

Joint Statement of Intent between Australia and the United Kingdom on collaboration on critical minerals

04 April 2023

Critical minerals are central to the modern economy, including renewable energy, electric vehicles, aerospace, battery storage, defence and electronics. International experts have been clear that the global supply of critical minerals must increase, and become more resilient, if the world is to achieve the global Paris climate goals. Metal recycling has the potential to be a significant source of secondary supply alleviating the burden on primary supply chains. The International Energy Agency expects that global demand for critical minerals will grow significantly from 2020 to 2040 and beyond; meaningful international effort is required to bridge this gap. Australia and the United Kingdom are committed to playing their parts in global efforts to address this challenge, as demonstrated by both countries' Critical Minerals Strategies. In that light, both countries will work closely together to build diverse, resilient, and sustainable supply chains. Through enhanced collaboration on critical minerals, we can develop solutions to challenges facing the sector, strengthen global markets, promote transparency and deepen links between Australia and the UK.

Both countries share a common interest in ensuring critical minerals markets are underpinned by the highest environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards. Our collaboration on critical minerals will build on the long standing economic and security ties between both nations, demonstrated recently through the Australia-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement, AUKUS, Aus-UK Joint Supply Chain Resilience Capability Building Initiative, the Joint Statement on Cooperation on Global Supply Chains and membership of the Minerals Security Partnership.

Our collaboration will build on both countries' shared commitment to growing the sector, and our respective expertise, to strengthen international critical minerals supply chains, promote economic security, and contribute to meeting net zero targets. This will help remove barriers to the adoption of new technologies and demand-driven development of new supply chains, providing a clear opportunity to create the highly skilled jobs of tomorrow.

Australia has significant critical minerals endowments and is now actively working to expand its downstream processing and manufacturing capabilities. These efforts build on Australia's expertise and reputation as a reliable, sustainable source of energy and resources for our trading partners, underpinned by world leading ESG credentials that are based on robust labour laws and environmental protection frameworks.

The UK is home to a strong global mining and engineering sector and is a centre of mining finance, standards and metals trading. It has mining and mineral processing expertise, including various industrial clusters and Europe's leading mining school, and its own pockets of critical minerals wealth. British advanced manufacturers are customers for critical minerals and play an important role in their supply chains. The UK also has a role as an international dealmaker, leveraging its expertise in regulatory diplomacy, its extensive engagement in multilateral forums and its strong relationships with mineral-rich producer countries and consumer markets.

It is intended that both countries will work together to pursue the following shared objectives:

- Increase and diversify the global supply of critical minerals to help meet the growing demand necessary for the net-zero transition, including by boosting global investment and connecting buyers, sellers, suppliers and investors across both nations.
- Support both nations to build their sovereign capabilities in downstream processing and manufacturing.
- Build new critical minerals industries within both nations that will create skilled and high-paying jobs and address regional inequalities, including for regional communities.

Both nations will work together to:

- Identify prospective opportunities to encourage investment in key critical minerals supply chains, including for renewable energy and other clean energy technologies, along with upstream extraction.
- Seek avenues for enhanced Research & Development collaboration, including geoscience, downstream minerals processing, and the development of environmentally sustainable technologies.
- Promote higher ESG performance relating to critical minerals mining and processing, while also supporting global industry adoption of the highest ESG standards.
- Consider further coordination of critical minerals policy, including information exchange on supply chain resilience and security, regulation and minerals criticality.
- Encourage collaboration and the exchange of skills and expertise between Australian and UK firms, and with other international partners.
- Collaborate on topics of resource efficiency, substitution or recycling of specific critical minerals.

Officials from Australia's Department of Industry Science and Resources Critical Minerals Office (CMO) and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), and Department of Business and Trade (DBT), will work closely together and with other participants of the Australia-United Kingdom Joint Working Group on Critical Minerals to lead this work and identify an initial set of priorities for our collaboration.

Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State for the Indo-Pacific
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development
Office

Hon Madeleine King MP
Minister for Resources
Department of Industry, Science and
Resources