

Group to advise on WA approvals process

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THE Western Australian government has launched a 12-member working group, which includes a number of mining and petroleum industry identities, to advise on ways to improve the state's exploration and development approvals process.

Speaking to representatives from the resources sector at a lunch on Friday, WA Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore said a priority after the recent state election was to overhaul the current approvals process and provide greater certainty and confidence in the mining and resources sector.

"This new working group consists of a number of prominent Western Australians with a broad knowledge of the minerals and petroleum industry and of industry concerns about WA as a place to do business," he said.

The chairman of the group is Peter Jones, a former resources minister to the Sir Charles Court government, while Kalgoorlie member and former mines minister John Bowler is deputy chairman.



Western Australia Mines and Petroleum Minister Norman Moore

The group also comprises University of Western Australia Energy and Minerals Initiative director and former Chamber of Minerals and Energy chief executive Tim Shanahan, and former Chamber of Minerals and Energy director David Parker.

Vice-president of government relations in WA for BHP Billiton, Ian Fletcher, is also in the group, as is Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association's WA director Richard Ellis and NiPlats non-executive director and Department of Environment director general Derek Carew-Hopkins.

The group also includes Mark Gregory, Ian Wight-Pickin, Chris Clegg, Doug Koontz and Noel Ashcroft.

Moore said the group will provide advice on the best way for government to make the approvals process more efficient and more welcoming for exploration and development activity in WA.

The group's objectives include identifying which impediments can be dealt with through changes to government policies and administrative processes, and those that will require legislative change and a framework to ensure better coordination across agencies to achieve quicker approvals.

The group will also identify and analyse key issues stakeholders have with the approvals processes and actions that can be taken to improve WA's reputation as a place to do business in the mineral and petroleum industries.

The group is expected to meet this week to review the current approval processes.

An interim report is anticipated for February and a final report by the end of April.