, and related companies across Australia, with over 80 members having operations primarily based in Queensland. Our members are mineral explorers, emerging miners, producers, and a wide range of businesses working in and for the industry.

AMEC’s members explore for, develop, and produce minerals including antimony, bauxite, cobalt, copper, gold, graphite, lead, lithium, manganese, mineral sands (such as silica), molybdenum, nickel, phosphate, potash, rare earths, silver, tungsten, uranium, vanadium, and zinc.

Feedback Format

AMEC has a "Queensland 2025 Government Policy Brief" attached as an appendix to this document to cover the elements of AMEC's concerns that are not covered by the questions raised in the consultation paper. Issues with the Financial Provision Scheme do not appear to be in scope, but they are causing significant disruption and stifling growth in the sector.

AMEC has presented our feedback in a table format, as suggested in the consultation paper. This makes the submission longer than we would normally provide, and we will have more details and case studies to include as the draft bill progresses.

Detailed Comments per suggested response format

Section Number and proposal	AMEC Response/Feedback
Part 1 – EP Act proposals to reduce regulatory burden, make the Act more responsive to emerging challenges and remove barriers to investment	
1.1 - Provide for the making of mandatory codes as an alternative to environmental authorities	Section 1.1 partially addresses "Proposal 10" in AMEC's Government Policy Brief, requesting Standard Conditions for critical minerals. Of the 9,300 EA's administered, the consultation paper estimates "more than 30% may be suitable for conversion to a mandatory code without reducing environmental and community safeguards". AMEC supports mandatory codes as an alternative to environmental authorities, and the recognition that the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) gives by this consideration that it is such a low risk that it will no longer be subject to financial provisioning. The mandatory codes for low-risk activities approach presents an excellent opportunity to streamline the current regulatory process, which is covered by the standard 'Environmentally Relevant Activities' (ERAs). However, the mandatory codes should not be used to increase conditions for what is covered under the current ERAs. The staged approach to the mandatory codes is supported, especially since priority will be given to those currently complying with standard ERA and, therefore, exploration drilling. The mandatory codes are a positive approach, but more context and detail will be needed to clarify which activities and operations will benefit from them. AMEC would also like clarity on how common conditions for Prescribed environmentally relevant activities will fit in here (if at all), or will they convert to the model conditions covered later in the consultation paper? The consultation paper specifically requested feedback on lower-risk resource activities. AMEC supports the *Technical Report: Environmental*

	Risks of Resource Activities assessment of the "Exploration Permit" tenure type as containing only low risk outcomes. The standard conditions for exploration and mineral development projects should be contemporised to remove confusion and duplication. The Technical Report was a considered approach to develop an internal Departmental risk-based approach to resource activities. However, it does have room for improvement. For example, the risk assessment framework developed in the technical report does not meet the minimum standards as detailed in ISO 31000 – Risk Management, which the resource industry uses daily. Failing to meet minimum standards could result in lower risk likelihoods, as well as higher consequence levels and high-risk ratings that are not necessarily reflective of true risk profiles. Considering that risk assessment will be the key framework of the mandatory code, it is important that there is no regulatory conflict throughout the process and that risk assessment adequately captures activities that are genuinely low risk, such as Exploration Drilling. We note that the Technical Report was originally intended to be an internal-facing source of information for DETSI. AMEC made a submission on the Technical Report in August 2023, suggesting that it be made public-facing, as any yardstick by which the industry is measured should be transparent. AMEC welcomes the report being made a public document.
Proposal 1.1 - Provide for the making of mandatory codes as an alternative to environmental authorities	AMEC conditionally supports for the making of mandatory codes as an alternative to environmental authorities. The mandatory codes approval process and timeframes must be short and uncomplicated. There is an opportunity for Queensland to improve on the Western Australian Eligible Mining Activities (EMA) reform[1]. The EMA is a notification process for low-risk activities in non-sensitive environmental areas. To receive an EMA, proponents are obligated to agree to Standardised Conditions. This will allow drilling in non-environmentally sensitive areas, with a single day turn around on approval. AMEC suggests that DETSI consider a process, which allows an existing EA Holder to make an application to perform certain activities in an SEPP, provided they meet minimum criteria and do not result in residual impacts. Currently, there is no sliding scale, and as a result, any activities that are

[1] Western Australian Eligible Mining Activities Reform

	perceived to require additional 'oversight' usually require an EA amendment. The mandatory codes could build on this process. The mandatory codes must: • Make it easier for exploration drilling to adapt to changing conditions e.g. if a drill site needs to be moved due to unforeseen on-ground conditions (within an already culturally cleared area), the "EA Holder" can do so under reasonable mandatory codes • Allow for Exploration drilling on a granted Mining Lease • Ensure designations such as 'low risk' have some statutory criteria to limit the inconsistent application of DETSI's officer discretion. The chosen wording in the mandatory codes should reflect and address these types of concerns • Eliminate duplicative legislation that causes confusion, such as Condition A14 in the Standard Conditions, contradicting the Australian Cultural Heritage Act for cleared areas if clearances are within 100 metres of undefined "Historical, Archaeological or Ethnographic sites".
1.2 - Provide a consistent environmental risk basis for regulating environmentally relevant activities	Section 1.2 may have broader implications for other industries, such as renewable infrastructure, but AMEC supports any initiatives that enable low-risk exploration and mineral development projects. AMEC commends the Department on leading this approach and providing a scale of objectivity to the assessment process for ERAs. Section 1.2 also partially addresses "Item 10" of AMEC's Government Policy Platform, requesting Standard Conditions for critical minerals.

Proposal 1.2 - Provide a consistent environmental risk basis for regulating environmentally relevant activities	AMEC conditionally supports providing a consistent environmental risk basis for regulating environmentally relevant activities. Proposal 1.2 seeks to address the inconsistency of primary and secondary legislation for different classes of activity. The threshold for prescribing activities as ERAs, based on a State Environmental Protection Priority, is to ensure all activities warranting approvals are captured, and needs to include all types of infrastructure projects. AMEC suggests that the proposed risk assessment framework proposed by DETSI aligns with the existing standards of the Australian Standard for Risk Management *and associated risk assessment guidelines (AS ISO 31000:2018).* This would ensure there is limited confusion between existing regulatory requirements outlined in other Queensland legislation. Such as: • Work Health and Safety Act 2011 • Mineral Resources Act 1989 • Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 1999 • Resources Safety and Health Queensland (RSHQ) The benefits of the ISO standard for risk include: • Transparency of process • Informed decision making and • Input to priority setting Most AMEC members are already operating in highly risk-averse environments and have well-established and robust systems in place for addressing risk. It would be worthwhile to align with and work within existing standards, incorporating environmental considerations.
1.3 Clearly identify the State's priorities for environmental protection in the EP Act	The State's priorities are already addressed in the EP Act in Part 2 Section 3 Object "The object of this Act is to protect Queensland's environment while allowing for development that improves the total quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains the ecological processes on which life depends (ecologically sustainable development)." If State Environmental Protection Priorities(SEPPs) were to progress, they would require further consultation and consideration of moving the Regulations instead. Clarifying the State's priorities for environmental protection in the EP Act needs to be coupled with flexible mapping and the ability to easily change

	the designation given by less reliable (air photo) mapping by actual people in the field. Mapping as a critical trigger has been demonstrated to have a high degree of inaccuracy in both the field and the mapped categories, especially after field validation has occurred. The consultation paper states on Page 18 *"Clearly outlining the matters that are State Environmental Protection Priorities in the legislation will provide clarity to stakeholders and applicants on the aspects of the environment where adverse impacts will trigger greater oversight."* AMEC has strong case examples as well as submission points about how this system currently does not work; it fails the DETSI applications and the assessment team. There is no flexibility in the test of what is reasonable; rather, there are blanket considerations and prescribed standoff provisions that don't achieve greater protection, limit low-risk activities and are cumbersome and costly to navigate. They create a sanitised zone for some operators as it becomes either too difficult to correct the defined overlays or too costly to address. AMEC suggests there are two levels of consideration: • Where the triggered value is true and exists, and there should be a degree of low-risk activities that can occur in an SEPP with little to no impact and certainly no residual impact and • There is validation that the SEPP is not present and or not valid. AMEC is keen to develop this further through the continued development of the bill, as it is a key concern for our members. AMEC has been requesting support with this concern for several years in our policy platforms in the form of improved environmental mapping (Proposal 22 in AMEC Policy Platform). However, we are open to alternative solutions such as those suggested above to address this issue. We would ideally like any changes to address a situation, such as where an explorer would like to drill in an area that is incorrectly mapped, to require the area to be remapped by an ecologist at their own expense and time. If they have approval to drill in an area that is not mapped as sensitive but appears so when they reach the site, they must obtain an amendment, which also takes time. Alternatively, they can drill where the mapping indicates they can. When contemplating Matters of State Environmental Significance (MSES) under the *Environmental Offsets Act 2014*, consideration should be given to

	mining projects that are restarting, expanding, or reprocessing on existing disturbed areas. These brownfield-type projects should be considered State Disturbance Offset Priorities (SDOPs), and they should be given prioritised consideration when assessing environmental outcomes, as they are offsetting "NEW" disturbances and, in most cases, improving existing rehabilitation outcomes. This is a new concept proposed by AMEC and we look forward to discussing the application of this further with DETSI.
Proposal 1.3 - Clearly identify the State's priorities for environmental protection in the EP Act	AMEC Conditionally supports clearly identifying the State's priorities for environmental protection in the EP Act. The alignment of the SEPPs should make it easier to comply with the EP Act, however, there are only limited, timely and costly solutions to adapting for low-risk activities. Exploration drilling should not be penalised due to incorrect mapping; conversely, it should not be conducted solely where the map indicates, especially if there is clear on-ground evidence of sensitive vegetation. AMEC would like to see a similar style of approach where there is a minimum activities guideline which offers a self-assessable pathway for low-risk activities and then scales up as activities scale up. This is similar to how aspects of the Vegetation Management Act operate under the Vegetation codes for certain activities, for which exploration could be considered in alignment. Of the listed SEPPs in Box 1.3 of the consultation paper, there is a clear link to existing State and Commonwealth legislation; therefore, the introduction of SEPPs should not be a duplication of existing legislation. There is considerable detail in the range and definitions that are prescribed in these sections. A detailed comparison and review of all relevant sections of legislation is beyond the scope of this response; however, there is a deep concern that this could increase the complexity of the Standard Criteria for environmentally relevant activities. Low-risk and low-impact risk activities are significantly overcomplicated. Especially when considering the percentage of impact, this is often less than 1% of the actual vegetational area, and 0.001% or less of the total known extent of a SEPP. Given that most exploration drill pads are 10 x 10-meter pads or less, it should not be necessary to validate the significance of these SEPPs in the field and determine that the percentage of impacts is on a scale, magnitude, and cost that is well above the cost of drilling and outside of any significant economic return.
1.4 - Provide a mechanism to codify	Reducing the inconsistent application of requirements for similar activities would be an excellent outcome of best practice environmental management

'best practice environmental management'	(BPEM), however there needs to be no overlap with the mandatory codes referred to in section 1.1. In the consultation paper, 'standard criteria' is referred to generously as 'broadly defined' in Schedule 4 of the EP Act. This broad definition is the root cause of confusion between EA and statutory decisions for both the regulator and the proponent. If there is an amendment to allow the chief executive to make codes of practice, will 'standard criteria' be removed from the EP Act? They would seem superfluous if BPEM were to be introduced. The loss of flexibility in using BPEM needs to be taken into consideration. With emerging innovative technology and scientific developments, "better than" best practice may be implemented at a lower cost. The department's past position is that the solution must cost more to achieve a better environmental outcome, which is not the case. Conversely, existing approvals must be honoured, and there can't be the retrospective application of new standards unless through an opt-in provision. The process used by the chief executive to make the codes would need to be very transparent and involve consultation. The proposed process of industry consultation, subject to the scrutiny of Parliamentary processes, is essential as most elements in industry already have these techniques established.
Proposal 1.4 - Provide a mechanism to codify 'best practice environmental management'	AMEC does not support the proposal to "Amend the EP Act to allow the administering authority to amend conditions of an EA to reflect a BPEM code that has been made or re-made, without further consultation, but with an appropriate transitional period." There is too much uncertainty introduced with no clear timeframes. Amending approved environmental conditions outside established statutory pathways is sovereign risk. It will undermine investor confidence and weakens the regulatory certainty on which long-term resource projects depend. To do so asks the question, what else will the Government change that was agreed? Considering the proposal of "A code of practice has effect for a maximum of seven years after the day it is made and must be re-made within this timeframe. This will enable the BPEM codes to be maintained as contemporary requirements as technology, knowledge and skills improve." This is supported in some instances, but where business decisions have been made based on specific environmental conditions, the act of 'moving the goal posts' can have significant financial and operational consequences.

1.5 - Providing consistent general administrative requirements across approvals	Section 1.5 partially addresses “Item 10” in AMEC’s Government Policy Platform, requesting Standard Conditions for critical minerals. Of the 9,300 EA’s administered, the consultation paper estimates “more than 30% may be suitable for conversion to a mandatory code without reducing environmental and community safeguards”. However, applying general administrative conditions to EA amendments is retrospective regulation and could result in increased compliance costs depending on the nature of the conditions. Limiting the EA amendment flexibility will result in similar challenges being experienced by companies that have completed the PRCP process. The general conditions prescribed outside the EP Act and in the regulations are supported by AMEC. AMEC also supports the concept of simplifying administration and reducing administrative burdens, but it can’t undo all the great work entities have undertaken to meet current legislative requirements. It is possible that there is also an option to allow EA holders to transition to the proposed general administrative conditions. This would provide EA holders with a process to consider the benefits and costs, and determine the applicability and suitability to their operations.
Proposal 1.5 - Providing consistent general administrative requirements across approvals	AMEC supports this proposal if existing EA Holders are given the option to move to general administrative conditions. DESI would also need to be adequately resourced to facilitate the transition.
Part 2 – Other proposals relating to Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans (PRCPs)	
2.1 Assist EA holders transitioning into the PRCP framework under the EP Act	The recognition of unintended consequences of previous legislation in this section is admirable. However, Section 2.1, as it is written, will not “Assist EA holders transitioning into the PRCP framework under the EP Act”. For example, in a situation where a company is attempting to restart a legacy mine site. A granted mining lease, existing disturbance, and an existing environmental authority would be in place, and the company would need to conduct exploration drilling to determine the mine plan and, therefore, the PRCP. AMEC understands that the intent is to “to prevent actions to profit from the extraction of resources before a PRCP schedule is in place, rather than to prevent rehabilitation works.” However, in many mineral mining situations, the only way to facilitate rehabilitation is through economic rehabilitation, and the “profits” can take years after operations commence to materialise. Currently, many rehabilitation opportunities are not being

	pursued due to this exact condition. If proponents can't assess the economic potential of an area, there is no point in taking on the risk associated with a PRCP based on outdated resource information. The PRCP/ERC requires current environmental quotes from suppliers; there should also be suitably current resource estimation data to accompany the environmental data. It has been proven that the quotes system is not effective; it is either inflated or often outdated due to the general nature of a PRCP, which extends well beyond the timeframe of the quotes. By the time the quote may or may not come to fruition in a commercial sense, it could be 5-10 years or more. The quotes system should only be used to demonstrate independent solutions that are not adequately able to be determined in the ERC Calculator, and or where the ERC calculator clearly does not correctly calculate a value. In the 2025-25 Queensland Budget, a $32.3 million package for the Abandoned Mine Lands Program administered by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development DNRMMRRD. This expense sits in a department other than DETSI, so there is little incentive or accountability to assist with the economic rehabilitation. $32.3 million is 10% of the estimated actual expense of running "Environmental Programs and Regulations Services".
Proposal 2.1 - Assist EA holders transitioning into the PRCP framework under the EP Act	AMEC conditionally supports assisting EA holders transitioning into the PRCP framework under the EP Act. Removing the term "mining activity" from section 431A of the EP Act will not "Assist EA holders transitioning into the PRCP framework under the EP Act". It will continue to limit the redevelopment of legacy mine sites. Effective addressing this process would address Proposal 18 in the accompanying Policy Brief, calling for re-commercialising mines reform. Perhaps consideration could be given to permitting the activities outlined in the new mandatory code to be undertaken in these types of situations. Alternatively, an option to 'freeze' the PRCP while the appropriate data is gathered. The activity would still be covered by the general environmental duty and the mandatory code.
2.2 Clarify when offence provisions apply in circumstances where an application has lapsed	Environmental approval applications are lapsing because of the Department's inability to assess them in a timely manner. Addressing this issue will remove the need for this amendment. At a recent DETSI briefing, the attendees were informed that 22 of 66 transitional PRCPs for minerals have been completed. That means it has taken approximately 3 months per PRCP. The Department is clearly under-resourced, a concern that was raised when PRCPs were introduced. The

	budget data supports this. The number of FTEs in the relevant area has decreased since 2019, when PRCPs were introduced. It is difficult to compare Departments over time, but according to the 2019-20 Budget Papers, "Environmental Protection Services" had 777[2] Estimated Actual FTE. In the 2025-26 Budget Papers, "Environmental Programs and Regulation Services" has 759[3] Estimated Actual FTE. Meaning a decrease of 18 FTE. AMEC acknowledges that the situation is more complex due to the numerous staff and functions involved, but it is unreasonable to penalise companies for application delays resulting from DETSI under-resourcing. The under-resourcing is also supported by AMEC Members' feedback who are attempting to navigate the process.
Proposal 2.2 - Clarify when offence provisions apply in circumstances where an application has lapsed	AMEC does not support this proposal. In our accompanying Policy Brief, Proposal 16 proposes a "Capability Uplift" that would better serve DETSI and industry in addressing application delays.
2.3 - Provide a new category of approval for transitional applications for PRCP schedules	This section addresses many concerns raised by AMEC members regarding the Post Mining Land Use (PMLU) options currently available under the existing framework and partially addresses them in AMEC's Government Policy Platform Proposal 19, which calls for a post-mine land use tenure solution. The PRCP framework was modelled on open-cut coal strip mining despite feedback from AMEC that it would be challenging for extraction methods other than strip mining to easily comply with the PRCP Process.
Proposal 2.3 - Provide a new category of approval for transitional applications for PRCP schedules	AMEC supports this proposal, but has concerns about how it will be presented in legislation. This proposal should also consider that this tenure type is also a future resource opportunity. As we are currently seeing with the interest in accessing historic tailings, planning for this opportunity in future would be world leading. Taking this a step further, if the entity has mapped the "future resource opportunity", this would make it even easier and more economical to access. To incentivise companies to map future economic opportunities, they could be given a discount in the ERC

[2] QUEENSLAND BUDGET 2019–20 Service Delivery Statements Department of Environment and Science
[3] QUEENSLAND BUDGET 2025-26 SERVICE DELIVERY STATEMENTS Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation

	Calculations. There should be consideration for Managed Post Mining Land Use (MPMLU) activities allowed on a Mining lease be broadened to economic activities such as tourism and power generation.
2.4 - Allow for audits of PRCP schedules to be determined by the administering authority	Regulatory intervention should be co-designed with industry and the administering authority, as different types of rehabilitation operate at different cadences. The current audits do not intend to press non-compliance actions, but are looking at the annual and biannual activities taken over 5-10year periods. AMEC agrees that a 3-year cycle was not a suitable timeframe.
Proposal 2.4 - Allow for audits of PRCP schedules to be determined by the administering authority	AMEC supports this proposal as long as the language reflects the intent in the consultation paper that the timeframes will be extended beyond 3-year intervals, i.e. no sooner than 3 years.
2.5 - Allow for a new notice to submit a PRCP application following an EA transfer	It is essential that the mechanisms for a transfer PRCP are not a resubmission for a new PRCP and reassessment. The current EA transfer process is simply to ensure that the heads of powers, as defined under the Corporations Act, are correctly identified. Aligning the EA and PRCP transfer processes would be ideal. Although the names on the PRCP are less important than the EA as the PRCP outcomes are also listed in the EA.
Proposal 2.5 - Allow for a new notice to submit a PRCP application following an EA transfer	AMEC supports this proposal and initiatives that address the challenges experienced during sales processes and provide potential investors with greater certainty. However, 20 days will not be sufficient time for the new holder to comply. It would be better if the 20 business days were used to negotiate a new timeframe for a revised or new PRCP Plan that meets the requirements of Section 431A and ensures that a new operator/EA holder has sufficient time to develop a plan that aligns with the statutory guidance.
2.6 - Provide for removal of the public interest evaluation process	The current duplicative public interest evaluation (PIE) process does not benefit industry or the public interest. Generally, PIEs allow for contentious decisions to be reviewed with transparency. It is important that considerations such as economic, social and environmental matters are weighted proportionately depending on the elements supplied in the application.

Proposal 2.6 - Provide for removal of the public interest evaluation process	AMEC supports the removal of the duplicate PIE, with the focus being on the information currently required in section 316PA(2).
2.7 - Clarify that EA holders who have fallen out of the PRCP framework due to a lapsed application may re-apply	Section 2.7 appears to be a workaround for the larger problem of applications being refused and too much time being taken in the assessment process (see Section 2.2 above).
Proposal 2.7 - Clarify that EA holders who have fallen out of the PRCP framework due to a lapsed application may re-apply	AMEC supports this proposal but would also like DETSI to consider addressing the root cause of lengthy approval timeframes.
Part 3 – Other proposals to amend the EP Act, NC Act and Water Act (chapter 3)	
3.1 - Clarify that the definition of waters in the EP Act includes groundwaters	Clarifying the definition should also be consistent across other legislation defining water in Queensland.
Proposal 3.1 - Clarify that the definition of waters in the EP Act includes groundwaters	AMEC conditionally supports clarifying that the definition of waters in the EP Act includes groundwaters. AMEC would like to see the details about these changes integrated in the Water Act 2000, including how this will be consistent with the following: • Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment means the Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment established under section 455. • Groundwater Impact Assessment Fund means the Groundwater Impact Assessment Fund established under section 478. • All aspects of the water act that defined Underground water, which is the term used in the Water Act 2000 as opposed to groundwaters. *Schedule 4, Water Act 2000,* ***underground water*** *means water that occurs naturally in, or is introduced artificially into, an aquifer.*

	AMEC suggests that the definition of waters in the EP Act align with the term currently used in the Water Act, which would provide consistency and reduce confusion, rather than using the term groundwater or the term underground water.
3.2 - Enhance powers for a court to order forfeiture of property which may be used in the ongoing conduct of an offence under the EP Act Proposal 3.2 - Enhance powers for a court to order forfeiture of property which may be used in the ongoing conduct of an offence under the EP Act 3.3 - Enhance powers for a court to order confiscation of proceeds from environmental crimes under the EP Act Proposal 3.3 - Enhance powers for a court to order confiscation of proceeds from environmental crimes under the EP Act 3.4 - Ensure adequate time is available to gather evidence in summary proceedings under the EP Act	AMEC does not support the increased criminality of the EP Act. More detail and time is required to review the complexities of these proposals. The proposed amendments to forfeiture, confiscation, and altering timeframes for evidence gathering need careful consideration to ensure they align with principles of fairness, transparency, and economic stability. The unintended consequences could include extended legal exposure for historical conduct that may create uncertainty and hinder procedural clarity. It is also concerning that the broader powers could inadvertently enable negotiation practices that are not proportionate to actual environmental harm. Also, uncertainty around enforcement timelines may impact investor confidence and long-term capital planning, economic growth. Proposal 3.2 to 3.4 signal the Queensland Government's move towards "criminalisation". AMEC's concern is that criminal law is an extremely blunt instrument for addressing environmental issues when, statistically, Queensland does not have either high rates of offences or prosecution of environmental offences, so it is hard to understand "the why?". AMEC challenges that the entire regulatory approach as rigid, legalistic, cumbersome, inflexible, and reactive. It is not cost-efficient and does not encourage or improve regulation. The recommendation also appears not to have considered an actual test of functionality when it comes to the administration of the proposed changes and criminalisation of environmental laws. In Queensland, we don't have high rates of pollution and degradation; instead, we have a robust and advanced licensing and approval system, as well as a well-developed regulatory approach. There may be a need (as with all systems) to review and amend them to make them modern, but AMEC suggests that the command-and-control style of regulation is not suitable for our Queensland-specific circumstances. The legislative amendments must be reflective of the Government's intent for this reform. With offences under this Part reserved for conduct of a particularly egregious nature. Given the scale of consequences for a

Proposal 3.4 - Ensure adequate time is available to gather evidence in summary proceedings under the EP Act	proponent, stringent evidentiary standards are needed coupled with a clear defined threshold for offence.
3.5 Clarify when the residual risks requirement lapses	Increased clarity for the residual risk requirement is not something AMEC members have expressed concerns about.
Proposal 3.5 - Clarify when the residual risks requirement lapses	AMEC supports the suggested changes to an absolute timeframe of 6 months to increase clarity, rather than a “reasonable period.”
3.6 Amend the EP Act to ensure the information stage is not shortened when an amendment application is received	AMEC Members have had many issues with this process, and it also clearly frustrates DETSI delegates. AMEC does not support this process taking any longer than it currently does and refers to the items above that address under-resourcing. AMEC suggests DETSI address the root causes of the time delays and process inefficiencies. Often, delays are caused by resourcing issues throughout the process, for example, during pre-lodgement meetings, where companies present their plans but receive very little to no feedback. This is because DETSI has administrators in the pre-lodgement meetings but not technical experts, so no constructive feedback or guidance is given. Members report that two-way engagement ceases, and they don’t get feedback on the scope, and they don’t know what is required for the assessment. The assessment scope ultimately depends on the assessor’s interpretation, but this is not revealed until the request for information (RFI) process, rather than during the pre-lodgement meetings. The ramifications of not knowing what to submit are that companies submit everything (and anything) to avoid a ‘not properly made’ response. This is a clear waste of time and money for both the proponent and DETSI. It means that DETSI receives more information for a simple EA amendment than they have time to assess (i.e., 20BD for a minor amendment). EA Approvals are too limited, and EA Amendment requirements are overreaching. The EA approval mechanism appears to be set up for a greenfield site. Mines currently in operation and wishing to expand or extend their mine life still wear the full burden of an environmental assessment, although they are a brownfields site, where environmental

	impacts are well understood and are currently being regulated and managed. The miner is required to provide all potential environmental impact data upfront i.e. all environmental questions need to be answered at the outset. There is no ability to address concerns or collect additional data during the execution phase, which slows down or delays project commencement. This is compounded by the fact that project financiers will not release project funding until all permits and approvals are in place. The activity allowed under EA approvals is excessively prescriptive. Companies are finding that they constantly require minor amendments. Almost every individual activity has required an EA amendment, even though all of the activities are within the current area of disturbance and are similar to what is already underway. Regular operations have needed an amendment to: • Install new camp rooms • Install a new kitchen • Install a new sewage treatment plant • Replace a water dam with a water tank There is a disconnect between what companies believe they are authorised to do compared to what DETSI believes. DETSI's view is that any change, no matter how small, requires an EA amendment.
Proposal 3.6 - Amend the EP Act to ensure the information stage is not shortened when an amendment application is received	AMEC does not support this change as the root cause of timing issues should be addressed. If time management is an issue with EA Amendments, time could be saved by removing the public notification step a when applying to amend an EA for a mining activity relating to a mining lease. There is an effective tenure process at the outset of this process and the public notification step is an unproductive duplication.
3.7 - Provide greater clarity and consistency on the requirements for third-party accreditation programs under the EP Act	Providing greater clarity and consistency on the requirements for third-party accreditation programs under the EP Act is not something AMEC members have expressed concerns about.
Proposal 3.7 - Provide greater clarity and	AMEC is undecided on this proposal and will await further details.

consistency on the requirements for third-party accreditation programs under the EP Act	
3.8 - Remove requirements to publicly notify terms of reference for environmental impact statements	Removing duplicative processes and reducing the confusion experienced by stakeholders during the process is a good step forward and does not diminish the intent of the terms of reference.
Proposal 3.8 - Remove requirements to publicly notify terms of reference for environmental impact statements	AMEC supports this proposal.
3.9 - Provide consistency in authorised officer functions and powers where these intersect with the Planning Act	Providing consistency in authorised officer functions and powers where these intersect with the Planning Act is not something AMEC members have expressed concerns about.
Proposal 3.9 - Provide consistency in authorised officer functions and powers where these intersect with the Planning Act	AMEC supports this proposal.
3.10 - Clarify the dictionary definition of protected area under the NC Act	Clarifying the dictionary definition of protected area under the NC Act is not something AMEC members have expressed concerns about.
Proposal 3.10 - Clarify the dictionary definition of protected area under the NC Act	AMEC Supports this proposal, but would like to draw attention to other references to the use of 'protected area'. In addition to the Part 4, division 2 section 28 and Part 4A, section 70B and Section 14 of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 AMEC has also identified

	other uses of the term ***protected area*** that may also need consideration in the same context. Part 3 Interpretation [s 6] • cultural resources of a ***protected area*** means places or objects that have anthropological, archaeological, historical, scientific, spiritual or sociological significance or value, including such significance or value under Aboriginal tradition or Ailan Kastom. • Indigenous landholder, for a ***protected area*** or land, means the entity that, under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 or the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991, is the trustee for the protected area or land • natural resources, in relation to— (a) a ***protected area***; or (b) an area identified under a regulation or conservation plan as, or including— (i) a critical habitat; or (ii) an area of major interest; means the natural and physical features of the area, including wildlife, soil, water, minerals and air.. nature-based, in relation to the use of a ***protected area***, includes scientific, educational, spiritual, intellectual, cultural, recreational and biodiscovery under the Biodiscovery Act 2004. Part 4 Protected areas [s 30] prescribed ***protected area*** means a protected area of a following class— (a) national park (scientific); (b) national park; (c) conservation park; (d) resources reserve AMEC would like to ensure that the proposed changes in no way impact the current provisions detailed under Part 4 Protected areas [s 27].
3.11 Clarify chapter 3 of the Water Act	Clarifying chapter 3 of the Water Act is not something AMEC members have expressed concerns about.
Proposal 3.11 Clarify chapter 3 of the Water Act	AMEC is undecided on this proposal and will await further details.

	Chapter 3 of the Water Act 2000 (the Water Act) provides the framework for managing impacts on underground water associated with resource operations. AMEC is very keen to understand how DETSI are proposing to address underground waters and what it is that will be different, given that the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2014 has provided an expansion of considerations for underground waters, which included the baseline assessment of bores, to ensure that make good agreements would be adequate. The amendments also introduced UWIR and CMAs, as well as bore assessment, resulting in potential MGAs, which are essentially administered through the OGIA. Understanding what DETSI is planning to do differently and what improvements are essential, as well as some form of justification as to why the existing framework is deficient and requires greater clarity. At the moment, the consultation paper presents a very high-level approach to a very large section of legislation.

Final Remarks

AMEC welcomes the opportunity to continue working with DETSI in the development of the Bill and provide DETSI with our members feedback to improve existing processes. We also welcome the opportunity to confidentially review a draft of the Bill.

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Enclosed

Appendix 1. – AMEC Queensland Policy Brief

Queensland 2025 Government Policy Brief

Association of Mining and Exploration Companies

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Mount Carbine tungsten mine, EQ Resources

Contents

I. INTRODUCTION

AMEC's Queensland 2025 Government Policy Brief identifies key policy levers that can be pulled to create an environment that supports the resource sector's growth.

Queensland's strong mining and mineral exploration sector is supporting a consistent and sustained contribution to the State's royalty base, economy and employment market. To improve Queensland's international competitiveness, create jobs and attract mining and mineral exploration investment, the Government needs to embed public policy settings that:

- Increase economic growth through increased mineral exploration and mining activity.
- Reduce the cost of doing business throughout the State, and
- Ensure Queensland is a partner of choice for sourcing and investing in responsibly sourced minerals for the future.

AMEC's proposals seek a regulatory framework that supports a safe, environmentally, socially and financially responsible and leading sector. The recent approach to the resources sector in Queensland, however, is generating an environment that will not attract strong investment in mineral exploration or support a modern Queensland economy with a diverse resources sector; consequently, regions and broad economic growth is suffering.

II. ABOUT AMEC

AMEC is the national industry body representing and advocating for more than 600 mineral exploration and mining companies across Australia. Our members are explorers, emerging miners, producers, and a wide range of businesses working in and for the industry. The AMEC Queensland membership base is dominated by companies looking for critical minerals, as well as associate companies working in and for the sector. Our members and associates in Queensland—of which there are about 80—explore, develop and produce minerals including Antimony, Bauxite, Coal, Cobalt, Copper, Gold, Graphite, Lead, Lithium, Mineral Sands, Molybdenum, Nickel, Phosphate, Rare Earths, Silver, Tungsten, Uranium, Vanadium and Zinc.

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III. AMEC's POLICY PRIORITIES

Delivery on initiatives suggested against these policy priorities will deliver streamlined assessment and help drive down the current high costs of doing business in Queensland.

- Land access and co-existence
- Reducing Red Tape
- Environmental regulation
- Whole of Government alignment, and
- Safety.

This incoming government brief also identifies some further new strategic matters that AMEC recommends will require consideration and action, namely:

- Commitment to permanent funding for the Collaborative Exploration Initiative.
- Ceasing the current mining lease objections review process being carried out by the Queensland Law Reform Commission
- Overturning the current ban on uranium mining in Queensland
- Acid Supply Security, and
- Rationalise actions regarding emissions.

A. Land access and co-existence

The ability for exploration companies to access their exploration permits throughout Queensland is becoming increasingly difficult. Uncertainty of access has the perverse outcome of driving exploration away from Queensland and into areas where there is more certainty regarding the timing and cost to access tenements; this is more noticeable during times when markets are unstable or unfavorable. A clear and consistent minerals land access framework would benefit explorers and landholders and would reduce time and cost added by lengthy, costly and stressful legal processes.

In addition to fundamental land access, increasingly overlapping land uses, and their consequences are being experienced; specifically with regards to renewable energy project occupiers (wind and solar proponents) overlapping with exploration tenements. Land access under these conditions is becoming complicated for exploration companies and competing land occupiers. Agreements need to be arranged with multiple stakeholders for the same areas of land. There is no better time than now to have a fresh look at Land Access in Queensland due to these increasing complexities and embed policy and mechanisms that are in the interest of achieving the coexistence of growth.

As such, AMEC seeks to work with Government on the following policy recommendations:

PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
HIGH	***1. Establish a NEW Multi-Land Use Policy***	Many of Queensland's minerals are critical to the infrastructure and battery demands that will underpin the delivery of the renewable energy transition. While land access considerations for minerals are regulated by the Mineral Resources Act and MERCP, renewable energy projects are regulated under the Planning Act. Despite an overarching policy objective of	Through consultation with industry, agriculture and renewables companies, establish an integrated multi-land use policy to support the co-existence and development of land for multiple uses. This also, needs to take the subsurface resources into consideration.	Dept of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing, Rural and Regional Development (DNRMMRRD)

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		"co-existence", the current framework introduces significant project risk to all parties, and potentially costs if they play out through the Land Court. A NEW Multi-Land Use Policy, legislation and process harmony (specifically notification parity between resource and renewable energy companies) is necessary to reduce current and future conflicts and ensure certainty.		
MED	***2. Establish a NEW tenure solution to support the NEW Multi-Land Use Policy***	It is suggested that a new tenure solution to manage and address co-existence between resources, agriculture and renewable energy projects is established. This is not dissimilar to Western Australia's diversification tenure solution.	If consultation on the policy demonstrates the need for a supporting tenure to operationalise the policy, then trigger a process to do such.	DNRMMRRD
HIGH	***3. Responsible person is at a minimum the landowner or the person who has day-to-day management of property***	Defining the 'responsible person' under the Land Access Code to be the landowner or the person who has day-to-day management of the property, not the legal representative or land agent / advisor. AMEC is not against having legal representatives or land agents / advisors. The role of the responsible person under the Land Access Code is to be responsible for communication and is required to have knowledge of the property and its operations. This role cannot be performed efficiently by a legal representative or land agent / advisor as they are not aware of the day-to-day operations on the relevant land.	Amend the Land Access Code.	DNRMMRRD
HIGH	***4. Define the rights of each party***	Clearly defining the rights of each party involved will help to minimise the risk of conflict escalation. This could be done in a way that builds	Amend the Land Access Code	DNRMMRRD

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		capability, for example, clearly showing in guidance what "good" looks like and also sharing what "bad" looks like and the possible repercussions of the behavior.		
HIGH	***5. Set limitations on decision making timeframes***	Setting limitations on the timeframes for decisions in the negotiations will help deliver certainty on when access should be resolved. Certainty delivers efficiency, which helps drive down costs and essentially makes Queensland a more attractive prospect for doing business.	Amend the Land Access Code	DNRMMRRD
High	***6. Cap land access negotiation and compensation costs***	Similar to the New South Wales model, capping the costs involved in the land access negotiations, as well as guidance on compensation costs to deal with material impacts and rehabilitation appropriately. Capping the compensation costs and providing guidance would help to achieve a level playing field and deliver certainty.	Amend the Land Access Code	DNRMMRRD
HIGH	***7. Embed shared mediation costs***	Embedding within the framework that mediation costs are shared would also facilitate the expedited resolution of access. The current framework, where all costs sit with the explorer until the matter is referred to the Land Court, does not support resolution.	Amend the Land Access Code	DNRMMRRD
LOW	***8. Require title amendments only when a material change is determined***	Currently, once the CCA is executed, it needs to be registered on title. AMEC suggests that this is only necessary under scenarios where the outcome of the exploration has material or ongoing (e.g. more than 2 years) impacts. Otherwise, the requirement to register on title is another cost to businesses and a bottleneck	Amend the Land Access Code	DNRMMRRD

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		that is not delivering any benefit to landholders or explorers.		

B. Reducing Red Tape

Attempting to solve new problems with old solutions will not serve industry or regions and will eventually lead to worse outcomes. AMEC is strongly of the view that the obstacles to efficient and risk-based assessment are not one department's problem alone but are a government problem and, as such, need to be solved by departments working cooperatively together in the State's interest.

As such, AMEC seeks to work with Government on the following policy recommendations:

PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
LOW	**9. *Set statutory timeframes***	The current assessment by the administering authority of the *Minerals Resources Act 1989, Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014* and *Mineral and Energy Resources (Financial Provisioning Scheme)* does not set statutory timeframes. The setting of statutory timeframes supports delivering certainty and predictability to proponents, which generates cost savings. If you know how long your assessment will take, you can better plan, which saves money.	Amend the Resources Acts to include statutory timeframes	DNRMMRRD
MOD	**10. *Standard conditions for critical minerals***	In response to growing coal development, departments developed a suite of standard conditions for coal assessment to improve assessment efficiency and achieve multiple benefits in streamlining these developments. As critical minerals emerge as the next wave of development in Queensland's resources sector, it seems logical to	Using the Julia Creek-Richmond Critical Mineral Zone as a pilot, establish standard conditions. Some low-hanging fruit for this could include conditions for light and noise. This could, however, be extended and include other matters, where the risks and geological profiling are known to be similar.	DNRMMRRD Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI)

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		consider what standard conditioning can occur to achieve greater administrative efficiency. As a part of this, the Queensland Government could consider the use of geological risk profiling to inform standard conditions. As such, where the geology is the same, the hazards and risks involved in the development are likely to be the same. Understanding geological risk profiles for one project could be applied or inform future development conditioning and, as a result, accelerate assessment administration.	Broadly, there could be efficiency gained for standard conditions that are developed across all EA and ERA Holders, e.g., Duty of Care and Reporting standards. The development of eligibility criteria and stand conditions or codes, for low risk profile operations is sensible and provides a pathway for guidance and policy the be achieved, leaving room to focus on the critical nuances of each project.	
LOW	***11. Critical mineral zones – economic development planning***	The critical mineral zones require urgent economic development planning to be included within their scope. AMEC is supportive of the current critical mineral zone work, but is aware that there is a lens of coordinated economic planning and development missing. The current focus areas of social, housing and First Nations, as well as discussion of environmental zonal work, are positive. However, these are putting the cart before the horse without sound economic planning to identify where critical infrastructure is required, how utilities can be accessed and optimised, and the best models for funding.	Undertake an assessment of the common infrastructure—workforce, accommodation, roads, energy, water, port, freight, acid—that will be required and identify an overarching plan for sequencing and development of ancillary but critical infrastructure needs for the critical mineral zones.	DNRMMRRD Economic Development Qld (EDQ)
HIGH	***12. Financial Provisioning Scheme reform***	AMEC's members experience significant barriers in complying with the current Financial Provisioning Scheme by Queensland Treasury,	Undertake a review with the intent to reform consistent with these principles: a. Ensuring risk is fit for operation and increase	Queensland Treasury DETSI DNRMMRRD

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		namely the raising of cash funds to meet surety requirements at a time when cash flow is at its lowest in the development cycle. There is no reward without risk, and currently the FPS is managed to ensure there is zero risk to the State. It is recommended that options to share risk between the State and proponent are embedded into the FPS to help enable and support resource development.	risk tolerance within the scheme to support operators at the forefront of new mineral exploration and development. b. Bring back the discount for operators who are performing well. c. The State sharing, providing or even deferring (similar to the critical mineral rent deferral mechanism) part of the surety to reduce the financial burden on the developer at a critical point of cash flow and development. d. Allowing surety to be paid in instalments to assist cash flow.	
MOD	***13. Freight and logistics management***	Freight costs and availability remain a key cost inhibitor for junior producers. Government intervention in the following could help support efficiency. Proposals such as the ones below are not of benefit to the resources sector only, good roads and rails benefit the whole economy (e.g., agriculture and tourism) as well as improve safety of the community and workers who commute, DIDO. Reviews of some corridors, e.g. the rail between Townsville and Mount Isa have been done exhaustively with no useful action or change from the previous government.	Options for action include: a. Review and reform access conditions for export infrastructure to ensure new and smaller projects can be offered equitable access to infrastructure on reasonable terms. For example, a dedicated or scheduled berth at the Port of Townsville that services junior operators only like that in Western Australia. b. Review pricing structures for rail infrastructure to ensure that it is accessible, and that capacity is being maximised. c. Continue to work with industry, pipeline projects and local stakeholders to prioritise infrastructure investment through initiatives like the “Regional Freight Planning” process.	Department of Transport and Main Road Queensland Rail

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HIGH	***14. Water management***	Implementation of the current water management framework means that some instruments of the *Water Act 2000* are currently not operationalised. AMEC supports the re-implementation of a Water Licencing framework allowing the development of associated water infrastructure and take of waters from a watercourse.	The following proposals could be considered by DLGWV to support development: a. Establish a water storage infrastructure licence specifically for harvesting water from a watercourse during above peak flood events. b. Complete catchment wide hydrological study upgrades considering the 2011 and 2022 drought conditions as well as the 2018-2021 drought conditions as climate driving factors changing the nature of water resources and how it is managed. c. Work with and fund a common user infrastructure proposal for critical minerals development that delivers water certainty to critical mineral zones. d. Build more agility into water plans to allow for adaptive licensing in response to demand. e. Allow for a development application to develop infrastructure under water plans. Currently, there are no mechanisms for the development of infrastructure unless it is tied directly to an EIS and or Strategic Development. This limits the ability to develop key operational infrastructure that heavily influences whether it is the make or break of a project.	Department of Local Government, Water and Volunteers (DLGWV)
LOW	***15. Harmonise Cultural Heritage Regulation for explorers***	Regulation of impacts to cultural heritage is overseen by three agencies; each agency's regulations conflict and confuse explorers, and in	Collaboration between the agencies must be directed with an outcome to harmonise these regulations, particularly as they apply to exploration tenure and	DNRMMRRD DETSI Department of Women,

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		many cases, make it impossible to comply with one agency's regulations without breaching the other's. Currently, each agency interprets the other's regulations differently, and inter-agency engagement on this topic is effectively non-existent.	permits, due to their limited impact.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism (DWATSIPM)
HIGH	***16. Capability uplift***	Across the government, companies are feeling the impacts of staff turnover and capability gaps in assessment and compliance staff. This being felt more acutely in some areas than others. The high turnover means time (and hence money) lost in regularly rebuilding relationships and re-educating staff on projects and their objectives.	Capability uplift of assessment staff involved in the resource assessment to better understand critical minerals projects, their footprint, operations, hazards and risks. The Western Australian government achieved significant improvement in assessment timeframes by purely focusing on capability and creating regulatory specialists.	DNRMMRRD DETSI OCG DLGWV

C. Environmental regulation

AMEC advocates that environmental regulation would benefit from having a strong focus on stability of the policy reforms and policy direction, as well as implementation of assessment and regulatory frameworks that are fit-for-purpose and correspond to an operation's footprint, disturbance, and risks.

As such AMEC seeks to work with Government on the following policy recommendations:

PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
LOW	***17. Embedding the State Interest in decision making***	AMEC's members persistently experience decision making under the acts and provisions administered by DETSI that is not in the State's interest.	Establish the state interest as a key consideration in making decisions under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*. Support state interest with guidance to assessors and companies on what this looks like and how to assess it independently.	DETSI
HIGH	***18. Re-commercialising mines reform***	Historic mine sites and tailings storage facilities are	AMEC recommends that the framework governing these	DETSI

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		lower impact way to recover resources from already disturbed land. With innovative technology, it is becoming increasingly popular to investigate and understand their commercial viability for a range of critical minerals; millions are invested in researching this each year. The current administration, legislation and costs, however, are a deterrent to companies keen to work on these sites and tailings. Member experience identifies DETSI as the handbrake in achieving success in this space. A fresh approach is required to classify these sites as opportunities to further develop our resources, as well as an opportunity to reduce the government's environmental liability. Proposals to re-process mine tailings and re-visit abandoned mine sites offer obvious potential. Previously disturbed sites are given the same environmental scrutiny as a greenfield site and therefore have the same rehabilitation cost requirement, even when the reprocessing process has a rehabilitation component.	sites be reformed to allow for exploration and analysis of historic and abandoned mines under a modern, shared risk scenario. The ERC Calculator should also be reviewed to correspond with the reforms and allow for more fit-for-operations calculations. This is the definition of economic rehabilitation, enabling net positive outcomes for the environment, economy and community.	DNRMMRRD
MOD	***19. Post mine land use tenure solution***	Currently, the ERC Calculator is managed to return a disturbed area back to its original use or another economic use, such as grazing. This is not keeping pace with infrastructure needs, e.g. renewable energy development, or technology, e.g. exploring tailings /	Establish a post mine land use tenure solution that allows mines to be re-mined, or economically rehabilitated (second prospectivity—be it pit or tailings) or used for another higher use (than grazing), such as energy production. Reduce the scrutiny around post-mining land use outcomes. There are circumstances where a	DETSI DNRMMRRD Qld Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		historic or abandoned mines.	PMLU outcome is re-processing and reshaping, but it may never have a community purpose. The current solution is to heavily cost rates at these sites	
MOD	***20. Waste framework reform***	Tailings and other waste rocks on mine sites are increasingly being explored for minerals (critical) that were not previously sought. This is seeing the definition of possible resources in what were traditionally waste sources. Due to their waste classification, this makes it very challenging to explore and commercialise these resources. The End of Waste Code and overarching circular economy policy needs reform to take advantage of this opportunity.	Consistent with circular economy principles, reform the end of waste code and redefine the definition of waste, noting that what was a waste once is now a highly valuable resource, and that this paradigm will only gain momentum as innovation grows. Specifically, this relates to traditional mine waste products such as rock and tailings.	DETSI
LOW	***21. Decarbonisation policy and plans***	Any actions to impact the resources sector must be co-designed with industry to tailor education in this space to ensure all operators have their capability needs addressed.	Similar to recent action in NT and WA, make the decision to leave the emissions policy and requirements to the federal government only	DETSI
LOW	***22. Environmental mapping***	Currently, there is a significant delay in the Queensland Herbarium's identification of errors in the existing mapping of regional ecosystems. Further, the updating of the maps only occurs every two years. If companies find vegetation incorrectly mapped, it is difficult and costly for the company to get it corrected.	The following initiatives would help improve the data available: • Update digitally published vegetation maps more regularly and notify publicly when amendments are made. • Make it simpler to report potentially incorrectly mapped areas to the appropriate agency for follow up. • Remove the cost and time burden of incorrect mapping from the explorer by enabling Herbarium staff to make field visits when errors	DETSI / Qld Herbarium

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
			are reported and amendments are made.	

D. Whole of government alignment

The Queensland Government has a range of commitments that relate to resources, critical minerals, energy transition, decarbonisation targets, workforce and skills, communities and First Nations people that are implemented by departments in silos.

Whole of government alignment and support for Queensland's resources sector and facilitating its responsible development—both greenfield and brownfield—is a practical pathway to achieving the various targets and the necessary transition of skills and communities in preparedness for the burgeoning green growth industries and opportunities.

As such, AMEC seeks to work with the Queensland Government on the following policy recommendations:

PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
MOD	***23. Clear articulation of whole of government alignment and support for Queensland's resources sector***	The Queensland Government must align their efforts with those of the Federal Government to ensure that duplication is minimised and, instead, effective integration is achieved. The Queensland Government needs to recognise the criticality of responsibly facilitating and accelerating the development of critical minerals by achieving alignment in strategic objectives and key performance indicators across all Queensland Government departments involved in assessing, regulating and facilitating resources development.	Clear articulation of support for the resources sector and facilitation of green and brownfield minerals projects in the Ministerial Charter letters for those ministers responsible for administering the Environmental Protection Act 1994, Minerals Resources Acts, Water Act 2000 and other legislation and regulations that are associated with the resource development. From the top (Director-General) down, a clear commitment through articulation in strategic plans to operational business plans that facilitation of responsible mining is a priority for Queensland. To be supported by capability uplift and cultural change where required.	DNRMMRRD DETSI OCG DLGWV
LOW	***24. Local procurement and content targets***	Through the energy transition infrastructure, create a local market for local minerals	Where practical, establish procurement targets for local minerals in products	Department of Housing and

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		through initiatives like procurement targets, mineral content requirements in technology and co-funding manufacturing for downstream battery components.	required to support the energy transition.	Public Works (DHPW)
HIGH	***25. Royalty stability***	The change to coal royalties in June 2022 was a destabilising act that has had far reaching investment consequences. This decision was interpreted as policy instability and, based on member experience across Australia, has greatly impacted Queensland as a preferred destination of investor choice. AMEC seeks that the Queensland Government commits to competitive royalty rates for all mineral commodities.	Commit to royalty stability for the term of government	Queensland Treasury
MOD	***26. Whole of Government pre-lodgment***	For minerals projects, re-establish whole of government (resources, water, environment, etc) pre-lodgement or scoping meetings with proponents. This puts the assessing officers from each line department in the room with the proponent early to understand how the process integrates, what the obstacles may be and pathways forward.	The Resources Cabinet Sub-Committee will assist in enabling this process at a high level. Translation of this process into departments will further support its success.	DNRMMRRD DETSI OCG DLGWV Queensland Treasury

E. Safety

AMEC advocates that safety proposals must be scalable and fit for operations, its hazards and corresponding risks. Continuing to regulate the industry in a homogenous way—capturing juniors and mid-tiers as though they are tier 1 companies and correspondingly presenting the same risks—is not sustainable, will lead to perverse outcomes (e.g., under reporting) and consequently not facilitate achieving Resources Safety and Health Queensland's (RSHQ) zero serious harm vision.

As such, AMEC seeks to work with the Queensland Government on the following policy recommendations:

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
HIGH	***27. AMEC to be a member of the Minerals Safety and Health Advisory Committee (MSHAC)***	Currently, AMEC is not a member of MSHAC; as such, the exploration industry does not have adequate representation in the meetings that set the priorities for the sector. Explorers, therefore, have limited, if any, influence on safety and health policy and how it should be implemented and legislated.	AMEC seeks that legislation is amended to include AMEC as a member of the MSHAC. This will enable junior explorers and miners to be better represented in important decision making. Until such time as legislation can be amended to include AMEC as a member, AMEC should be allowed to have an observer role in some capacity.	Resources Safety and Health Qld (RSHQ)
MOD	***28. Complete the review of the Minerals Exploration Safety Guidance Notice November 2004***	Over the last two years, AMEC has had RSHQ commit to review the Minerals Exploration Safety Guidance Notice, November 2004, which has not been done since its release. AMEC seeks that the Minerals Exploration Safety Guidance Notice, November 2004, be reviewed in 2025 in collaboration and consultation with industry.	The review will include updated guidance for explorers in relation to dust management, respirable disease and psychosocial safety. As part of the Guidance Note review and improving communication and engagement with junior and mid-tier explorers and operators, work with industry to develop safety templates that make it easier for junior and mid-tier operators to build capability, ensure compliance and work towards continuous improvement.	RSHQ
MOD	***29. Clarity and communication***	The approach of treating exploration in the same manner as mining operations causes confusion and unnecessary complexity for explorers trying to implement appropriate SHMS. Clarification of the requirements upon explorers as opposed to drillers, for example, including clear instructions and resources, would improve the current framework. This could include RSHQ working closer with AMEC to develop safety	Review of the Minerals Exploration Safety Guidance Notice November 2004	RSHQ

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		templates that make it easier for smaller companies to implement changes and ensure compliance		
LOW	**30. BoE accepted training**	Member feedback indicates the accepted training is not fulsome.	A review of the CPD training will be undertaken to ensure that it is a full list that covers all acceptable and appropriate training.	RSHQ

IV. Other strategic matters

Below are key further strategic priorities AMEC would like to see the new Queensland Government progress.

PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
HIGH	***31. Commitment to rolling funding of the Collaborative Explorative Initiative***	There are no new mines without exploration. The CEI is currently funded until 2027 with the program receiving $17.5M total to that date. In the 24-25 budget, the CEI was not extended in the same way as it has been previously, i.e. a further year of funding.	There needs to be a commitment to ongoing funding of the CEI to provide certainty that the state will support exploration.	DNRMMRRD
HIGH	***32. Cease the current Mining Lease Objections Review Process*** ***STATUS: COMPLETED***	The Qld Law Reform Commission is currently undertaking a review of the mining lease objections process. AMEC has been consulted in the review process. Based on the current consultation paper, AMEC is highly concerned that the review is likely to recommend a suite of proposals that duplicate the current notification and objections processes, as well as do not address the core matter of issues, e.g. assessing officer not being skilled to do their jobs effectively and efficiently.	The Minister to request that the Attorney General seeks for the review process to be stopped.	DNRMMRRD Department of Justice and the Attorney General
HIGH	***33. Overturn the moratorium on uranium development***	There is currently a moratorium on U development. Queensland has some of the most globally	Overturn the moratorium on U development to allow for investment to flow to Qld readily and build the	DNRMMRRD

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PRIORITY	PROPOSAL	DESCRIPTION	MECHANISM FOR CHANGE	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT
		significant U deposits in north west Qld. Despite the moratorium exploration has continued.	opportunity to not only revitalise the Qld economy and regional NW economy but contribute to the development of new and expanded supply chains. Previous guidance: 5413T3427.pdf	
High	***34. Emissions action rationalisation***	Stop the work currently being undertaken on a Resources Sector Emissions Reduction Plan	This plan is being progressed to support the previous government's legislative commitment to deliver the plan by the end of 2025. The plan is intended to support the federal plan, which has not yet started development or consultation. AMEC believes better effort would be spent by amending legislation to allow for renewable energy to be exported off mining leases to support the development of on lease renewable energy infrastructure, than another plan for a plan.	DNRMMRRD
HIGH	***35. Emissions action rationalisation***	There is significant duplication between the federal and state requirements for emissions. This is not effective nor efficient regulation. The resources sector is significantly overregulated in this space.	Similar to recent action in NT and WA, make the decision to leave emissions policy and requirements to the federal government only	DETSI
MOD	***36. Acid Supply***	The supply of acid in Qld for mineral processing has been show as not being sufficient to support the growth of minerals, in particular critical minerals in Qld. To date the government has run a process that has not been transparent, inclusive or efficient.	It is recommended that the process going forward to identify effective actions to support the supply of acid in Qld is expedited and that recommendations from industry—not only Glencore, IPL and Evolution—are included in the scope of work.	Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning (DSDIP)

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