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## Consultation will cut carbon sustainably

Kalgoorlie Miner, Kalgoorlie

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### COMMENT

■ Paul Everingham

Now that the dust has settled after withdrawal in March of the EPA's greenhouse gas emissions guidance and a public consultation period has been announced, I'm hopeful that the EPA, government, industry, and the community can work together on what is very important policy guidance.

We must take this opportunity to get it right. Let me make it clear that the Chamber of Minerals and Energy and our WA resource sector members are committed to action on climate change.

We do not deny our role in this challenge and we are proud some of the world's best thinking on reducing greenhouse gas emissions is occurring in our sector.

We're also proud that the WA resources sector is the world's big-

gest producer of lithium — essential for batteries — and one of the biggest producers of cobalt, nickel, copper, rare earth and numerous other minerals critical for the transition to a lower carbon future.

Greenhouse gases are produced by all sectors of our economy — from the industries that employ us, provide us with goods and pay royalties and taxes to fund essential government services, from the transport sector that moves us and our goods around our big State, the agricultural sector that feeds us,

and the everyday household activities we all carry out.

What gives me great hope about the upcoming consultation is that EPA chairman Dr Tom Hatton has stated the EPA is holding "fair dinkum" consultation and has acknowledged the EPA's guidelines would benefit from consultation.

Dr Hatton also said the EPA would consult on ways they could make their advice more robust, not just in environmental protection and practical application, but to ensure they are less likely to be subject to legal challenges.

CME, like its mining and oil and gas company members, is looking forward to the consultation and finding a way forward that is achievable and sustainable. We are aligned that any new EPA guidance must support a national approach to emission reduction, consistent with the Paris Agreement.

CME will continue to advocate for a measured transition that allows the sector to meet collectively our share of commitments while continuing to employ West Australians, encourage investment, and return royalties and other economic benefits to government and local communities.

The McGowan Government has made no secret it wants to create more jobs for West Australians, with a target of 150,000 new jobs by 2023-24. It is an ambitious target, in which the mining and oil and gas

sector will play a critical role.

We're already doing our bit. Between May 2017 and November 2018, the mining industry alone employed 25,000 new people. And there's more to come with predictions that an additional 15,000 workers will be needed in the sector between 2020 and 2025.

It's inevitable that we will move to a lower-carbon economy. And it's inevitable that the resources sector will play a positive role though providing minerals for batteries and renewables and eventually hydrogen fuel.

■ Paul Everingham is the chief executive of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA.