



## **M E D I A R E L E A S E**

MR 109/11

3 May 2011

### **Woomera Prohibited Area Open to Resources Development**

Defence Minister Stephen Smith and Resources and Energy Minister Martin Ferguson today released the final report into the review of the future management and use of the Woomera Prohibited Area (WPA).

The Ministers announced that the Government endorsed the Review undertaken by Dr Allan Hawke AC and the proposed new management framework for the WPA.

The Ministers visited Woomera this morning and were accompanied by the South Australian Premier, Mr Mike Rann and the South Australian Minister for Mineral Resources Development, Mr Tom Koutsantonis.

Mr Smith said, "As a result of the Review, a new management framework will be introduced to increase use of the Woomera Prohibited Area in Australia's national interest by better balancing national security and economic considerations."

Mr Ferguson said, "The Woomera Prohibited Area has great economic potential, with estimates that more than \$35 billion of developments, including iron ore, gold and uranium projects would be possible over the next decade."

Under the new arrangements, Defence will remain the primary user of the WPA. The area will be divided into Green, Amber and Red zones, each offering different levels of access or timeshare to non-Defence users.

A timeshare model will be introduced to ensure access to areas of lesser Defence requirements.

The WPA remains an essential Defence testing and evaluation asset and plays an important role in our national security and Defence capability.

Its remoteness and size makes it a unique location for large scale and long range weapons testing.

At the same time, the new timeshare arrangement will allow greater access, and greater certainty of access, by the resources and energy sectors.

The detailed financial, legislative and regulatory arrangements for the new management framework are to be developed by a joint Commonwealth/South Australian Government coordination office (the WPA Coordination Office) working in close consultation with industry.

A six month moratorium on all but the most advanced applications for access to the WPA will see the development of necessary protocols. During this time, the WPA Coordination Office will process any outstanding applications, identified by the South Australian Government, where non-Defence users are close to settling access arrangements with Defence.

Mr Smith and Mr Ferguson acknowledged the hard work of Dr Hawke and his review team in providing a considered report that strikes the balance between maintaining national security interests while advancing our national economic interests.

**Media note:**

A copy of the final report of Dr Alan Hawke's Woomera Prohibited Area Review is available at <http://www.defence.gov.au/woomeraReview/>

File imagery is available at <http://images.defence.gov.au/fotoweb/Grid.fwx?archiveId=5003=&search=20112505>

File vision of Defence activities at Woomera is being fed to Parliament House.