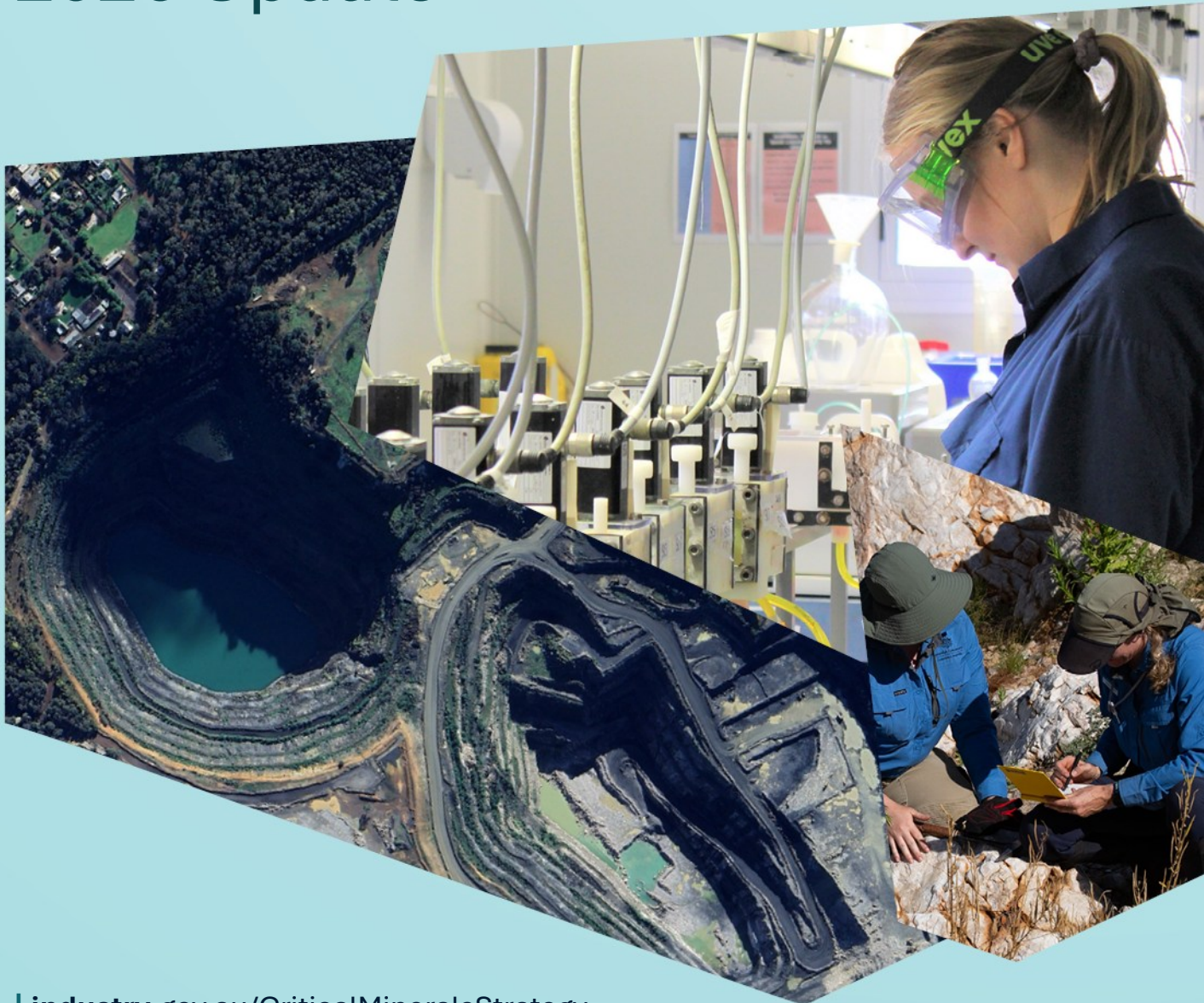




Australian Government

Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030 2026 Update



| industry.gov.au/CriticalMineralsStrategy



Acknowledgement of Country

In delivering Australia's 2026 update to the Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030, we pay our respect to First Nations peoples, their elders and their ancestors who have always cared and continue to care for our lands, waters and communities.

First Nations peoples are the custodians of the lands and waters on which critical minerals mining and processing takes place. Their voices and knowledge are vital to the success and sustainability of the critical minerals sector. In the spirit of reconciliation, we are committed to listening to the voices and experiences of First Nations peoples and improving how First Nations peoples can be heard and represented. We will work to ensure the benefits gained from the growth of the critical minerals sector are shared by all Australians.

We thank First Nations peoples for their continuing custodianship of the Country that we live and work on today.

Artwork credit:

DISR Journey

2024

Chern'ee Sutton

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The purpose of this publication is to outline the Commonwealth's strategic direction and priorities for Australia's critical minerals sector.

The Commonwealth as represented by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources has exercised due care and skill in the preparation and compilation of the information in this publication.

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2026 strategy update at a glance

The Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030 is the framework to grow Australia's critical minerals sector.

Since the release of the Critical Minerals Strategy in 2023, global competition for critical minerals has intensified and concentrated supply chains have emerged as a strategic vulnerability for many economies. Critical minerals are no longer a resources issue. They are central to national security, economic resilience and industrial capability.

As countries strengthen their efforts to secure supply and develop new critical minerals industries, Australia can play a larger role in the industries and technologies that are shaping the global economy. This update sets out the Australian Government's progress since 2023 and how we will continue to draw on our strengths to attract investment, expand processing and refining, and support more diverse and secure supply chains.

The updated strategy sharpens focus on the priorities, actions and partnerships to deliver Australia's vision for the sector. It places greater emphasis on national security, economic resilience and focuses on international partnerships, and targets government effort where it can have the greatest impact across the critical minerals value chain.

Australia's objective is not simply to extract critical minerals, but to capture more value from our resources, strengthen sovereign capability and support long-term economic growth. This means expanding processing and refining where Australia can build a comparative advantage, support new project development, and ensure the sector contributes to broader national priorities, including a Future Made in Australia.

Australia is uniquely placed to seize this opportunity. We combine significant critical minerals resources with world-class mining expertise, a stable investment environment and growing processing capability. Together with our strong international partnerships, these strengths position Australia to become a supplier of choice for the industries and economies that depend on critical minerals.

The strategy's vision is enduring. By 2030, Australia will be a globally significant producer of extracted and processed critical minerals. This will help strengthen Australia's national security and economic resilience, diversify supply chains and support energy security, the global transition to net zero, and a Future Made in Australia.

The strategy sets out government priorities across 6 focus areas to guide action over the coming years (see Figure 1). Success will require collaboration between governments, industry, investors, researchers, communities and international partners.

This update delivers on the Australian Government's commitment to review the strategy and ensure it remains aligned with Australia's national interests and the rapidly evolving global environment.

Figure 1: Critical Minerals Strategy focus areas and success outcomes

Focus area	Success outcomes
 Accelerating strategically important projects to production	• A strong pipeline of projects progressing through development stages to final investment decision. • More domestic processing and refining, increasing value captured onshore. • Stronger innovation that translates into Australian intellectual property developed, protected, commercialised, and applied domestically.
 Attracting investment and building international partnerships	• Increased demand for, and foreign investment in, Australian critical minerals. • More diverse and resilient supply chains that reduce exposure to concentration, market distortion and strategic vulnerabilities.
 First Nations engagement and benefit sharing	• First Nations communities have the information and expertise to fully participate in critical minerals opportunities. • Growth of the critical minerals sector supports economic self-determination and wealth creation for First Nations communities.
 Showcase Australia as a world leading, high-standard producer at scale	• Australia as a key driver in shaping standards-based markets. • Lower emissions from extraction and processing activities. • Increased circular economy practices.
 Lifting competitiveness through coordinated infrastructure development and efficient regulatory systems	• Better access to enabling infrastructure, common-user facilities and reliable energy for critical minerals projects. • Improving efficiency and predictability of national environmental approvals. • Alignment between Commonwealth, state and territory governments for developing strategically important projects.
 Growing a skilled workforce	• More workers with the skills needed for critical minerals processing and refining. • Greater diversity and inclusivity in workplaces.

Message from the minister

Critical minerals and rare earths sit at the centre of strategic decision making. They are not just commodities: they are strategic assets fundamental to sovereign capabilities that help secure Australia's future. They underpin our national security and economic resilience. They are essential inputs to technologies that power our economy and defence capability, enable the energy transition and advance the government's Future Made in Australia agenda.

The global context has changed significantly since government released the Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030. Concentrated market power, export controls and geopolitical competition have disrupted supply chains that modern economies rely on. This is reshaping global supply chains around greater resilience, trust, security and strategic alignment. Without secure and diversified supply chains, we cannot deliver the economic resilience, industrial capability and national security outcomes that Australians expect.



Geoscience Australia staff examine a quartz sample in the Mount Isa region to assess its potential as a source of high purity silica as part of the Australian Critical Minerals Research and Development Hub (2022–2026). High purity silica is a key raw material for producing silicon, a critical mineral used in solar panels, computer chips, electronics and communications technologies that are essential to Australia's clean energy and digital future. Supplied: Geoscience Australia

Critical minerals processing and refining are highly concentrated markets, and efforts to diversify those supply chains have faced significant commercial, technical and market barriers. When markets are distorted or supply is disrupted, Australian jobs, industries and communities feel the consequences. Governments, including Australia's, are taking a more active role in strengthening global critical minerals supply chains, both internationally and at home. No single country can overcome these vulnerabilities or meet future demand alone. This makes cooperation with our trusted partners more important than ever.

Australia has an important role to play in addressing these challenges. Our extraordinary geological endowment, world-class geoscience capability, skilled workforce and strong resources sector position us to help secure and diversify critical minerals supply. As many seek reliable alternatives, Australia can strengthen our role as a trusted supplier and processor.

The Australian Government is stepping up to help diversify markets. Since the release of the Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030, the government has backed the sector with significant action. Key activities include:

- legislated the **\$17.5 billion Critical Minerals Production Tax Incentive**, which will provide a **10% refundable tax offset** for the processing and refining of **critical minerals** from **1 July 2027 to 30 June 2040**
- committed **\$1.2 billion** to establish the **Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve** and passed the ***Export Finance and Insurance Corporation Amendment (Strategic Reserve) Act 2026*** to give Export Finance Australia the powers needed to support the Reserve
- expanded the **Critical Minerals Facility** from its original **\$2 billion** to **\$5 billion**
- strengthened the government's ability to back strategically important projects, with Export Finance Australia committing over **\$3 billion** towards 5 major projects as of July 2026
- committed \$835 million of funding through the **Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility** to support 5 critical minerals projects
- committed **\$3.4 billion** through **Resourcing Australia's Prosperity** to unlock new discoveries and build the long-term project pipeline
- opened **critical minerals pilot and demonstration facilities** at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation to support processing innovation and onshore value adding
- refreshed Australia's investment promotion pipeline through the **Australian Critical Minerals Prospectus**, which showcased 94 advanced, investment-ready projects across mining and midstream processing
- updated Australia's **Critical Minerals List** and introduced a **Strategic Materials List** to better reflect Australia's economic, strategic and industrial priorities
- supported **strategically important smelters and refineries**, preserving industrial capabilities that can enable the recovery of critical minerals as by-products

- committed almost **\$89 million in grants to 21 early-mid stage critical minerals** projects since 2023, helping grow Australia’s pipeline of critical minerals projects
- established or joined more than a dozen bilateral and multilateral agreements or frameworks with international partners, including joining the **G7 Critical Minerals Resilience and Production Alliance** to drive new demand and support sustainable new markets for Australian producers to export into
- invested \$53 million to establish the **Critical Metals for Critical Industries Cooperative Research Centre** to accelerate innovation and commercialisation across the sector.

These actions are already delivering results. They demonstrate that Australia is more than a resource supplier. We are a leader and an enduring partner of choice. We are building the capability to capture more value from our resources, support processing, smelters and refining, and help diversify supply chains. Our continued success depends on aligning our critical minerals priorities with the demand from our international partners, as well as across all levels of government.

The next 4 years of the strategy must build on this progress. Global supply chains are being reconfigured, and Australia must stay focused on where we can have the greatest impact. We will prioritise the minerals and supply chain segments that matter most to Australia’s strategic interests. We will focus effort where supply risks are greatest, where partners need reliable alternatives, and where Australia can build capability, capture value and strengthen economic resilience.

This strategy is about turning Australia’s natural advantages into enduring economic, industrial and strategic value. It is about advancing national security, building economic resilience, strengthening sovereign capability and securing Australia’s place as a trusted partner in industries that are shaping the future.



The Hon Madeleine King MP

Minister for Resources
Minister for Northern Australia

Introduction

The strategy provides a national framework to grow Australia's critical minerals sector and supports the Australian Government's Future Made in Australia agenda.

The strategy sets out 6 focus areas. These focus areas prioritise the government's efforts to diversify global critical minerals supply chains by working with international partners, industry, investors, the research and innovation sector, states and territories, as well as communities.

The 2026 strategy update reflects new domestic and international policy settings implemented since 2023, which have collectively helped position Australia at the forefront of efforts to diversify global critical minerals supply chains.

What are critical minerals?

Critical minerals are metallic or non-metallic elements and materials that are:

- essential inputs to our modern technologies, economies and national security
- vulnerable to supply chain disruption.

Risks of disruption to critical mineral supply chains increase when mineral production or processing is concentrated in particular locations, facilities, or companies.

Why are critical minerals important?

Critical minerals are important for the functioning of a modern society in a rapidly evolving economic and strategic environment. Critical minerals, and the technologies they enable, have important applications across a range of sectors such as:

- agritech
- computing and critical technologies
- defence
- energy
- medicine
- space
- telecommunications
- transport.

Critical minerals are a central part of delivering the Future Made in Australia agenda. They are essential to Australia's national security, economic resilience and the acceleration of the clean energy transition. Processing and refining of critical minerals was identified as a priority sector in 2024, under the Future Made in Australia National Interest Framework.

Critical Minerals List

Australia maintains a [Critical Minerals List](#), containing materials important for modern technologies, economies and national security. Australia's list reflects the nation's unique characteristics, including our geological potential, strategic partnerships and minerals most vulnerable to supply chain disruption. The government will review the list at least every 3 years. We may update it in response to global strategic, technological, economic and policy changes.

The Australian states and territories have identified their own critical minerals lists based on their resource endowments and economic opportunities. Other countries also have their own critical minerals lists which are based on their own considerations.

Strategic Materials List

Australia maintains a [Strategic Materials List](#). These materials do not meet the criteria to be critical minerals but nevertheless are in demand and recognised as important to Australia's economic, industrial and strategic interests, including the energy transition and modern technologies. They generally have more developed, transparent markets and better supply chain resilience than critical minerals but can still be at risk from unpredictable shifts in global trade and market trends. The Strategic Materials List is updated together with the Critical Minerals List.



Research Laboratories for
Critical Minerals Midstream
Processing at ANSTO . Supplied: ANSTO

Vision and objectives

Vision for 2030

We are a globally significant producer of extracted and processed critical minerals. We support secure, resilient and diversified global supply chains essential to:

- Australia's national security and economic resilience
- domestic and regional energy security
- the global transition to net zero
- our Future Made in Australia agenda.

Objectives

Advance our national security, economic resilience and strategic influence

Growing a secure, competitive and resilient critical minerals sector will strengthen Australia's national security and economic resilience. It will boost our strategic influence by enhancing our leverage in an increasingly contested geopolitical environment.

Build sovereign capability in critical minerals mining and processing to support a Future Made in Australia

Move further along the critical minerals value chain and increase refining and processing where we have, or can develop, a comparative advantage. This will support the sector's growth and deliver benefits and jobs as part of a Future Made in Australia.

Create secure, resilient and diversified supply chains through strong international partnerships

Australia will strengthen its position as a trusted and reliable supplier of critical minerals and processed products, helping to diversify global supply chains and reduce market concentration. This will support more resilient markets, enhance economic security, and advance shared strategic interests with our partners.

Use our critical minerals to strengthen Australia's energy security, support the net-zero transformation, and help become a renewable energy superpower

Australia will continue as a major exporter of the critical minerals needed for net zero technologies and pursue our own emissions reduction targets of 62–70% below 2005 levels, by 2035 and net zero by 2050.

Australia's place in an evolving environment

Australia has unique characteristics, credentials, capabilities and partnerships that enable us to play a leading role in the development of globally secure, resilient and diversified critical minerals supply chains. We will work with communities, key sector participants and international partners to fully realise this potential.

Why the opportunity matters for Australia

Demand for critical minerals remains strong and continues to increase as partners decarbonise their economies, strengthen their economic resilience, develop digital infrastructure and artificial intelligence capabilities as well as other modern and advanced technologies. Access to these minerals is increasingly central to many countries' industrial capabilities and national security, including Australia's, but is becoming harder to secure as export controls and other restrictions disrupt supply. Government strategy and policy action are now necessary tools to reduce Australia's exposure to volatile and concentrated supply chains.

Market conditions vary by critical mineral and change in response to a range of factors. Some markets operate with greater transparency, while other critical minerals markets remain highly concentrated, opaque and exposed to sharp price movements. These risks extend beyond extraction. Some of the most significant vulnerabilities are in refining, processing and other midstream segments, where capability is concentrated in a small number of countries. Across lithium, nickel, cobalt, battery-grade graphite and rare earth element refinement, the 3 largest refining economies accounted for an average of around 91% of global supply (IEA 2026a). In several markets, including for manganese, nickel and graphite, virtually all supply growth came from a dominant supplier (IEA 2026b).

This concentration means supply chain disruptions, including through the use of export controls or other trade restrictions can create strategic pressure points across global markets, increasing exposure to price shocks and coercive market behaviour. Current trends suggest little improvement over the coming decade. The consequences of this are increasingly significant, with analysis indicating disruptions to rare earths supply chains alone due to export controls could place up to around \$9 trillion per year in downstream industrial production at risk (IEA 2026b). Such disruptions would have far reaching implications for energy security, defence supply chains and industrial production globally.

These vulnerabilities are becoming more consequential as demand for critical minerals continues to grow. Lithium demand is projected to be 3.8 times higher in 2040 than in 2025, with mined output required to increase by 2.5 times from current levels to meet this projected demand (IEA 2026b). Global demand for magnet rare earths is set to

expand by 25% between 2030 and by over 80% to 2050 (IEA 2026b). However, these strong projections do not guarantee the investment required to deliver future supply and meet demand. Investment and diversification challenges are particularly acute in processing and refining, where concentration constrains access to supply even when upstream resources are available and abundant.

Tivan Speewah Fluorite Project
Western Australia.
Supplied: Tivan



Geopolitical tensions, strategic competition and trade fragmentation are further shaping critical minerals markets. As countries seek to strengthen economic, industrial and national security, critical minerals are increasingly important strategic assets. Australia's approach reflects this. Governments across the world have recognised their exposure to supply chain disruption risks and are reducing their dependence on single suppliers. Inaction is no longer a viable option.

Governments are responding by implementing policies such as public financing, project facilitation, domestic processing support, permitting reforms, strategic reserves and increased international cooperation. Governments and industry are looking at ways to secure, diversify and operate in more transparent supply chains, particularly in the midstream part of the value chain.

Growing Australia's critical minerals sector will strengthen supply chain resilience and contribute to diversifying global sources of supply. This supports both Australia's interests and the needs of our partners. To achieve this, we will:

- strengthen international partnerships to help bring new sources of demand online
- coordinate, de-risk and provide targeted financing to specific projects
- monitor and determine the most suitable policy settings to grow the sector
- facilitate international investment and strategic offtake agreements to diversify supply.

Australia's critical minerals opportunity

Australia has some of the world's largest recoverable resources of critical minerals, including cobalt, lithium, manganese, rare earth elements, tungsten and vanadium (see Figure 2, Geoscience Australia 2026). We also have deep expertise in traditional resources, built over generations as a reliable resources exporter, with a globally recognised mining sector, world-leading geoscience capability, and skilled workforce. These strengths position Australia to seize the critical minerals opportunity, including capturing greater value across the value chain.

However, our geology and mining expertise alone will not be enough to counter concentrated market power and behaviour that undermines fair competition. Australia must prioritise minerals and supply chain segments that matter most to our strategic interests. We will focus effort where supply risks are greatest, market conditions are most distorted, and Australia has the capability to make a material contribution. This means we will target areas where our resource strengths, partner demand and national security and economic resilience interests align.

Australia can build from the industrial capability we already have, while attracting investment in new midstream processing assets for critical minerals. For example, existing smelters and refineries can provide a platform for further value-adding, including recovery of critical minerals from processing streams, by-products and residues where commercially viable. New processing assets and common user facilities can also create pathways to process more Australian minerals onshore. Maintaining, modernising and expanding competitive processing capability will enable Australia to capture more value domestically and strengthen secure, resilient and diversified critical minerals supply chains.

Many of our partners have well established manufacturing and downstream processing capabilities. Australia can better connect our upstream resources, and growing midstream outputs, with our partners' demand to help deconcentrate global markets. This will create new pathways for Australian industry to participate in strategically important value chains. These partnerships will attract investment, secure offtake opportunities and build the commercial scale needed to develop upstream and midstream projects.

Australia is already seeing early signs of this in practice. Since the release of the 2023 strategy, 15 new critical minerals projects and major expansions to existing operations have commenced production, adding around \$6.3 billion in annual production value, with around \$4 billion in downstream capital investment.¹ Refining projects have also

¹ Department of Industry, Science and Resources analysis: Albermarle Kemerton Lithium Refinery Train 1–2 (lithium hydroxide); Core Exploration Ltd Finnis Lithium project Stage 1 (spodumene concentrate); Covalent Lithium Kwinana Lithium Refinery (lithium hydroxide); Covalent Lithium Mount Holland lithium mine (spodumene concentrate); Group 6 Metals Dolphin Project (tungsten trioxide); Iluka Resources Balranald (ilmenite concentrate); Iluka Resources Balranald (rutile concentrate); Iluka Resources Balranald (zircon concentrate); Liontown Resources Ltd. Kathleen Valley (spodumene concentrate); Lynas Rare Earths Ltd. Kalgoorlie Rare Earth Processing Facility (NdPr carbonate); Sheffield Resources/Yansteel Thunderbird Stage 1 (ilmenite concentrate); Sheffield Resources/Yansteel Thunderbird Stage 1 (zircon concentrate); Tronox Atlas-Campaspe (ilmenite concentrate); Tronox Atlas-Campaspe (rutile concentrate); Tronox Atlas-Campaspe (zircon concentrate).

accounted for 67% of the value of critical minerals final investment decisions, compared with 31% prior to the strategy's release (Department of Industry, Science and Resources analysis). Continuing this momentum will allow Australia to capture greater economic and strategic value from our resources over time.

Australia's project pipeline lays a strong foundation to act on these opportunities. In December 2025, our pipeline comprised 130 major critical minerals projects. This included approximately \$19 billion in proposed investment for projects at more advanced stages of development (Office of the Chief Economist, 2025). This pipeline is dominated by early-stage projects. Translating this pipeline into production will require targeted and strategic investment, supported by the Commonwealth, state and territory governments, international partners and the private sector.

The Nolans Bore Rare Earths Project comprises the development of a rare earths mine and processing facilities (including beneficiation, extraction, and separation plants) 135km north of Alice Springs in the Northern Territory. Supplied: Arafura Rare Earths Limited

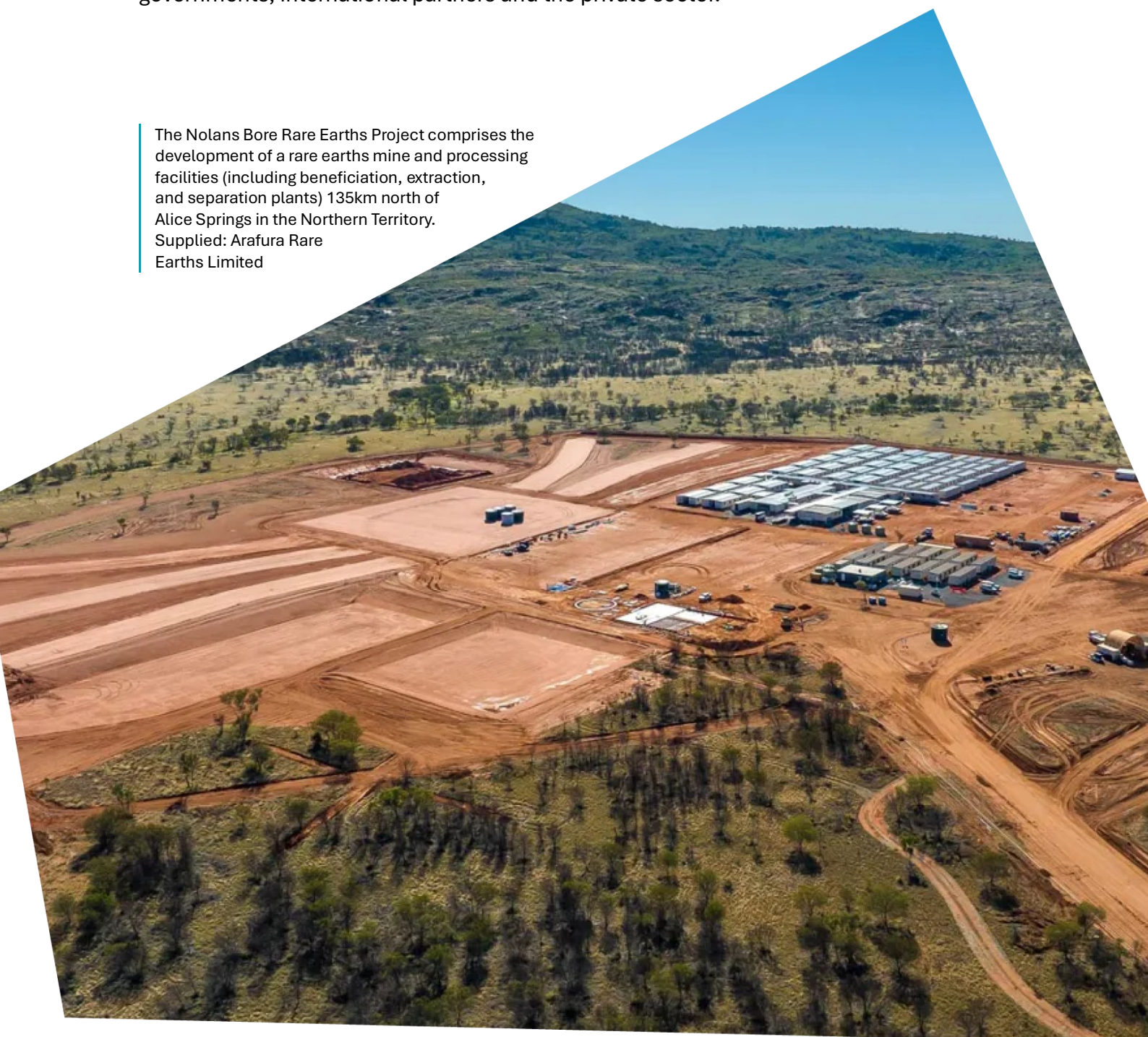
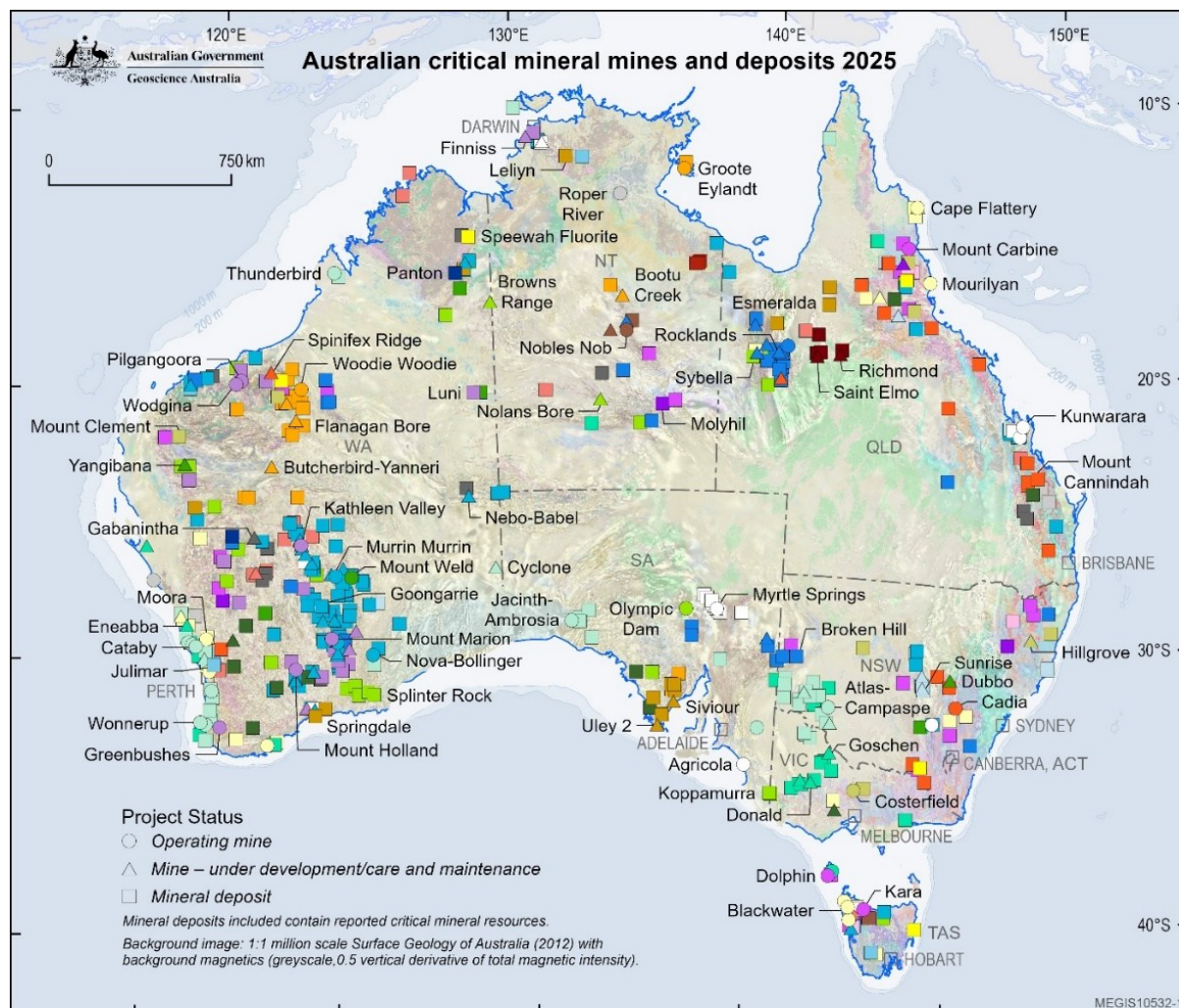


Figure 2: Australia's critical mineral mines and deposits 2025



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Our approach

The Australian Government will leverage its investment in critical minerals and the Future Made in Australia agenda to propel the sector's growth, and support Australia's national security and strategic impact out to 2030 and beyond. The government will continue to act in a concerted, targeted and proportionate manner. We will support our critical minerals sector to unlock private investment, improve project economics, accelerate commercially viable projects and grow Australia's midstream capability.

Concerted

The Australian Government will continue to provide national leadership, alongside state and territory governments, industry and investors, to get critical minerals projects operating and delivering supply to the world. This includes leadership in improving infrastructure, approvals systems, skills, financing and market access.

A wide array of government action is in improving project economics, such as public financing, investment facilitation, and the Critical Minerals Production Tax Incentive. This will crowd-in private capital and support commercially viable projects.

Australia will continue to leverage our international partnerships to deliver outcomes for our partners and the nation. We will pursue investment and offtake agreements with partners to secure new demand for Australian projects, improve market access and link our upstream and midstream capabilities into our partners' downstream ecosystems.

Targeted

The government will support critical minerals projects and capabilities that deliver the greatest impact to deliver the strategy. We will target projects that move Australia further along the value chain, increase domestic value-add and build capability in refining and processing where Australia has, or can develop, a comparative advantage. This includes targeted action where the private sector alone cannot address the economic and geopolitical factors that drive abnormal market outcomes.

Proportionate

Government action will address market gaps, crowd-in private capital, improve commercial viability and accelerate long-term industry development. The government will do this in a way that is proportionate to the size of our economy and global market demand, considers our natural advantages and national interest, and is efficient, effective and fiscally responsible. Australia will target our support where it can make a clear difference to investment decisions, project development and supply chain outcomes.

Our focus areas

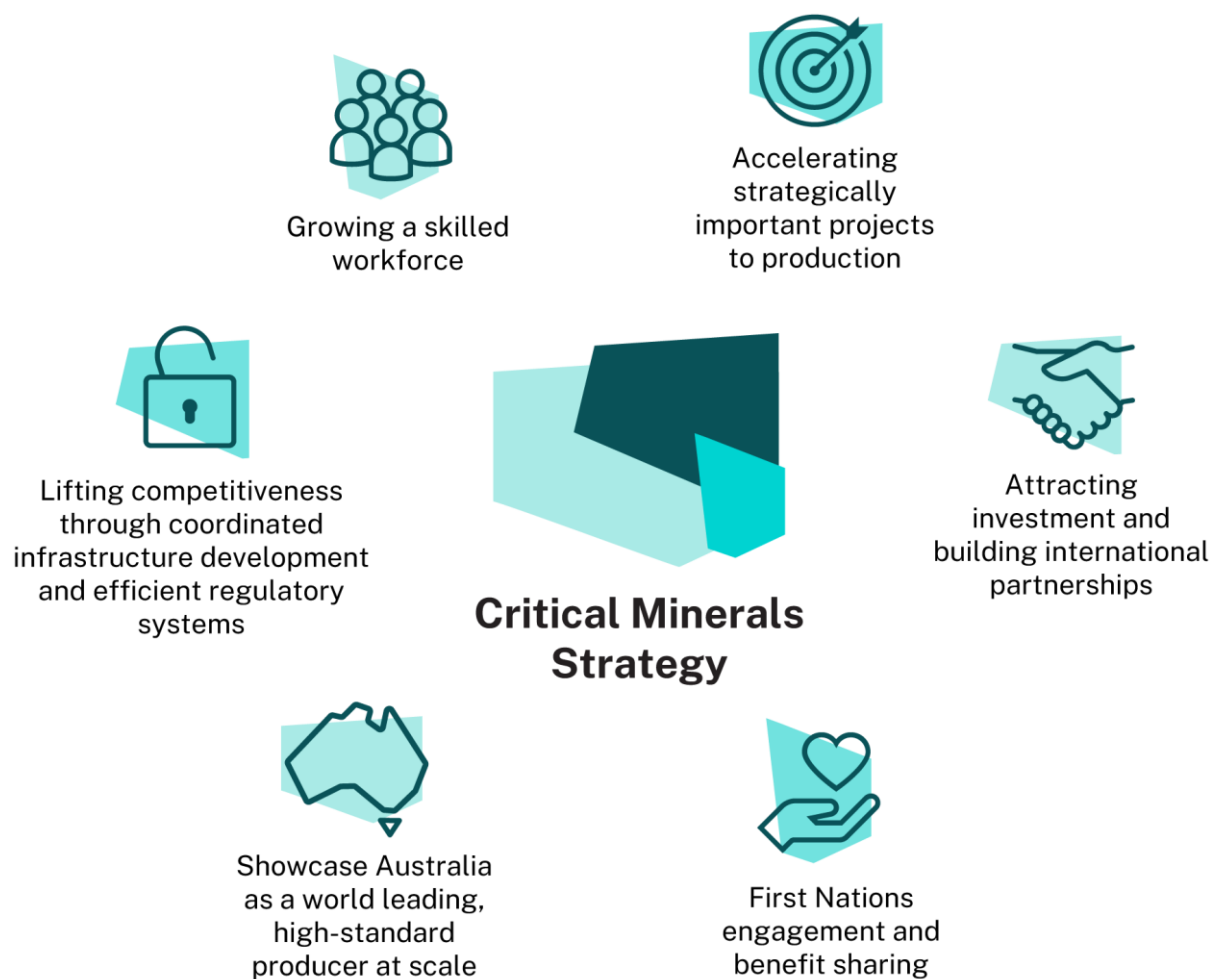


Figure 3: Critical Minerals Strategy focus areas

1. Accelerating strategically important projects to production

Australia can deliver a strong, investable pipeline of critical minerals projects to support more production and value-added processing.

Why action is needed

The economic and strategic value of Australia's critical minerals is growing but will not be realised by market forces alone. Targeted government support that crowds in private capital can accelerate strategically important projects towards production.

Many projects face challenging project economics, particularly as they move from exploration into development, processing and production. These projects often require high upfront capital, specialised technology, reliable energy, skilled workforces, and supporting infrastructure at commercial scale, all while operating in volatile markets.

These challenges, especially for midstream processing and refining projects, span across technical, financial and operational requirements. They include:

- navigating technical risks from complex mineralogy and the need for specialised processing
- project risks associated with operating in remote areas, significant capital and energy requirements, long development timeframes and the fact that many proponents are junior miners and mid-tier producers
- market risks from concentrated supply chains, opaque markets, uncertain revenue outlooks and limited pricing data.

Private capital remains essential to developing the sector, but it is not always enough to bring strategically important projects to market. High-tech manufacturing sectors, such as those that produce parts for electric vehicles, renewable energy and storage, telecommunications, and defence and aerospace applications, are not always willing to pay prices that reflect the costs of sustainable and secure supply chains despite clear demand for diversified supply.

While some projects are technically viable and supported by strong long-term demand, they still struggle to attract investment. Factors such as technical complexity, construction and commissioning risks, market uncertainty, long development timelines and operating costs, and expected returns can fall outside private sector investment thresholds. These projects may sit close to commercial viability, but not close enough to proceed without targeted risk-sharing or other support.

This creates a gap between what private markets will fund and what Australia needs to do to build a resilient, competitive and secure critical minerals sector. Private investment decisions do not always capture the broader benefits these projects can deliver, including more diverse supply chains, stronger economic resilience and improved national security. Targeted public investment for strategically important projects can help close this gap by improving project economics, sharing selected risks with industry and attracting private capital.

We have world class mineral resources, a world-leading mining sector, and advanced geological and metallurgical expertise. Targeted intervention for strategically important projects can turn these strengths into commercially viable supply, create greater domestic value and support stronger trade relationships. This reflects the role of critical minerals as long-term national assets that create strategic value extending beyond the immediate returns of individual projects.

The government will continue to de-risk and invest in the critical minerals project pipeline. This support helps maintain a sufficient stock of investment-ready projects and strengthens our role as a reliable supplier. Government support will help build the industrial base needed to support future processing, refining and downstream opportunities under the Future Made in Australia agenda.

Building a resilient critical minerals sector also strengthens Australia's defence and industrial capability and complements the objectives of the [National Defence Strategy](#) and [Defence Industry Development Strategy](#).

Read [case studies](#) that demonstrate how government policies and initiatives are supporting the development of strategically important critical minerals projects.

Success outcomes

- A strong pipeline of projects progressing through development stages to final investment decision.
- More domestic processing and refining, increasing value captured onshore.
- Strong innovation that translates into Australian intellectual property developed, protected, commercialised, and applied domestically.

Areas of action to nurture our critical minerals pipeline

The Australian Government understands that the critical minerals sector needs active, targeted and proportionate support across the life cycle of exploring, extracting and processing to achieve the 2030 vision of a growing sector.

Unlocking critical minerals through precompetitive geoscience

Building a globally competitive critical minerals sector begins with discovery, and much of Australia is still underexplored. Improving our understanding of the nation's geology through pre-exploration and exploration activities is an important step to support future critical minerals projects.

Resourcing Australia's prosperity

High-quality precompetitive geoscience data is a key enabler to exploration, investment and future project development. Geoscience Australia's \$3.4 billion [Resourcing Australia's Prosperity initiative \(RAPi\)](#) is delivering precompetitive geoscience data that reduces exploration risk and stimulates targeted investment in prospective regions, reducing the gap between resource identification and production.

RAPi supports better decision making across the resources pipeline, from discovery to development. Over the next 3 decades, RAPi will continue to stimulate exploration and accelerate discovery and development of Australia's critical minerals and other resources. Particularly for underexplored regions where gaps in precompetitive geoscience data and information have historically constrained investment.

Continued investment and targeted support for exploration will be important to support future discoveries and maintain a strong pipeline of critical minerals projects.

Leveraging our national innovation network to de-risk projects

Innovation is critical to move projects from early development through piloting, feasibility and commercial production. Targeted research and technology development can reduce technical risk, lower costs, improve environmental performance and shorten development timelines. This helps Australian firms compete in fast moving global markets.

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency provides financial support to advanced, lower-emissions approaches to critical minerals processing, helping companies test new technologies at scale, reduce technical risk and build pathways towards commercial application.

Australian Government science agencies, universities and industry research centres are also supporting technology to reduce the technical and commercial barriers to commercialise early-stage critical minerals projects. The government is focusing investment on research and development (R&D) to improve process efficiency and reduce costs.

Geoscience Australia, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) provide technical expertise that supports project development. This is helping proponents navigate technical challenges, reduce risk and progress projects towards investment decisions and commercial outcomes. These agencies bring proven real-world scientific and technical capability that is highly valued by industry in Australia and internationally.

These science agencies have developed significant intellectual property and technical expertise that can assist Australian companies to commercialise value-adding processing routes for products such as high purity silica, high purity alumina, tungsten, and rare earths including metallisation. CSIRO and ANSTO provide skills and capabilities arising from decades of engagement with the Australian mining and mineral processing industry. Both organisations have a long track record of process co-development and providing flowsheet design and piloting services. ANSTO has

strengths in rare earth circuit designs and has been a cornerstone of the success of several Australian companies.

Australian intellectual property is an important economic asset turning research and technical capability into commercial outcomes. Developing, protecting and commercialising Australian intellectual property reduces technology risk to enable resilient and globally competitive businesses. It also creates significant additional value in global supply chains through licensing, partnerships and services.

The Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program provides funding for industry-led collaborative research partnerships to improve the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of Australian industries. In 2026, the Critical Metals for Critical Industries (CMCI) CRC was awarded \$53 million over 10 years under the CRC Program to accelerate the development and commercialisation of new critical metals refining technologies. This will include research efforts to:

- identify and prioritise Australia's best critical metal opportunities
- develop and pilot next generation refining and recovery technologies
- accelerate commercialisation and workforce capability development.

In parallel to these efforts, the government is more broadly considering reforms to Australia's R&D system which will contribute to enabling innovation in the critical minerals sector. This is informed by the [Ambitious Australia report](#) and will be supported by advice from the National Resilience and Science Council.

Financial support to de-risk strategic projects

Directed financial support is available to strategic critical minerals projects to help address barriers, reduce risks, and ultimately progress towards final investment decision. This includes where capital is constrained by scale, risk or market conditions.

Support is delivered through a range of mechanisms and special investment vehicles, including:

- Export Finance Australia
- the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility
- the National Reconstruction Fund Corporation
- the Clean Energy Finance Corporation
- Indigenous Business Australia.

These mechanisms advance Australia's shared economic objectives with our partners and complement our joint efforts to build secure and resilient critical minerals supply chains. They reduce vulnerabilities to supply disruptions and strengthen the long term availability of critical inputs for strategic industries.

Export Finance Australia

Export Finance Australia (EFA) is Australia's export credit agency which supports Australian businesses to expand globally. It also administers the Australian Government's [Critical Minerals Facility](#) (CMF). EFA provides finance on its

Commercial Account to commercially viable critical minerals projects within Australia and abroad. Support via the CMF is designed to crowd-in private finance and buyers from international partners, helping to diversify global supply chains and meet demand. As of June 2026, EFA has approximately \$3.1 billion in funding that has been committed to 5 major critical minerals projects across Australia.

The Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility

The Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) is a government financier, providing concessional loans for the development of infrastructure projects in Northern Australia and the Australian Indian Ocean Territories. NAIF continues to play an important role in supporting the growth of the critical minerals sector in northern Australia.

NAIF provides finance to support projects that deliver public benefit in northern Australia, creating jobs, economic growth, opportunities for local suppliers and supporting First Nations outcomes.

As at 30 June 2026, NAIF has committed up to \$835 million to support 5 critical minerals projects in Northern Australia.² This includes investments made through the expanded \$500 million funding allocation earmarked in 2023 under the NAIF Investment Mandate for projects that advance the Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030.

The National Reconstruction Fund Corporation

The National Reconstruction Fund Corporation (NRFC) can support critical minerals projects through its broader mandate to strengthen priority sectors of the economy including value adding in resources and renewable and low emission technologies. Through debt, equity and guarantee investments, NRFC aims to crowd-in private capital, improve supply chain resilience and support projects that expand Australia's capability in value adding stages of production. As of July 2026, NRFC has announced \$325 million in investments to critical minerals projects.

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) invests in the latest technologies to generate, store, manage and transmit clean energy. This includes:

- investing in mining technology and industrial decarbonisation to support Australia's transition to lower emissions
- supporting critical mineral supply chains
- addressing financing gaps
- mobilising private investment in projects that contribute towards decarbonising the economy.

Since inception to June 2026, the CEFC has made investment commitments of more than \$300 million to support Australia's emerging critical mineral supply chains and build further momentum in the sector.

² HPA First Project; Nolans Rare Earths Project; Thunderbird Mineral Sands Project; PLS P680 Expansion Project; Coburn Heavy Mineral Sands Project.

Indigenous Business Australia

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) is a Commonwealth Corporate Entity that assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to build economic independence and wealth. Over the next 5 years of IBA's Towards 2030 Strategy, it aims to mobilise between \$5 billion to \$7 billion to advance the commercial and economic interests of Indigenous peoples. IBA considers mining and critical minerals as one of its priority sectors and an area that represents significant emerging opportunities for First Nations peoples.

IBA Investments is a financial investor, that co-invests at a minority level with Indigenous entrepreneurs and corporations to grow viable operating businesses and projects that have reached the final investment decision stage. IBA Investments can invest or lend funds to larger projects and works together with the Commonwealth Special Investment Vehicles.

Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve

The Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve (CMSR) is a tool to strengthen diversified critical minerals supply chains and support the development of strategically important critical minerals projects. The CMSR supports strategically significant projects where financing is constrained by market manipulation, price distortions or supply chain risks. It is designed to unlock investment, link diversified supply and reinforce Australia's position as a trusted and reliable supplier of critical minerals to global markets. Through Export Finance Australia, the CMSR expands the range of support available beyond traditional debt and equity financing. It can:

- enter into offtake agreements
- trade forward offtake contracts
- aggregate demand and supply
- undertake selective stockpiling
- establish contracts-for-difference.

These tools improve commercial certainty, help connect Australian supply with global demand, and provide greater flexibility to respond to changing market conditions. They increase Australia's ability to coordinate financing approaches with international partners and public financing institutions to develop strategically important projects and build diversified supply chains.

Support is tailored to the circumstances of individual projects and mineral markets, enabling intervention where it can have the greatest strategic impact. The CMSR's current focus minerals are antimony, gallium and rare earth elements. By reducing risk and improving pathways to investment, production and market access, the CMSR helps bring new supply online, strengthen supply chain resilience and support the long-term growth of Australia's critical minerals sector.

Market-enabling supports to advance critical minerals processing in Australia

The government is also improving the investment environment for critical minerals projects and strengthening the commercial case for processing and refining in Australia.

The Investor Front Door

The Australian Government's [Investor Front Door](#) streamlines how investors and business interact with the government. Government-selected projects receive dedicated support to navigate approvals processes and connect with suitable government financing opportunities. Projects are selected based on public [eligibility and assessment criteria](#), which include alignment with Australian Government strategic priorities. Other projects may also receive support with their regulatory and public financing needs.

This will make it simpler to invest in Australia and attract more global and domestic capital into critical minerals projects. Project proponents that are interested in the Investor Front Door, including information on how to apply for support, can visit www.investorfrontdoor.gov.au.

Australia wants to incentivise first movers to produce processed critical minerals. The government is providing support that improves project economics and provides a more competitive return on investment for activities beyond traditional upstream production.

Critical Minerals Production Tax Incentive

Under a Future Made in Australia, the government is providing broad-based support across Australia's critical minerals with a 10% production tax credit, at an estimated cost of \$17.5 billion from 2027–28 to 2040–41.

The Critical Minerals Production Tax Incentive is the government's flagship policy to move Australia towards undertaking more separation, refining and smelting onshore. This incentive aims to improve project economics, help attract investment into value-adding activities and strengthen Australia's position further along critical minerals supply chains. By producing high-purity, value-added chemicals and metals, Australia can capture the full economic and strategic value of our mineral endowments.

For example, Australia's rare earths resources are largely exported as concentrates. Expanding domestic refining capability to produce mixed rare earth carbonate and separated rare earth oxides can increase the value captured from Australian resources, improve resilience to trade and market disruptions, and support partners seeking more secure and trusted sources of supply.

This helps bolster our resilience to trade and market disruptions and support our partners who are seeking more secure and trusted sources of supply. However, tax incentives and broader innovation support will not address all market gaps.

The incentive will commence on 1 July 2027 and will be available to eligible companies until 30 June 2040 for up to 10 years per project.

2. Attracting investment and building international partnerships

Australia is strengthening its alignment with our partners across demand, investment and supply chains to support more secure and resilient global markets.

Why action is needed

International demand for critical minerals is growing as countries seek to strengthen their national security, economic resilience and enhance defence capabilities, diversify supply chains and accelerate the energy transition. Australia has significant resource endowments, world-class mining expertise and a strong reputation as a trusted and reliable trading partner. We have already made significant progress in working with our partners to translate shared commitments into action.

Realising this opportunity will require deeper collaboration with international partners. While Australia is a major producer of many critical minerals, processing and manufacturing remain concentrated in a small number of economies. Building more diverse and resilient supply chains will require coordinated action between governments and industry to mobilise investment, secure market access and bring new projects online.

International partnerships and foreign investment are central to this effort. Investment helps drive project development, create skilled jobs and connect Australian producers to global markets. It also helps deliver the long-term offtake arrangements, financing and commercial partnerships needed to support new projects and expand processing capability.

Australia does not need to participate in every stage of the value chain to succeed. Instead, we will build on our strengths in mining while expanding our processing capability and integrating with the value chains of our partners. This helps Australia capture greater value from its resources, strengthen supply chain resilience and cement our role in the industries of the future.

Success outcomes

- Increased demand and foreign investment for Australian critical minerals.
- More diverse and resilient supply chains that reduce exposure to concentration, market distortion and strategic vulnerabilities.



PLS is a leading lithium producer with operations, projects and partnerships across Australia, Brazil and South Korea. The Pilgangoora Operation in Western Australia is PLS's flagship hard rock lithium asset. Supplied: PLS Group

Areas of actions for international engagement

A core focus of Australia's strategy is working with our international partners and public financing institutions to coordinate and improve access to offtake, equity and finance. This includes streamlining supports and joint financing arrangements for eligible critical minerals projects. Since 2023, the Australian Government has agreed or joined more than a dozen trade agreements and international partnerships to enable more diversified access to global markets for exporters, producers and investors (for more information, see Appendix A: International partnerships).

International diplomacy and cooperation

International partnerships and foreign investment are central elements of Australia's strategy given our critical minerals are deeply connected to global markets and supply chains.

The government will continue to strengthen Australia's position as a trusted and reliable partner. This includes concerted engagement with our international network to build more secure, resilient and diversified critical minerals supply chains. Australia exports critical minerals to 74 countries³ and engages internationally to connect Australian projects with global markets, investors and end users.

Types of international partnerships

Australia's international engagement on critical minerals includes:

- bilateral partnerships
- multilateral coordination
- commercial facilitation and investment.

The government is strengthening Australia's position in global critical minerals supply chains and driving project development at scale. We are:

- leveraging existing bilateral partnerships to mobilise investment and offtake into Australian projects
- deepening technical collaboration with our international partners through R&D across the value chain
- shaping market rules, norms and global approaches to critical minerals by participating in international forums and initiatives
- connecting Australian projects with investors and offtake opportunities in priority markets
- supporting coordinated financing approaches, including joint financing and risk-sharing to improve access to capital for Australian projects.

Through our partnerships, Australia advocates for more transparent, diverse, and reliable critical minerals markets. We also work to expand market access, create new sources of demand, advance investment opportunities, promote research collaboration, high-standards production and supply chain coordination.

The Australian Government continues to deepen partnerships with our partners and attract investment that supports sector growth, strengthens supply chain resilience and creates stronger links across the value chain.

The long-term sustainability of Australia's critical minerals sector depends on projects attracting investment and securing access to offtake, equity and financing arrangements across the value chain. This includes offshore intermediaries and end users.

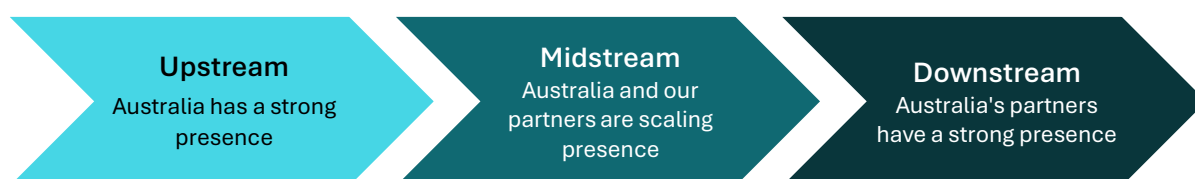
³ Based on 2024 international trade data and departmental analysis of Australian critical minerals exports. The estimate excludes very small trade flows, scrap trade, selected broad commodity classifications and non-sovereign territories to better reflect meaningful export destinations.

Expanding Australia's presence along the value chain

To build on Australia's strong and established position as a trusted supplier of high quality resources, we are working with international partners and industry to advance opportunities for Australia's critical mineral sector across the different parts of the value chain.

Through our international partnerships, we can better align Australian production and processing with partner demand, investment and industrial capability. This includes linking Australia's upstream minerals and midstream capabilities with the needs of partners. This allows Australia to concentrate on the stages of processing where we can have a comparative advantage.

Figure 4: Overview of current international critical minerals supply chains



This approach helps connect our existing upstream production and emerging midstream capabilities to established downstream markets, strengthening our role in diversified global supply chains. By leveraging our respective strengths across the value chain, Australia can focus on areas where we have the greatest opportunity to compete and add value.

Figure 5: Stages and common processes in the critical minerals value chain

Upstream	Midstream	Downstream
exploration	separation	batteries and energy storage
mining	refining	magnets and advanced materials
beneficiation	chemical conversion	electronics and communications
n/a	metallisation	electric vehicles and transport
n/a	n/a	defence and aerospace

This figure is illustrative and does not represent the value chain for any single critical mineral. Activities shown are common examples only and may not apply to all commodities.

Agencies and their role in securing investment from our partners

Foreign investment has been and will continue to be central to Australia's prosperity. It helps drive economic growth, create skilled jobs, facilitate access to international markets and enhance productivity. Foreign direct investment is essential to achieving the government's vision for the sector, particularly where it contributes to the development of sovereign capability, strengthens supply chain resilience, and aligns with Australia's national security and interests.

The Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) work to advance Australia's critical minerals interests through international partnerships and diplomatic engagement.

This includes supporting the conditions for long term collaboration across critical minerals value chains. Australia's ability to work constructively with a broad range of partners helps align policy, investment and industrial priorities across critical minerals value chains, which supports beneficial outcomes for Australia and our partners.

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) supports government objectives by facilitating commercial connections between Australian critical minerals companies and international buyers and investors. Through its global network, Austrade connects prospective offtakers, investors and downstream partners with Australian project proponents across mining, processing, refining and broader value chain development. Austrade's business missions, market briefings and targeted commercial facilitation help translate investor interest into practical engagement with Australian companies.

Commercial facilitation and investment

Converting international interest into investment, offtake and commercial partnerships is critical to growing Australia's critical minerals sector. The Australian Government is connecting investors and end-users to strengthen commercial links across the value chain. This connects projects with market opportunities, and support investment in mining, processing and refining activities.

Foreign investment framework

Attracting investment is only one part of Australia's approach to growing the nation's critical minerals sector. Maintaining a transparent and predictable foreign investment framework is also important to ensuring investment supports Australia's long term economic, national interest and national security objectives.

The Foreign Investment Review Board advises the Treasurer in accordance with the *Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975*. The Act requires foreign investors to notify the Treasurer of proposed foreign investments, including in relation to critical minerals, which meet certain criteria, and enables investors to voluntarily notify certain investments, or seek an exemption from notification requirements. The Treasurer has the power to prohibit these investments, or apply conditions to the way they are implemented, to ensure they will not be contrary to the national interest or national security, as the case requires.

Critical Minerals Prospectus

Austrade publishes and maintains the [Australian Critical Minerals Prospectus](#). The prospectus builds on data available through Australia's geoscience agencies and supports efforts to attract offtake and investment into Australia's critical minerals sector by showcasing investment ready opportunities across the value chain.

The prospectus' recent inclusion of the growing pipeline of midstream projects reflects Australia's increasing capability in processing and refining and the opportunity to capture greater value across the supply chain. In addition, trade delegations

showcasing Australian projects to potential international partners and investors provide opportunities to deepen cooperation on resilient critical minerals supply chains.

While the prospectus is a key entry point for investors, it is not exhaustive. Austrade can also facilitate tailored introductions to additional opportunities aligned with investor requirements, helping international partners navigate Australia's expanding project pipeline, including its growing midstream processing capability.

Export-credit agencies and project finance

Developing critical minerals projects may require coordinated financing from governments through export credit agencies or other finance institutions. These organisations can play an important role in mobilising capital, reducing risk and supporting project viability, particularly where market volatility, financing constraints or other market distortions affect investment decisions.

Export credit agencies are increasingly working together to support the development of more diverse and resilient critical minerals supply chains. In Australia, EFA complements these efforts by providing finance and risk-sharing mechanisms that help connect Australian projects with international demand, investment and offtake opportunities. Through instruments such as the Critical Minerals Facility and Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve, EFA works alongside domestic and international financing partners, including partner export-credit agencies, to support strategically significant projects and strengthen supply chain resilience.

3. First Nations engagement and benefit sharing

We support genuine engagement and partnership with First Nations communities that advances economic empowerment, creates lasting economic security of First Nations peoples and communities, and respects their land and water rights and interests.

Why action is needed

The Australian Government acknowledges and respects the enduring relationship First Nations peoples and communities have with Country including Land, Water, Sea and Air Country. First Nations peoples are custodians and stewards of Country. Their cultural authority, Traditional Knowledge and continuing obligations to care for Country are central to sustainable land, water and environmental management. The government recognises the significance of First Nations cultural heritage, knowledge and practices.

Critical minerals projects depend on land, water, infrastructure and community trust. They will only succeed long term if they respect First Nations rights, interests and responsibilities to Country. Valuing First Nations land and water rights, cultural heritage and Traditional Knowledge, and engaging early and genuinely with First Nations communities, is essential to the sustainable growth of Australia's critical minerals sector.



Jirrbal traditional owner Brad Go-Sam pointing out features in the Silver Valley, North Queensland, a highly prospective area for critical minerals being re-evaluated by the Geological Survey of Queensland. Used with permission. Supplied: University of Queensland. Photo by John Burton

Across Australia, First Nations peoples and communities play a central role in caring for the lands and waters that support resource development. More than 60% of Australian resources projects, including exploration and extraction, operate on land covered by a native title claim or determination (Productivity Commission 2020). In the Northern Territory in particular, approximately 50% of the landmass is freehold Aboriginal land where Traditional Owners have the right to refuse consent or ‘veto’ any land access and land use proposals.

First Nations interests extend beyond native title and legislated land rights. Around 25% of Australia’s landmass is under some form of Indigenous management or co-management (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2024). These interests reflect cultural and spiritual obligations to care for Country, regardless of land tenure.

The growth of Australia’s critical minerals sector creates an opportunity to advance First Nations economic self-determination. This requires engaging with First Nations peoples as decision-makers, partners and potential co-investors from the earliest stages of project development. The Australian Government’s First Nations Economic Partnership reflects this priority.

Buyers, investors and partners are increasingly interested in whether projects have durable community support and benefit sharing arrangements. Governments and industry share responsibility for meaningful engagement, agreement making, partnership and benefit sharing with First Nations communities. While royalties, employment and procurement remain important, they are not enough. Economic participation should include equity, co-ownership, commercial partnerships, and enable First Nations-led enterprises to capture value across the supply chain. This can build enduring economic capability, strengthen community-controlled development and support intergenerational prosperity.

Genuine partnerships improve project outcomes. Meaningful and culturally safe engagement with Traditional Owners is best practice and essential to achieving outcomes that reflect community priorities, cultural authority and long-term aspirations. Early, culturally safe engagement can support meaningful negotiations under land rights legislation and the *Native Title Act 1993* (Native Title Act). Partnership can reduce disputes, improve project design and strengthen investor confidence. But engagement must not be treated as a compliance step. It must be sustained through transparent decision-making, clear obligations and accountability for agreed outcomes.

Australia’s critical minerals sector will be stronger if First Nations peoples share in its decisions, ownership and benefits. Respect for Country, cultural authority and economic self-determination is not separate from project success. It is central to it. This can improve outcomes for First Nations communities and support meaningful progress against targets and socioeconomic outcomes under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap.

Success outcomes

- First Nations communities have the information and expertise to fully participate in critical minerals opportunities.
- Growth of the critical minerals sector supports economic self-determination and wealth creation for First Nations communities.

Areas of action to support First Nations engagement and benefit sharing

Economic empowerment and benefit sharing

The Australian Government will continue to partner with First Nations peoples, communities, organisations and enterprises to drive economic empowerment as a key priority. The government has continued to pursue practical reforms through Closing the Gap and through the First Nations Economic Partnership. This approach reflects the principle that First Nations peoples should be empowered to determine, drive and own the desired outcomes, alongside government.

The government will support the growth of a critical minerals sector that creates opportunities for First Nations peoples and communities to pursue their self-determined goals. We will do this by continuing to encourage genuine partnership and early engagement by proponents that recognises Traditional Owners as equal decision-makers and partners. For example, the NAIF mandates all funded projects to have a strategy that sets out objectives for First Nations participation, procurement and employment that considers the needs of the First Nations population in the region of the proposed project. The resources sector is already partnering with communities through jobs with local training and internships, local business and procurement opportunities, community shares and equity stakes in projects, and community grants.

These opportunities depend on strong, early and ongoing partnerships and engagement between industry, governments and First Nations peoples, communities and their representative organisations. Meaningful engagement can support Traditional Owners to capture a fair share of project benefits. This can contribute to improved employment, income, asset building and their self-determined community goals.

The government will use the First Nations Economic Partnership to advance greater economic agency for First Nations peoples, communities and organisations. The partnership will also support productivity and economic growth by exploring opportunities to leverage land and Native Title rights and interests, boost skills and education, support job creation and back First Nations businesses. The government is investing \$16.9 million over 5 years (2025 to 2030) through the partnership.

The partnership will undertake a consultation process in the second half of 2026 to develop a First Nations Economic Framework which will set out the partnership's comprehensive vision of First Nations economic empowerment. This will ensure the diverse knowledge, skills and lived experience of First Nations peoples inform economic reforms and help deliver meaningful and lasting outcomes.

From July 2026, the government has committed an additional \$75 million through a new program to support the economic empowerment of Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs). The increased funding will support PBCs to carry out legislative functions, engage with government and industry, and leverage economic opportunities.

The Future Made in Australia Community Benefit Principles include collaborative engagement with and achieving positive outcomes for local communities, including First Nations communities and supporting First Nations communities and Traditional Owners to participate in and share the benefits of the transition to net zero.

Resourcing Australia's Prosperity

The Resourcing Australia's Prosperity initiative (RAPi) will accelerate the discovery and development of Australia's minerals, energy, and groundwater resources by delivering world-leading precompetitive geoscience data and information.

The initiative also supports First Nations economic self-determination through targeted engagement and partnerships with First Nations peoples and local communities, allowing communities to benefit from emerging opportunities in resources development. RAPi includes:

- a First Nations Advisory Group to provide culturally informed advice that supports meaningful partnerships and respectful engagement across all RAPi activities
- co-designed tools, partnerships and work programs alongside First Nations peoples to support responsible management of Land and Sea Country
- informing opportunities for communities and First Nations economic self-determination and decisions affecting them
- building First Nations expertise in data collection to support decisions about land and water resources.

Cultural heritage and environmental protection reforms

Consent, cultural heritage protection, environmental stewardship, and the recognition of Native Title and other land rights and interests are central to responsible critical minerals development.

We will encourage partnership and engagement approaches that:

- demonstrate cultural capability
- build and maintain trust and respect
- occur early to enable First Nations communities to influence project design and long-term outcomes
- provide sufficient time, resourcing and expertise that support free, prior and informed consent and allow Traditional Owners to assess proposals and negotiate on equal footing
- prioritise genuine partnerships and benefit-sharing across all stages of the mining lifecycle.

We are pursuing an ambitious reform agenda to strengthen cultural heritage and environmental protection legislation through reforms to the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). Under the reforms, we are developing a National Environmental Standard for First Nations Engagement and Participation in Decision-Making. The standard is being developed through a co-design process with First Nations peoples. It will set clearer, nationally consistent expectations for early and meaningful engagement with First Nations peoples. It will also provide greater certainty for proponents on engagement requirements under the EPBC Act.

4. Showcase Australia as a world leading, high standard producer at scale

Australia leads sustainable mining practices globally. We are using our credentials to shape sustainable and resilient global markets alongside our partners.

Why Australia advocates for high standard critical minerals markets

Policy settings, consumer behaviours and regulatory safeguards are all drivers for critical minerals to be produced in a safe, sustainable and responsible manner. The Australian Government, as well as state and territory governments, sets high standards for sustainably produced critical minerals. This enables and promotes social licence between communities and project proponents. It also ensures investors and end users can invest with confidence in the sector.

In critical minerals markets, provenance, traceability, emissions performance and supply chain due diligence are influencing what it means to be a competitive and trusted supplier. High standard critical minerals markets are those that are produced under robust frameworks and laws that uphold environmental protections, social responsibility, governance and traceability.

Australia has a world leading framework of policies and legislation that ensure high environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards across our critical minerals projects. These standards extend across the full life cycle of a project, including mine closure and post-mining land use planning. Early consideration of post-mining land uses helps to ensure that environmental, social and economic outcomes are integrated into project design and development, supporting sustainable land stewardship, community expectations and future opportunities for regional development.

Our standards enable us to respond to changing global expectations from investors and ensure our minerals are ethically sourced with transparent supply chains. Our technical standards help protect the value of Australian critical minerals by providing confidence in how minerals are sampled, assayed and verified. Reliable measurement of characteristics such as mineral concentration and product quality supports transparent pricing, offtake agreements and market confidence in Australian supply.

High standards-based markets support demand signals that reward responsible extraction, processing and trade of critical minerals. We are playing an active role in shaping these markets by participating in multilateral fora focused on developing the policy settings needed to support demand for high standard critical minerals.

Circular economy policies are also reshaping expectations around how critical minerals are sourced, processed and reused. These shifts are increasing attention on resource recovery, repurposing, reprocessing and recycling opportunities as part of secure, sustainable and diversified supply chains.

Australia can use its resources, technical expertise and ESG standards to respond to these shifts over time. Greater resource recovery, reprocessing and recycling can

improve resource efficiency, strengthen supply chain resilience and create new opportunities where projects are commercially viable and supported by market demand. This will enhance our sector's reputation as a sustainable, competitive, trusted and high standard supplier.

Success outcomes

- Australia as a key driver in shaping standards-based markets.
- Lower emissions from extraction and processing activities.
- Increased circular economy practices.

Areas of action for high standard production at scale

Concerted action with our international partners

We are working with international partners to shape standards-based markets for critical minerals. Australia is promoting markets that reward:

- responsible extraction and processing
- open and transparent markets
- credible certification
- interoperable traceability systems
- approaches that support more environmentally sustainable supply chains.

The Australian Government has endorsed the [G7 Critical Minerals Action Plan](#) as an outreach partner. The plan looks to develop a roadmap for promoting standards-based markets for critical minerals, increase investment in responsible projects worldwide, and enhance collaboration around innovation.

This will help Australian producers capture value from their ESG credentials and strengthen Australia's position as a leading global supplier of high-standard critical minerals. This is done by ensuring the emerging standards and regulatory approaches are aligned, interoperable and fit for purpose across Australia, giving us better ability to increase our market share in growing international markets.

Strong domestic environmental, sustainability and governance credentials

Australia has some of the world's strongest governance performance indicators, including political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, voice and accountability, rule of law and control of corruption (World Bank 2025). We have robust legislative frameworks that support ethical business practices and good governance and provide avenues to report unethical practices and misconduct.

Export Finance Australia applies internationally recognised frameworks to assess projects and project-related transactions. These frameworks include the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Recommendation of the Council on Common Approaches for Officially Supported Export Credits and Environmental and Social Due Diligence and the Equator Principles. This screening and assessment helps

ensure that projects develop in a socially responsible manner and in line with sound environmental management practices.

Reducing emissions from critical minerals extraction and processing

Much of the demand for Australia's critical minerals is the result of a global effort to achieve net zero. The government's approach to decarbonising the resources sector is set out in the [Resources Sector Plan](#). This forms part of Australia's broader [Net Zero Plan](#) and establishes the pathway for the sector to contribute to economy-wide emissions reduction targets. Under the Resources Sector Plan, emissions from mining and processing are expected to decline over time due to the Safeguard Mechanism and increasing adoption of lower-emissions technologies within the sector.

Sustainability through a circular approach to critical minerals

There is scope to improve the sustainability and productivity of the critical mineral sector through the adoption of circular economy principles. Australia's transition to a circular economy will deliver significant national benefits, including more resilient supply chains, improved material efficiency, and support for new industries and jobs.

Australia's circular economy objectives, outlined under the [National Circular Economy Framework](#), sets a national ambition to:

- double Australia's circularity rate by 2035
- reduce the per capita material footprint by 10%
- lift material productivity by 30%
- safely recover 80% of resources.

Processing and refining activities, including existing smelting operations, generate by-products and residues that contain critical minerals. These are not always recovered under current commercial settings. However, improving recovery and commercialisation of these streams presents a tangible opportunity to strengthen domestic supply, increase resource efficiency, and capture additional value from Australia's mineral endowment. These capabilities underpin high-value industries, strengthen economic resilience and position Australia to capture greater value through the development and commercialisation of processing methods.

Geoscience Australia's Atlas of Australian Re-mining Potential is improving the understanding of resource potential in mine waste, tailings and other secondary resources. This will help identify opportunities to recover additional value from existing operations and support Australia's circular economy objectives.

Australia has shown capability as a leader in developing and implementing more efficient, safer and environmentally friendlier technologies and processes in the resources sector. We will continue to leverage our strengths and translate innovation into commercial outcomes. This includes through the capabilities of our national science agencies, including CSIRO, ANSTO and Geoscience Australia. While Australian innovations expect to deliver more efficient, safer and lower-emissions processes, their value often extends beyond environmental outcomes, to the overall health and economic prosperity of all Australians.

5. Lifting competitiveness through coordinated infrastructure development and efficient regulatory systems

Strategically planned enabling infrastructure and efficient regulatory systems will help our critical minerals sector expand further into domestic and global markets. Targeted action in these areas reduces costs, lowers project risk and contributes to supply chain diversification.

Why coordination is needed to improve our competitiveness

Many of Australia's critical minerals deposits are in regional and remote areas, where higher infrastructure, energy and service costs can affect project viability. As projects move from exploration to production and processing, access to enabling infrastructure, reliable energy and efficient approvals becomes increasingly important to commercial success.

Australia competes globally for investment, customers and projects. To remain competitive, projects need efficient pathways to development, reliable access to infrastructure and energy, and regulatory systems that provide certainty and support timely decision-making. Coordinated action between governments and industry can help lower costs, improve productivity and reduce barriers to investment.

Investment in roads, rail, ports, energy, water, common user facilities and other enabling infrastructure can improve project economics and support commercial-scale development. Better-connected infrastructure networks can also unlock regional opportunities, support local industry development and connect producers to domestic and international markets.

Common-user facilities further improve competitiveness by lowering barriers to entry and reducing the costs of testing, piloting and scaling new projects. Shared facilities can help businesses commercialise new opportunities more quickly while building greater scale and capability across the sector.

Realising these benefits requires coordination across Commonwealth, state and territory governments, industry, and regional communities. Aligning planning, approvals and infrastructure delivery can help ensure investment is directed where it will deliver the greatest economic and productivity benefits.

Efficient and predictable regulatory systems are also important to competitiveness. Investors need confidence that projects can move through approvals processes in a timely manner while maintaining Australia's high environmental standards. Modern, fit-for-purpose regulation can reduce delays, improve certainty and help bring projects into production sooner.

Reliable, affordable and low-emissions energy will become increasingly important as Australia expands domestic processing capability. Energy costs and availability will influence investment decisions, operating costs and the long-term competitiveness of Australian processing and refining industries.

Success outcomes

- Better access to enabling infrastructure, common-user facilities and reliable energy for critical minerals projects.
- Improving efficiency and predictability of national environmental approvals.
- Alignment between Commonwealth, state and territory and governments for developing strategically important projects.

Areas of action to increase competitiveness of the critical minerals sector

Working with states and territories to support development

Strong, coordinated intergovernmental collaboration is essential to building a competitive and productive critical minerals sector. This is particularly the case where policy settings, infrastructure and regional development priorities intersect. We are working with state and territory governments to align these settings and focus effort on the places where coordinated action can unlock the greatest economic and strategic value.

The Australian Government's [Regional Investment Framework](#) guides the approach to regional investment by supporting place-based, locally informed and evidence-based decision-making. It recognises that regions have different strengths and challenges, and that coordinated investment across governments can help regions adapt to economic change and support sustainable industry growth. In regions with known critical minerals endowments, this can help ensure investment reflects local priorities while supporting infrastructure, workforce and industry conditions that strengthen economic resilience and supply chain security.

Common user facilities will help Australia build the scale needed to grow midstream processing capability. We are undertaking feasibility studies with states and territories to investigate opportunities for shared processing infrastructure. When co-located in industrial precincts and supported by enabling infrastructure such as transport, power and ports, these facilities can attract complementary industries, reduce costs and improve efficiency. They can also support circular economy activities, including the recycling and reprocessing of waste and mining by-products. This creates more opportunities to expand domestic processing capability, improve productivity and strengthen the competitiveness of Australia's critical minerals sector. These studies provide a practical pathway to test where shared infrastructure can best address industry needs, support regional strengths and build future processing capacity.

Improving the efficiency of national regulatory systems

Critical minerals exploration, mining and closure regulatory systems are the responsibility of Australia's states and territories. The Commonwealth provides national leadership to the sector, and its prime regulatory intersection with the states and territories is in environmental regulation. The EPBC Act comes into force for nationally significant critical minerals mining activities.

Australia needs regulatory systems that support investment while maintaining strong environmental standards. Efficient, predictable and robust approvals processes provide greater confidence for investors to commit capital to large-scale projects. They help ensure strategically important critical minerals projects progress in a way that meets community expectations and provides market confidence.

The government is implementing the EPBC Act reforms to streamline approvals and deliver stronger environmental protection, more efficient and robust project assessments, and greater accountability and transparency in decision-making. These reforms will help reduce unnecessary duplication and improve the way governments assess and manage environmental impacts.

Government is providing more resources to fast-track approvals with states and territories, including in priority areas like critical minerals. This includes funding for new and updated bilateral agreements, and cross-government agreements to deliver landscape scale approaches, strategic assessments and bioregional plans that balance development and environment protection.



Renascor purified spherical graphite demonstration facility in Adelaide, South Australia. Supplied: Renascor

Improving energy reliability and reducing energy costs

Reliable, affordable and low-emissions energy will shape Australia's ability to grow critical minerals processing and refining. Midstream activities are commonly energy-intensive, and energy costs can materially affect project economics, investment decisions and thereby, our international competitiveness.

Australia has abundant renewable energy resources, with our renewable electricity prices expected to be globally competitive (CSIRO 2023). As we further develop our midstream processing capabilities, access to affordable and reliable energy will become an important factor in determining the sector's competitiveness.

The government is working with states and territories through the National Energy Transformation Partnership to support an orderly transition to a reliable, affordable and low-emissions energy system while maintaining energy security. Alongside this, the government is progressing coordinated electricity market reform and grid investment to support a more reliable, affordable and low-emissions energy system as Australia transitions to net zero.

The Capacity Investment Scheme aims to deliver an additional 40 GW of renewable generation and clean dispatchable capacity by 2030, including 26 GW of renewable generation and 14 GW of dispatchable capacity. This will support energy reliability as demand grows and ageing coal-fired generation exits the system.

The Future Gas Strategy and Domestic Gas Reservation Scheme will also support energy security and affordability by helping ensure adequate domestic gas supply. This complements broader electricity market reforms, to support reliable and competitive energy supply for energy-intensive industries, including critical minerals processing and refining.

Rewiring the Nation will also help connect low-cost renewable energy to households, businesses and industrial users. These initiatives can reduce energy supply risks, support lower-emissions processing and improve the competitiveness of Australian critical minerals projects. Over time, better access to reliable and affordable clean energy can strengthen our competitiveness and position as a trusted supplier of critical minerals.

Action on common user processing facilities

The Australian Government is working with states and territories to support feasibility studies that examine how common user facilities can improve productivity and help projects move through testing, piloting and scale-up more efficiently.

The government has also built on Australia's science capability, including ANSTO's new [Lucas Heights facilities](#) for processing clay-hosted rare earth deposits and producing high-purity quartz. These facilities complement broader measures in this focus area by improving access to specialised infrastructure and technical expertise that can reduce development risks and strengthen Australia's processing competitiveness.

6. Growing a skilled workforce

We will build the skilled, diverse and adaptable workforce needed to grow Australia's critical minerals sector.

Why Australia needs a larger, and more skilled workforce

The critical minerals sector offers opportunities for people at all stages of their career and across job types. Australia's mining sector employs more than 310,000 people (ABS 2026), and our resources and energy sector contribute around 11% of our GDP (Office of the Chief Economist 2025).

To fully unlock the natural endowments of our critical minerals, Australia must harness and expand its workforce. The mining sector is facing persistent skills shortages across engineering, technical and regional roles. At the same time, demand for higher-education aligned occupations is growing as the sector shifts towards critical minerals, automation, electrification and low-emissions operations (AUSMASA, 2026).

According to Jobs and Skills Australia, many jurisdictions have shortages across key professions, including:

- mining engineers
- chemical, geotechnical, materials engineers
- geologists
- hydrogeologists
- metallurgists.

In addition to shortages of specialised technical skills, workforce challenges for the sector are driven by increasing global competition for talent and the need to scale Australia's expertise, particularly in processing and refining critical minerals.

The sector must also attract more young people and underrepresented groups, adapt to changing technology requirements and address workforce constraints in regional and remote areas.

Despite these challenges, Australia does have notable, world-leading expertise that we must build on. Our task is to build the depth of capability behind these leaders and invest in the pipeline of young people needed to sustain and scale-up that capability. In areas such as refining and hydrometallurgy, Australia has internationally recognised, world-leading scientists and researchers whose expertise is already developing new technologies and processing routes. However, at this time, this expertise is concentrated in a relatively small number of people and institutions.

The Mining and Automotive Skills Alliance (AUSMASA) Joint Skills Council (JSC) has identified acute and emerging workforce gaps, while the Manufacturing Industry Skills Alliance (MISA) JSC highlighted ongoing difficulties attracting apprentices and replacing an ageing workforce. These workforce challenges constrain the sector's ability to build capability, increase productivity and scale critical minerals extraction, processing and manufacturing activities.

Future critical minerals projects will be increasingly technology-intensive, with greater electrification, automation and use of artificial intelligence. There is a greater need for skills to fill these increasingly AI-augmented roles. The current mining workforce faces significant skills challenges to meet this challenge, with acute shortfalls among new entrants, particularly for roles requiring programming, installation, mathematics, and troubleshooting (AUSMASA, 2026). This reflects the increasing diagnostic demands of modern mining equipment, especially for autonomous and remote operations. We are at an important juncture for Australia to expand the pool of highly skilled workers to address these changes and increase productivity and worker safety.

Women only make up 23% of the mining workforce in Australia (Workforce Gender Equality Agency 2024). Women's participation in the sector can be affected by factors including remote locations, cultures that are not inclusive, job security, and a lack of flexible working options such as part-time and job-sharing arrangements. Addressing these barriers will be critical to attracting and retaining the workforce needed to support the sector's future growth.

The sector is also exposed to foreign interference risks, including through its workforce. Concentrated supply chains, complex markets and the evolving global industry can increase the risk of inappropriate access to commercial, technological or strategic information. Strengthening the workforce's resilience to these risks helps protect sensitive information, including intellectual property, maintain investor confidence and support the sector's growth.

Success outcomes

- More workers with the skills needed for critical minerals processing and refining.
- Greater diversity and inclusivity in workplaces.



Alpha HPA process engineer at the HPA First Facility in Gladstone, Queensland. Supplied: Alpha HPA

Actions to grow a capable and efficient workforce

Critical commercialisation and capability enhancement

We will strengthen research, innovation and commercialisation partnerships to build domestic capability in critical minerals processing. We will do this by working with industry, research institutions and government agencies to develop new pathways to commercialisation and supporting the growth of Australia's domestic processing capabilities.

Through the government's Trailblazer Universities Program investment, the [Resources Technology and Critical Minerals Trailblazer](#) is building new research capabilities to drive commercialisation in the resources and critical minerals industries across Australia.

Skills

We are working through national skills and training systems to reduce workforce gaps and build the capability needed for critical minerals projects in Australia. This includes initiatives such as the Australian Apprenticeships Incentive System and [Jobs and Skills Councils](#). These initiatives complement Australia's National Skills Agreement 2024–2028, which provides up to \$12.6 billion to expand and transform access to the vocational education and training (VET) sector. This supports training providers to deliver quality education and training and implement reforms that address critical skills needs.

The government will use industry workforce planning to target the skills needed to scale domestic capability. We will also draw on analysis from Jobs and Skills Australia's (JSA), and the Jobs and Skills Councils, including the AUSMASA and the MISA to better understand current and future workforce demands.

The government is investing in targeted programs to build the workforce needed for the energy transition and industries, supported by the investment and delivery architecture of the Future Made in Australia agenda, including:

- \$626.9 million Key Apprenticeship Program – an expansion of the New Energy Apprenticeships Program, designed to encourage workforce growth and skills development in priority energy sectors by providing eligible clean energy apprentices and their employers with up to \$15,000 in financial assistance per apprenticeship.
- \$54.5 million Building Women's Careers Program – this funds 20 partnership projects to support women's access to flexible, safe and inclusive training and employment opportunities across 4 key male dominated industries of construction, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, and digital and technology which will support the broader Future Made in Australia skilled workforce agenda.
- \$31 million to Mobile TAFE – this meets local skills needs for remote First Nations communities. This could include training in resources, infrastructure and renewable energy, which are foundational to workforce needs in remote regions where critical minerals projects operate.

We will expand access to training that supports priority sectors. The government has made Free TAFE a permanent feature of the national VET system, investing over \$1.6 billion to 2034–35 to support at least 100,000 places every year from 2027, underpinned by the *Free TAFE Act 2025*.

These training pathways support domestic capability, the net zero transformation and Australia's technology and digital capability. They will help build and contribute to the workforce needed for midstream processing and downstream manufacturing in critical minerals supply chains.

In higher education, the government has invested in developing a pipeline of researchers skilled in university-industry collaboration under the Increase Workforce Mobility initiative. This includes funding for the National Industry PhD Program and CSIRO's Industry PhD Program to add 1,800 Industry PhDs by 2032.

National Industry PhD Program projects align with government priority areas, including the National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) priority to value-add in resources. This research specialisation supports ongoing investment in the commercialisation of university research and the creation of a skilled research workforce.

These initiatives are investing in people and places to build skilled workforces, capability for critical minerals processing, and secure well-paid jobs that support economic resilience. These efforts aim to boost productivity by supporting workforce capability and ensuring we have the right skills in place as we accelerate technology adoption and improve workplace participation.

Inclusive workplaces

Support for inclusive, safe and flexible workplaces will ensure the critical minerals sector can attract and retain the workforce it needs. Expanding participation broadens the available labour pool, helps address skills shortages and improves productivity. This is particularly important for the critical minerals sector as demand for skilled workers continues to grow.

The Community Benefit Principles, established under the *Future Made in Australia Act 2024*, will help ensure public investment, and the private investment it attracts, delivers benefits to local communities, workers and businesses. These principles encourage investment that creates safe, secure and well-paid jobs, develops skilled workforces through training and skills development, and expands opportunities for workforce participation.

We will improve pathways into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and mining-related careers. This will allow more Australians to access the opportunities created by the growth of the critical minerals sector. The government's Pathway to Diversity in STEM Review identified ways to better address gender inequities and improve pathways into the opportunities and rewards of mining careers. The government remains committed to improving opportunities for all Australians to access and benefit from well-paid jobs in STEM.

We will continue to prioritise safe and respectful workplaces. The Enough is Enough Report and the Australian Human Rights Commission's Respect@Work Report highlighted unacceptable workplace behaviour and the need for more inclusive workplaces for women. All 55 recommendations have been actioned and are being

implemented through strengthened workplace laws, a positive duty on employers, enhanced regulatory oversight, and industry measures to improve workplace culture and safety.

We will advance gender equality through Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality. In the critical minerals sector, gender equality and First Nations engagement and participation will form part of grant assessment criteria where appropriate. This approach signals the importance of inclusive workforce practices and supports improved data collection to track progress over time.

ANSTO's new pilot-scale rare earth processing facility.
Supplied: ANSTO



The pathway to the successful delivery of the strategy

The Australian Government will deliver this strategy through coordinated action at the national level. We will drive the national development and delivery of coordinated policies, programs and international engagements to deliver the strategy. This concerted action will help grow Australia's critical minerals sector to achieve the strategy's vision for the sector.

The strategy will align with key government priorities:

- Artificial intelligence: [National AI Plan 2025](#)
- First Nations: [Closing the Gap](#), [First Nation's Economic Partnership](#), [First Nations Clean Energy Strategy](#)
- Foreign and trade policy: [Australia's Free Trade Agreements](#), [Bilateral Partnerships](#), participation in [International Organisations](#), [Regional Architecture](#), and [Invested: Australia's Southeast Asia Economic Strategy to 2040](#)
- Foreign investment policy: [Australia's Foreign Investment Framework](#)
- Industry policy: [Future Made in Australia](#)
- National security policy: [Defence Industry Development Strategy](#), [National Defence Strategy](#)
- National Skills Agreement: [National Skills Agreement 2024–2028](#)
- Net zero and clean energy policy: [Australia's Net Zero Plan](#), [Resources Sector Plan](#), [Industry Sector Plan](#), [National Electric Vehicle Strategy](#), [National Hydrogen Strategy](#), [National Battery Strategy](#)
- Regional policy: [Regional Investment Framework](#)

Delivering the updated strategy will require collaboration with state and territory governments. The government will also continue to work closely with critical minerals project proponents, peak bodies, financiers, original equipment manufacturers and service providers to design, implement and monitor the effectiveness of policy interventions.

The Critical Minerals Office (CMO) in the Department of Industry, Science and Resources provides national policy and strategic advice, and facilitation services to develop the sector. It works with the states and territories to deliver the strategy. The CMO:

- develops policy and supports regulatory settings that enable investment and unlock processing and refining opportunities
- promotes investment and identifies opportunities to build diversified and secure global supply chains, in partnership with Austrade and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- supports research and development, including by Geoscience Australia, CSIRO and ANSTO.

Progress towards achieving the objectives of the strategy will be reported in the Department of Industry, Science and Resources annual report.

The work of the CMO is complemented by a strong international focus. DFAT drives Australia's growing international engagement on critical minerals. DFAT navigates the geostrategic aspect of critical minerals to establish and maintain international partnerships and negotiate international policy settings that are conducive to Australia's interests. It also advocates for Australia internationally, including on international economic, investment and trade finance issues associated with critical minerals.

The Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) is the government's lead trade and investment facilitation agency. Austrade's main role in delivering the Critical Minerals Strategy is facilitating commercial connections between Australian critical minerals companies and international investors. Austrade's 3 focus areas for critical minerals are:

- Offtake agreements for, and investment equity in, Australian critical minerals projects to accelerate their development.
- Foreign investment and capability attraction for midstream and downstream processing and value chain creation.
- Foreign investment in greenfield critical minerals opportunities.

Geoscience Australia is the nation's trusted leader in geoscience within the Industry, Science and Resources portfolio and is responsible for:

- maintaining the inventory of Australia's critical mineral resources
- delivering national precompetitive geoscience
- assessing resource potential
- promoting investment opportunities in partnership with Austrade and Australia Minerals.

[Australia Minerals](#) is a collaboration of Australia's federal, state and territory government geoscience organisations that provides consistent and accessible precompetitive geoscience data and information to support mineral exploration and works with Austrade to attract international investment into Australia's critical minerals sector.

Working together, the government will deliver on the vision of this strategy and secure Australia's place as a trusted and reliable critical minerals partner while creating lasting economic and social value for all Australians now and into the future.

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Appendix A: International partnerships

International engagements are key to deliver on Australia's critical minerals objectives

International partnerships are central to Australia's Critical Minerals Strategy. The government will continue to strengthen Australia's position as a trusted and reliable partner by expanding our network of international partnerships that build more secure, resilient and diversified critical minerals supply chains.

In 2024, Australian critical minerals were exported to 74 countries,⁴ with international partnerships helping connect Australian projects with global markets, investors and end-users.

Types of international partnerships

Australia's international engagement on critical minerals spans several complementary forms of cooperation, reflecting the need to connect different parts of the global value chain and align policy, investment and capability across jurisdictions. Common forms include:

- bilateral partnerships
- multilateral coordination
- commercial facilitation and investment.

Bilateral partnerships

Australia's bilateral partnerships on critical minerals support coordination across policy, investment and capability to develop secure and diversified critical minerals supply chains. These include formal cooperation frameworks, as well as practical collaboration to connect projects with markets, finance and downstream demand. Examples of Australia's partnerships are set out in this appendix in alphabetical order, and are current as of July 2026.

Australia–European Union Partnership on Critical Minerals

Australia's cooperation with the EU focuses on linking Australian supply with European industrial demand, including through direct engagement with EU Member States. This reinforces our shared objective of diversifying critical mineral supply chains.

⁴ Based on 2024 international trade data (CEPII-BACI dataset) and departmental analysis of Australian critical minerals exports. The estimate excludes very small trade flows, scrap trade, selected broad commodity classifications and non-sovereign territories to better reflect meaningful export destinations.

The partnership covers the entire critical and strategic minerals value chain – exploration, extraction, processing, refining, recycling, and processing of extractive waste.

Cooperation focuses on strengthening links between Australian critical minerals projects and EU industry. This includes increased bi-directional investment and commercial partnerships across the value chain. Financing is growing across investment banks, export credit agencies and member state-backed initiatives, to connect Australian supply with European processing, manufacturing and recycling capabilities.

Australia–France Strategic Dialogue on Critical Minerals

Australia and France are identifying opportunities to contribute to each other’s reliable and ethical supply in critical minerals, helping ensure that critical minerals markets remain diverse, robust, and underpinned by good governance and sound environmental and ethical practices.

The collaboration aims to facilitate information sharing, and research and development cooperation, including through identifying commercial arrangements that support ethical and sustainable international critical minerals supply chains.

Australia–India Critical Minerals Investment Partnership

Australia and India cooperate on critical minerals to support resilient, diversified and secure supply chains and to strengthen economic links across the critical minerals value chain. Cooperation under the partnership focuses on facilitating investment, commercial linkages and enhancing collaboration between government, industry and research institutions.

The partnership focuses on activities, such as research partnerships, geoscience cooperation and knowledge exchange to support capability development across processing, manufacturing and end-use markets. The partnership also provides a framework for connecting Australian critical minerals projects with Indian industrial and manufacturing demand to support investment and offtake opportunities across the value chain.

Australia–Japan Critical Minerals Partnership

Australia and Japan cooperate closely on critical minerals as a key pillar of our broader economic security partnership. Cooperation is focused on strengthening investment, policy coordination and supply chain diversification across the critical minerals value chain. This includes information sharing on public financing mechanisms, collaboration to address supply chain vulnerabilities, and support for strategic projects spanning mining, refining and downstream manufacturing.

Following the signing of the Australia–Japan Joint Statement on Elevated Critical Minerals Cooperation on 4 May 2026, critical minerals were elevated as a core component of the bilateral economic security partnership, reflecting the strategic importance of secure and resilient supply chains to long-term prosperity and industrial competitiveness.

Australia–United Kingdom Joint Statement of Intent on Collaboration on Critical Minerals

Australia and the United Kingdom cooperate across the critical minerals value chain, to pursue shared objectives of increasing and diversifying global supply, building sovereign capabilities and new critical minerals industries. It also recognises critical minerals are essential to our modern economy and national security.

Cooperation under this arrangement includes a focus on improving access to finance for critical minerals projects, including engagement with export finance and private sector investors, supporting increased investment and commercial partnerships in Australia's critical minerals sector.

Our cooperation also supports research and innovation partnerships. This includes advancing commercial opportunities and supporting the development of midstream processing capability, to address shared capability gaps across the value chain.

Australia–Republic of Korea Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Critical Mineral Supply Chains

Cooperation under this arrangement is focused on strengthening commercial linkages between Australian projects and Korean industry, including supporting investment into Australian critical minerals projects and connecting Australian producers with Korean manufacturers to develop alternative, robust and commercially viable critical mineral supply chains.

Bilateral cooperation continues to support coordination between governments and agencies and enable targeted cooperation activities across priority sectors, including key value chains such as batteries and critical technologies.

Joint Declaration of Intent between Canada and Australia on Critical Minerals Collaboration

Cooperation under the Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) focuses on leveraging complementary strengths to support investment, technological innovation, rules-based trade and enhancing development across the value chains.

The JDI establishes cooperation across key priority areas, including project financing, investment and trade; technology development and deployment; policy and regulatory alignment; standards-based markets; supply chain resilience; and information sharing.

Bilateral critical minerals cooperation is progressed through targeted activities, including exploring co-investment and offtake opportunities using public finance tools, collaboration on critical minerals reserve mechanisms, research and technical exchanges, workforce skills exchanges, and international collaboration to help shape development of standards-based markets.

Joint Declaration of Intent on an Australian–German Value Chain Feasibility Study

Germany and Australia are committed to building diverse, resilient and sustainable critical minerals value chains. Cooperation with Germany, including through the Feasibility Study, creates opportunities to facilitate deeper strategic and investment collaboration to protect against external market shocks.

This cooperation recognises the mutual benefits in connecting Australian critical minerals producers with Germany’s substantial manufacturing sector. It informs opportunities for collaboration, to remove barriers for industry, and to build on the use of green energy and ESG standards.

United States–Australia Framework for Securing of Supply in the Mining and Processing of Critical Minerals and Rare Earths

Australia’s cooperation with the United States (US) on critical minerals focuses on linking Australian supply with US investment and downstream demand, while supporting resilient supply chains. The Framework supports coordinated action across investment, capability and market development.

It also supports efforts to address shared market challenges, including pricing and non-market practices, improving regulatory processes and cooperation on recycling and geological mapping.

Multilateral cooperation

Australia’s engagement in multilateral forums on critical minerals has expanded in scope and influence, with a more active role shaping discussions, convening partners and contributing to the development of shared approaches across key institutions and initiatives, outlined below in alphabetical order as of July 2026.

Conference on Critical Materials and Minerals

The Conference on Critical Materials and Minerals was established in 2011. It is held on a regular basis as part of cooperation between Australia, Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, Germany, France, and the European Commission, to exchange information and discuss cooperation on policies, research and development, and other areas related to critical minerals. Australia chaired the Conference on Critical Materials and Minerals in 2023 to exchange information on policies governing critical materials, technical R&D collaboration and related efforts.

Forum on Resource Geostrategic Engagement (FORGE), formerly the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)

Australia is working with FORGE partners to advance initiatives that strengthen diversified, resilient, and secure critical minerals supply chains. FORGE partners are coordinating support and prioritising joint investment and co-financing to de-risk and accelerate priority high-standards projects, including Australian critical minerals projects.

G7 Critical Minerals Resilience and Production Alliance

Australia is a member of the G7 Critical Minerals Resilience and Production Alliance, working closely with G7 members to coordinate diversification efforts and mobilise investment. The alliance provides a comprehensive platform for cooperation within the G7 and partner countries to strengthen the diversification and resilience of critical minerals value chains and streamline existing initiatives on critical raw materials.

International Energy Agency (IEA)

Australia remains an active member of the IEA Critical Minerals Working Party (CMWP), contributing to the IEA's work on critical minerals security, including through participation in analysis, information sharing and coordination with partners to strengthen and diversify global critical minerals supply chains.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

Australia is playing an active role in the development of international standards through chairing the ISO Strategic Advisory Group on critical minerals and materials. Australia chairs the Strategic Advisory Group in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to develop and disseminate technical standards for critical minerals and materials, including ESG considerations.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Australia supports the OECD's research and analysis on critical minerals supply chains. The OECD is the leading global standard-setter for responsible business conduct for mineral supply chains and remains the primary global institution tracking export restrictions on critical minerals. This work is further supported by the OECD's convening power and relations with both mineral producing and mineral consuming economies.

The Quad (Australia, India, Japan, and the United States)

Australia engages through the Quad to advance cooperation on critical minerals as part of a broader focus on collective resilience in the Indo-Pacific. Participation in the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative allows for collaboration on emerging policy settings, investment approaches and market norms, while positioning Australia's domestic projects and processing capabilities as central to partner-led efforts to diversify supply chains and mobilise investment in the region.

Commercial facilitation and investment

Foreign investment and commercial offtake agreements are key to developing critical mineral projects in Australia. Austrade plays a central role in promoting Australia's critical minerals pipeline to international investors and facilitating commercial partnerships in target markets. Through its global network, Austrade connects prospective offtakers, investors and downstream partners with Australian project proponents across mining, processing, refining and broader value chain development.

Austrade's Australian Critical Minerals Prospectus includes a new midstream section of investable projects. It provides a curated opportunity to showcase Australia's investment-ready critical minerals projects and opportunities for global investors and

counterparties, including EV manufacturers, original equipment manufacturers, traders, processors, end-users and direct investors seeking connections to Australian projects.

Austrade's business missions, market briefings and targeted commercial facilitation help translate investor interest into practical engagement with Australian companies. This includes connecting Australian critical minerals projects with end-users, investors, traders and midstream processors across sectors such as batteries, magnets, high-performance alloys, advanced manufacturing and defence, and helping match investor interest with opportunities by commodity, project stage, geography and value chain segment.

While the prospectus is a key entry point for investors, it is not exhaustive. Austrade can also facilitate tailored introductions to additional opportunities aligned with investor requirements, helping international partners navigate Australia's expanding project pipeline, including its growing midstream processing capability.

Other key engagements

We are a founding member of the Sustainable Critical Minerals Alliance, which promotes sustainable, environmentally and socially responsible mining practices for the critical minerals sector alongside Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, France and Germany.

Australia participates in a range of scientific and technical collaborations that support knowledge sharing, resource development and capability building. These include initiatives such as the Critical Minerals Mapping Initiative, involving Geoscience Australia and international geological survey partners, and broader cooperation through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and Sustainable Critical Minerals Alliance.

Australia is a founding member of Pax Silica. The Pax Silica Declaration expresses signatories' desire to build secure, prosperous and innovative global technology supply chains. Secure supply chains are critical to ensuring technological progress and economic security in Australia's interests.