



MEDIA RELEASE

MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA – Victorian Division

MINERS SUPPORT NEW APPROACH TO NATIVE TITLE IN VICTORIA

The Minerals Council of Australia, Victorian Division welcomed the introduction of the Traditional Owner Settlement Bill into the Victorian Parliament today.

The Bill provides an alternative framework for the settlement of native title claims through agreements between the traditional owner groups and the State, thereby removing unresolved native title claims from the register.

Mr Chris Fraser, Executive Director, Victorian Division of the MCA said: “The minerals industry in Victoria has supported the new approach and today we see the actual legislation that will provide the framework to enable that new approach to be implemented.”

“Under this framework, traditional owners will have the option of entering a binding agreement with the State and removing their native title claim under the Commonwealth’s Native Title Act. The new approach offers significant advantages to the traditional owner groups and provides certainty for businesses that use Crown land in Victoria.”

“Whilst the details of the individual agreements are yet to be resolved, the minerals industry in Victoria is cautiously supportive of the new approach as it offers a number of significant benefits.”

“These include certainty and the ability to deal with the traditional owners on a commercial basis, rather than a legal basis; clarity and simplification about who can speak on Aboriginal heritage matters; and above all simplification of the access arrangements for exploration.”

“Access arrangements for mining will essentially remain as currently provided under the Commonwealth’s Native Title Act with a special VCAT list presiding over disputes instead of the National Native Title Tribunal.”

“We congratulate the Government on the Bill and look forward to being engaged in effective consultation with all the parties during the development of the individual agreements and in particular the terms of the Land Use Activity Agreements.”