



10 NOV, 2021

## Summit on mine sexual misconduct

Pilbara News, Pilbara

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**CAITLYN RINTOUL**

A three-day national summit to tackle workplace sexual misconduct has been convened by Australia's peak body representing resource and energy companies.

The Australian Resources and Energy Group (AMMA) has also called for a national task force to end the sector scourge.

Resources bosses from mining, oil and gas, and allied services are taking part in the forum, held across November 8, 15 and 22.

The invitation-only forum is being held behind closed doors.

At least 40 employers were expected to be represented in group sessions held across the three days.

Rio Tinto, BHP, Fortescue Metals Group and Woodside are among those invited.

AMMA operations director Tara Diamond said the association would call for nominations from form participants to form the task force, which is set to comprise 10 employer representatives.

Within hours of the announcement, the association had been flooded with interest.

Ms Diamond said the event had been planned to align with Federal Attorney-General Michaelia Cash's two-day national forum examining the issue of workplace sexual harassment across all industries. It will be held on Thurs-

day and Friday.

Ms Diamond described workplace sexual misconduct as "abhorrent", "inappropriate" and a "significant challenge" for the sector.

She said the AMMA had been prompted to host the summit following a relentless drive by member companies to stamp out the behaviour.

The task force will aim to drive accountability, new initiatives, and cultural improvement across the sector.

"There are countless proactive measures and initiatives in place among individual employers to

stamp out workplace sexual harassment. Actions like inclusive safety audits, appropriate workplace behaviours training and 'no tolerance' policies for perpetrators are having a great impact," Ms Diamond said.

"There is always room for more collaboration among leaders and constant exchanging of notes on their experiences and challenges.

"The industry is not resting on our laurels in dealing with this issue."

AMMA this year introduced "inclusive safety audits" to examine the actual and perceived physical and psychological safety hazards, as well as other employee training programs.

The summit commitment comes after AMMA's chief executive Steve Knott in August hit

back at claims there had been a cover-up culture in the sector, saying national data suggested mining employees were more likely to report incidents of workplace sexual harassment than those in other industries.

Shock findings from an investigation by The West Australian led deputy Liberal leader Libby Mettam to call for a landmark parliamentary inquiry into sexual harassment in the fly-in, fly-out worker community.

More than 70 submissions have been received by the investigating committee — from mine companies, unions, industry bodies and workers.

Of those, 40 have been described as traumatic first-hand accounts

of the horrors facing female FIFO workers — with official figures revealing alleged rapes at mines have more than trebled so far this year.

Ms Mettam and her committee of MPs toured remote mine sites last Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday as part of their research.

Their observations are expected to be collated, and will contribute to their final recommendations, which will be tabled in Parliament in April 2022.

**1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)**  
**Sexual Assault Counselling**  
**Australia: 1800 211 028**  
**WA Sexual Assault Resource**  
**Centre: 6458 1828 or 1800 199**  
**888 (free call from landlines)**



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**Ms Diamond described workplace sexual misconduct as "abhorrent" and "inappropriate".** Picture: Kelsey Reid