

Heritage Act hurting resource development - Bowler

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Independent Kalgoorlie MP John Bowler has called on the Western Australian Government to review the Heritage Act, saying it is the biggest single impediment to resource development.

The Minister for Mines and Petroleum, Norman Moore, has promised to speed up the mining approval process after a survey found WA is the most risky state in the nation for resource investment.

Mr Bowler says the Heritage Act is strangling the resources sector.

He says the Heritage Act fails to protect genuine Indigenous heritage sites and believes many Aboriginal people would welcome changes to the legislation.

"In the Heritage Act, there are no strict time lines for parties to be involved and to process, and the other trouble is, once sacred sites are identified, I don't think it gives them real protection," he said.

The goldfields' native title representative body doesn't oppose a review of the Heritage Act, but says the legislation is designed to protect Aboriginal heritage and not to facilitate resource development.

Brian Wyatt from the Goldfields Land and Sea Council says a review would have to be carried out with an aim to protect Indigenous interests.

"The Aboriginal Heritage Act, in all its intent and purposes, couldn't save probably one of the pristine sites in the world in the Burrup with the oldest rock art known to man," he said.

"That to me is more of a concern of our inability to protect that and at the same time attempt to see to development."