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*Advocacy, advisory,
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11 July 2013

Productivity Commission
Mineral and Energy Resource Exploration
Locked Bag 2 Collins Street East
Melbourne VIC 8003

By email to: resourceexploration@pc.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further Comment – Mineral and Energy Resource Exploration

As a submittee to the Inquiry, thank you for the opportunity to contribute further comments on the draft recommendations in the above draft report.

I commend the Commission for the clarity shown in the analysis and the practicality and appropriateness of the subsequent recommendations.

Additionally, I point the Commission at the recent response of the Victorian Government to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Greenfields Mineral Exploration and Project Development in Victoria. Of particular relevance in this response are the commitment to introduce statutory timeframes and to redirect the regulatory focus towards outcomes. If implemented effectively, the proposed changes in Victoria could well propel that State towards best practice in the sector.

Comments on the draft PC report are offered selectively where it is considered recommendations may be improved or clarified:

Recommendation 3.1 – I suggest that this recommendation be further clarified (as per preceding discussion in Chapter 3) to distinguish between exploration licences (ELs) that are the subject of a competitive bidding process where there may be “winning” and “losing” bidders for whom transparency needs are very important and ELs that are awarded as a matter of procedural course and for which there may be no competing applications, hence no reason to publish additional information;

As a number of the Commission’s recommendations refer to risk assessment, proportionality and performance-related outcomes as well as to evidence-based decisions, it would be beneficial in the final report to see some discussion on the implications for staff and systems development and cultural change in the Commonwealth, State and Territory agencies charged with administering exploration and resource development in such an outcomes based environment.

Yours sincerely

D R O’Neill
Director