

PIRC - Submission - Resources Safety and Health Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026

Submission No: 001

Submission By: Association of Mining and Exploration Companies

Publication: Making the submission and your name public

16 March 2026

To: Primary Industries and Resources Committee

**Re: Resources Safety and Health Queensland and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2026**

Submission Summary

The proposed structural changes to Resources Safety and Queensland (RSHQ) address the top three recommendations of the 2025 Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model and sets RSHQ up for success to deliver on the remainder of the recommendations. AMEC's main concerns are with the qualifications of the RSHQ Board and Committees, the cadence of their appointments, the ability (or inability) to undertake audits and the reporting frameworks.

AMEC is supportive of the proposed reforms to the Land Access Ombudsman, particularly the expanded role to investigate alleged breaches of access agreements and the provision of voluntary dispute resolution support for negotiations of Make Good Agreements, Conduct and Compensation Agreements, and mining access agreements.

The amendments to the Minerals Resources Act are mostly beneficial to AMEC Members. However, having tenements in the renewal stage for extended periods is disruptive for tenure holders and their work program planning as security of tenure is the foundation of decision making.

About AMEC

AMEC is a national peak industry body representing over 550 mineral exploration, mining, and related service 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, fluorite, gold, graphite, iron ore, lead, lithium, manganese, mineral sands (such as silica), molybdenum, nickel, phosphate, potash, rare earths, silver, tungsten, vanadium, and zinc.

AMEC introduction

Our submission addresses the architecture that underpins these reforms, focusing on the *Resources Safety and Health Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026* that was introduced to Parliament on 3rd March 2026.

This submission addresses the following reform pillars as defined in the legislation:

1. Resources Safety and Health Queensland
 - Establishing an independent skills-based Governing Board to strengthen oversight and accountability, streamline advisory structures and remove duplication.
 - Transferring the statutory functions of the Commissioner for Resources, Safety, and Health to the new Board to clarify responsibilities and strengthen accountability.
 - Expanding the functions of the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee and the Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee to provide independent advice and strengthen safety and health policy.
2. Land Access Ombudsman
3. Minor Amendments to the Mineral Resources Act

1 Resources Safety and Health Queensland

Independent RSHQ Board

Establishing an independent RSHQ Board addresses recommendation 1 of the Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model¹. However, there are some factors that must be taken into consideration. The appointment of the board and the chair must be designed to ensure objective oversight and strategic advice on risk management.

To achieve this, AMEC recommends that the selection criteria for board members be anchored to the top systemic safety risks currently facing Queensland's resource sector, such as inadequate hazard identification, lapses in contractor safety integration, and insufficient emergency preparedness.

Candidates should be assessed based on their demonstrated ability to address these risks through relevant field experience and technical expertise. It will be important to ensure the Board's independence from conflicts of interest. The inclusion of Clause 73 in the legislation ensures that conflicts are not only declared to the Minister, but also to the board, ensuring members representing different parts of the sector have transparency.

Mandatory risk-based mechanisms must guide decision-makers, as they are essential for governance, accountability, and stakeholder trust, which are central to the reforms.

Transferring the function of the Commissioner to the RSHQ Board

Transferring the function of the Commissioner to the RSHQ Board addresses recommendation 2 of the Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model² by making it more clearly defined. This is supported by AMEC.

Division 3 of the Bill details the knowledge and experience to be considered when choosing the RSHQ Board. As part of this consideration, AMEC draws on an analysis of mining incidents and learning from this. A requirement that each board member elected has at least 10 years of experience in the mining industry and has been physically present and actively engaged on mining sites. This threshold is informed by research indicating that board

¹ [Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model, 2025](#)

² [Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model, 2025](#)

members and decision-makers with extensive, direct frontline experience are more likely to identify risks and implement safer, more practical solutions³.

For instance, a 2023 analysis of Queensland mining incidents found that teams led by managers with more than a decade of on-site experience had 25 per cent fewer safety breaches than teams led by those with less tenure-based experience. These roles should be filled by individuals with a diverse range of hands-on skills from the ground up, including mechanics, operators, OCEs, and others with real operational and frontline experience. Individuals with such experience are more likely to prioritise the safety of all workers over corporate interests, which aligns with the intent of these reforms.

Annual Reporting

The current RSHQ Annual Report includes audited financial statements, which provides an important level of transparency regarding the organisation's financial management. However, the audit function should be broadened to cover the operational data contained in the "Activities snapshot" section of the report. This data underpins key performance metrics, regulatory activity levels, and compliance monitoring outcomes, yet it is not subject to the same level of independent verification as the financial information.

Extending external assurance to this operational dataset would improve confidence in the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of the information relied upon by government, industry, and the public. Consistent with the findings of the Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model, this assurance work should be conducted by an independent third party. The Review noted that RSHQ is "subject to sporadic scrutiny by other agencies" and questioned whether this level of oversight is adequate, observing that "doubts arise as to whether this level of oversight is sufficient." Strengthening independent audit and validation processes for operational performance data would directly address these concerns and reinforce the credibility of RSHQ's reporting.

Increase functionality of the CMSHAC and MSHAC

Independent advisory bodies representing government, employers, and workers are essential for improving safety and health outcomes in the resource industry. This, combined with the appointment of the Mining and Resources Coroner in 2025, shows a deep commitment to a safer resources sector. The current Bill and briefing materials do not clearly address the expanded functions of these Committees or specify how their advice will be communicated to the Minister, Chairperson, and Board. To ensure transparency and accountability, AMEC recommends that committee recommendations be formally submitted in writing to the Board, with the RSHQ Board secretariat maintaining records of all submissions. Upon receipt, each recommendation should be logged in a public register accessible to stakeholders. The RSHQ Board should be required to respond to each submission within a specified timeframe, outlining the course of action taken or providing justification if recommendations are not adopted. Regular reports should track the progress and resolution of each recommendation, creating a feedback loop that ensures expert advice

³ Michael Quinlan, [Ten Pathways to Death and Disaster](#) [2014], Federation Press

is addressed in a timely and effective manner. This process will help assure stakeholders that committee input will lead to tangible outcomes and will not be lost within bureaucratic processes. This will not only improve the important existing, and hopefully unchanged, functions of these important committees. This is in line with details outlined in Recommendation 3 in the Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model⁴.

Appointing members from both the CMSHAC and MSHAC to the proposed new governing board is a positive step. This approach maintains the tripartite structure and advisory role of the committees, while integrating them more closely into RSHQ's governance. AMEC does not support the RSHQ Board operating as a separate, unregulated entity with limited connection to the CMSHAC and MSHAC. The goal is to strengthen the influence of these committees, clarify their purpose and engagement with government, and enhance transparency.

Fixed terms

AMEC supports the measures such as setting 4-year fixed terms for members but suggest implementing staggered appointments to prevent group departures. These mechanisms would help prevent undue influence, reinforce transparency, and strengthen stakeholder confidence in the Board's impartiality. Strong, stable governance of the Board is essential to safeguarding the long-term economic prosperity and social well-being of Queensland communities. The Board must demonstrate a high degree of diversity, which strengthens decision-making, promotes inclusive policies, and enhances trust. Greater minority representation on RSHQ boards is not only fair but also delivers measurable safety and productivity benefits.

For instance, mining safety boards that included Indigenous representatives have highlighted site-specific cultural and environmental risks, leading to earlier hazard identification and improved safety protocols. Equally, boards with female representation are more likely to identify and prevent risks to women in the mining industry.

AMEC strongly urges that the final bill adopt these mechanisms to ensure independence, robust compliance auditing, clearly defined roles, and a transparent process for stakeholder engagement on committee advice. We call on the government to address these critical issues to achieve meaningful improvements in safety and health outcomes for Queensland's resource workers. To demonstrate commitment and ensure accountability, we recommend that the government review the effectiveness of these reforms within 12 months of the bill's enactment and publicly report on progress made in implementing the recommended safeguards. Establishing this deadline will ensure continuous improvement and reinforce the urgency of protecting worker safety.

⁴ [Review of the Queensland Resources Safety and Health Regulatory Model, 2025](#)

2 Land Access Ombudsman

The Bill outlines amendments to the Land Access Ombudsman (LAO) that will hopefully address several of the Productivity Saving proposals AMEC provided in our 2026-2027 Budget Submission⁵.

The submission requested:

“Simplify Land Access at the mineral exploration phase of project development through methods such as:

- *Clearly defining the rights of each party involved in land access*
- *Set limitations on land access decision making timeframes*
- *Cap land access negotiation and compensation costs*
- *Embed shared mediation costs*
- *Adjust the remit of the Land Access Ombudsman to remove duplication or improve outcomes”*

Although the expansion of the LAO role will not address all the concerns raised in our submission, this new visibility will provide case study data to enable longer-term, meaningful improvements to Land Access issues in minerals exploration. It most certainly addresses the duplication issue.

AMEC also supports the removal of the proposed industry levy. This commitment by the Government to reduce the cost of business is welcome. The benefits to industry and flow-on benefits to the state of these reforms are anticipated to easily pay for this.

Ensuring the continuity of services and leveraging efficiency and coordination are great outcomes. A concern for Industry has been the potential for confusion among stakeholders regarding the different roles of Coexistence Queensland and the Land Access Ombudsman. Early clarity in communications, and clear guidance will reduce the likelihood of this occurring.

3 Minor amendments to the Mineral Resources Act

The procedural and administrative efficiencies proposed for the Mineral Resources Act are supported by AMEC.

Contemporising how spatial data is provided while retaining existing processes will strengthen data stewardship and improve the accuracy and consistency of submitted information. Modern formats make it quicker and easier for tenure holders to prepare data, reducing administrative effort and associated costs. The improved quality of submissions will also streamline assessment for the regulator, lowering processing time and compliance costs for both parties.

AMEC notes and supports the proposed simplification of how contraventions are managed when a tenure holder fails to pay rent. For mining claims, exploration permits, mineral

⁵ [AMEC 2026-2027 Budget Submission](#), Dec 2025

development licences, and mining leases, the amendments remove the separate treatment of rental by deleting the reference to “other than rental” in the preceding section. This has the effect of streamlining the legislative framework so that nonpayment of rent is dealt with under a single, consistent mechanism rather than through multiple, tenure specific provisions. AMEC supports this approach, as it removes unnecessary duplication, reduces interpretive complexity, and provides clearer expectations for both industry and the regulator.

Allowing for procedural fairness in the cancellation of mining tenements is strongly supported. Mining and exploration tenures are complex and costly to acquire, and their value is often tied to significant investments in exploration, compliance activities, and long-term planning. Because these interests can be difficult to accurately quantify, and because the loss of a tenure can have substantial commercial and operational consequences, it is essential that any cancellation process includes a clear and consistent natural justice framework.

Introducing a statutory show cause requirement ensures that tenure holders are given a reasonable opportunity to address any issues relating to unpaid rent before a cancellation decision is made. This not only supports transparency and accountability in regulatory decision making but also reduces the risk of inadvertently cancelling a tenure due to administrative error, oversight, or extenuating circumstances. Importantly, once a mining tenement is cancelled, reinstatement is extremely difficult, creating a risk of irreversible loss of investment and disruption to ongoing projects. Embedding procedural fairness safeguards helps protect legitimate mineral development activities while ensuring the State can still effectively manage noncompliance.

Finally, while extending the timeframes and validity periods for renewals and expiring tenements may allow the Department additional time to assess complex applications, this approach has practical drawbacks for industry. Tenure holders can be left operating under renewal conditions for lengthy periods, creating uncertainty and disrupting forward planning, investment decisions, and delivery of work programs. Prolonged renewal stages also complicate commercial arrangements and can delay progression of legitimate resource development activities.

A more effective and sustainable solution may be to allocate additional resources to the assessment team. Increasing staffing or specialist capability would help ensure that renewal applications are processed in a timely manner, reduce the backlog of complex cases, and provide greater certainty for both industry and the Department. This approach would maintain the integrity of the assessment process while minimising the operational impacts associated with extended renewal periods.

Conclusion

Although AMEC knew this Bill would be introduced after Ministerial Announcements, the submission deadlines have left little time to consult with members about their concerns. Also, having the Public Briefing on the same day allows little time to review the content provided. AMEC will consult further with members between the submission day and the public hearing day on the 25th of March, where we hope to appear as a witness and raise any additional

concerns at that point. That said, given the time we have had to review the Bill, it looks like a good step forward to improve safety in the resources industry and transparency within the RSHQ organisation.

For further information contact:

Kate Dickson, Head of National Operations – [REDACTED]

Amy Warden, QLD Policy Manager – [REDACTED]