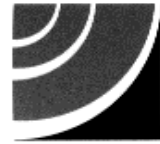


Minerals Tertiary Education Council

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**MINERALS
COUNCIL**
OF AUSTRALIA

10 September 2002

The Inquiry Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Science and Innovation
R1 Suite 116
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Re: Submission to the Inquiry into Business Commitment to R&D in Australia

The Minerals Council of Australia fully supports the submission prepared by AMIRA International to this inquiry, a copy of which accompanies this letter.

The minerals industry remains committed to R&D as evidenced by the eight CRCs currently supported by our industry and by the support for new CRC applications in the current round. Similar levels of support can be demonstrated by totalling the level of industry support for pre-competitive R&D facilitated through organisations such as AMIRA.

To our way of thinking and operating, and this is reflected in our member company base, the “minerals industry” is considerably larger and more diverse than the “mining industry” as defined by the ABS. The minerals industry includes not only the mining sector but also the exploration and minerals processing sectors, all three of which employ significant levels of intellectual capital to remain competitive in their specific, but interdependent areas of business.

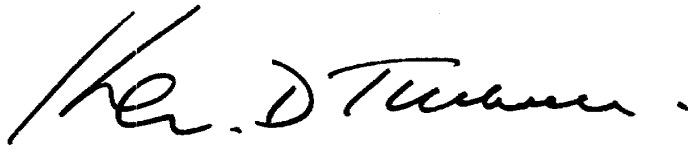
It remains in part, a legacy of past R&D successes, that we are now capable of generating \$41.6 billion in exports. The significant technology improvements that have contributed to this, when measured by business expenditure on R&D as a percentage of exports, occur more in the areas of exploration and minerals processing – fields that are mostly not included in the ABS statistics.

As a further example of industry commitment, in late July the Minerals Council of Australia and AMIRA International jointly organised the development of a collective view on National Research Priorities, in an exercise that involved many member companies of both organisations. The minerals industry believed it was important for the Commonwealth Government to receive a consistent message from our broad industry sector in so far as:

- the need for the Australian minerals industry to continue to innovate with a strong emphasis on R&D, if it is to remain competitive globally, and
- the imperative to demonstrate to government the interdependence of business R&D funding on the level of public R&D funding.

Industry funding is targeted more towards strategic and tactical process improvements. Research outcomes will only emerge as long as this work is supported by public funding of R&D in the enabling and fundamental sciences.

I hope that the inquiry will view our support of the AMIRA International submission favourably.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Tuckwell'.

Dr Kevin Tuckwell
Executive Director – Minerals Tertiary Education Council
& Acting Chief Executive