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Optimism & positivity in visit to Goldfields

Kalgoorlie Miner, Kalgoorlie

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Recently I had the chance to accompany Federal Member for Brand and shadow minister for resources Madeleine King on a trip to the Goldfields.

I'm a fairly frequent visitor to Kalgoorlie-Boulder, so it was interesting to see it through the lens of someone who can't get there quite as often.

As Madeleine's portfolio would suggest, she's a long-term supporter of our sector, but this was the first time she'd been to the Goldfields since she took on her new role in late January.

Our tour took in the BHP Nickel Smelter, Northern Star's South Kalgoorlie underground operation, and Evolution's Mungari mine site.

The strong sense of optimism and positivity at each site — indeed across all of Kalgoorlie-Boulder — was not lost on Madeleine, and was much reflected in a subsequent editorial for the Kalgoorlie Miner.

It was pleasing to see her highlight the WA mining and resources sector's continued and major global role in traditional commodities such as gold and iron ore, but also the key opportunities it has in critical minerals and, by extension, electrification.

To help fully realise those opportunities, there are several pivotal issues which the Chamber of Minerals and Energy and its member companies will be seeking to work on with the re-elected WA Government.

One of them is delivery of a

streamlined reform agenda to reduce duplication and administrative burdens while maintaining robust oversight.

Delays of "just" six to 12 months on major resources projects can cost billions.

Another is government support for the sector to access the right people, with the right skills at the right time, to seize current opportunities. Our member companies are strongly focused on creating jobs, and training West Australians, but there are also significant labour pressures in the current environment.

I know skills and labour shortfalls are also areas of long-term concern for industries in the Goldfields, and certainly ones about which the CME will be in conversation with new State Member for Kalgoorlie Ali Kent.

I'd like to congratulate Ali on her election win and commiserate with her main rivals, Kyran O'Donnell and Rowena Olsen.

The passion with which I saw all candidates tackling the election during my visit is another indication as to why the Goldfields continues to thrive.

It's extremely pleasing to see our Goldfields Esperance Business Register — designed to link local businesses with mining companies and each other — now has more than 190 companies signed up. If you're interested, visit gebusinessregister.com.au.

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