

Rio Tinto welcomes the release of Professor Graeme Samuel's independent review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) and the pragmatic recommendations proposed which will increase certainty for industry while enabling improved environmental outcomes.

Rio Tinto supports the National Cabinet's commitment to deliver 'Single Touch' bilateral assessments and approvals underpinned by National Environmental Standards. Duplicative and unnecessarily complex regulation not only delays investment in Australia but, as highlighted in Professor Samuel's review, does not deliver the environmental outcomes that the broader community expects.

Bilateral assessments and approvals will reduce duplication in regulatory processes to deliver increased certainty for business, while National Environmental Standards will ensure consistent environmental protection to enable improved environmental outcomes.

Professor Samuel recommends strong regulatory oversight of the Commonwealth and accredited parties in relation to the application of the National Environmental Standards. Rio Tinto welcomes the robust assurance regimes contemplated in the Review to provide confidence to the community regarding the application of, and adherence to, National Environmental Standards.

In the Review's recommendations Professor Samuel recognises the importance of improved involvement, consultation and collaboration with Traditional Owners in relation to environmental and cultural heritage management on their lands and in respect to modernization of Heritage regulatory regimes. In line with Professor Samuel's recommendations, Rio Tinto will continue ongoing engagement with stakeholders and government. Rio Tinto is also supportive of, and engaged with, the Western Australian Government reform process for Aboriginal Cultural Heritage.

Professor Samuel identifies opportunities to improve planning and decision-making by increasing the coordination and accessibility of environmental data. Rio Tinto supports the recommendation for a National environmental dataset and improved coordination of environmental investment as key enablers to improve biodiversity outcomes.

Rio Tinto is committed to the ongoing protection of Australia's environment and national heritage values. We support efforts to make environmental assessment and approvals processes more efficient and effective, in order to attract investment in Australia while still delivering the same or better environmental outcomes. Rio Tinto believes this can be achieved and looks forward to participating in thorough consultation with a range of stakeholders to consider and progress the review recommendations and associated reforms.