



# CRITICAL MINERALS ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA

FEBRUARY 2026  
EDITION

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Newsletter



# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



## CMA AUSTRALIA NEWS

New Member Welcome  
Events Promotion

## CRITICAL MINERALS EVENTS

Annual Events Calendar



## AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT NEWS

- Albemarle lithium refinery closure gives WA government a critical minerals reality check
- Could Canada and Australia form a critical minerals supergroup?
- Disruption and opportunity: Australia and critical minerals in a changing global order
- 'Not helpful': Australia against tariffs on China minerals, says King

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

- Canada is set to play a leading role in supplying the world with responsibly produced critical minerals
- Deep Sea Mining in 2026: Feasible or Not?
- Japan retrieves rare earth mud from deep seabed in test mission
- Trump unveils \$17b critical minerals reserve to counter China
- Lithium refinery shuts in another blow to 'Made in Australia'
- China adds 20 Japanese entities to dual-use export control list
- USA bolsters downstream germanium refining capabilities for military applications

## BIG PICTURE THINKING

- Global battery markets are growing strongly – and so are the supply risks
- Critical minerals in 2026: the rise of rare earths and lessons from the lithium boom
- Low cost LFP batteries are outcompeting NCM batteries

To open articles in a new tab:



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Command+Click on link



Critical Minerals Association Australia



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www.cmaaustralia.org



## ANU REECON+ A huge success...

Critical Minerals Association Australia was delighted to participate in this year's Australian National University REECON+ conference in **Canberra**, which brought together industry, government, investors and researchers to examine the future of rare earths and critical minerals in a rapidly shifting geopolitical and industrial landscape. [Read here](#) for full recap.



## CMA Australia Industry Roundtable

Canberra | 18<sup>th</sup> February

We facilitated a roundtable in Canberra, with the generous support of **GHD**, focused on market demand for rare earth elements, bringing together industry leaders and senior government representatives to explore long-term demand, strategic mid-stream priorities, geopolitics, and shared skills development. It was a timely and insightful discussion that builds on ongoing work to support critical minerals common user facilities and broader sector investment. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed so openly and candidly - the frank exchange of perspectives made for a highly valuable and thought-provoking conversation for the critical minerals community.



# PAYDIRT'S BATTERY MINERALS CONFERENCE

**Register Here**

(ask us about a member discount)

## Paydirt Battery Minerals Conference

Perth | 21-22 April

The future of the critical minerals sector has never been more contested with the industry exposed to price swings, geopolitical strains and sudden disruptions. Paydirt's Critical Battery Minerals Conference is the premier forum for stakeholders from every link in this complicated supply chain to discuss the future of the space.

Minerals as diverse as lithium, rare earths, copper, antimony, niobium, graphite, nickel, manganese, cobalt, tin, and vanadium are attracting unparalleled attention, not only from traditional investors but also governments, carmakers and end-users around the world.

## CMA in the news...

**Strategic mineral reserves need fixes to avoid exploitation- minerals alliance | 10<sup>th</sup> March**

*The CMAAs Jeff Townsend and Namali Mackay spoke with S&P Global earlier this month...*

Strategic mineral reserves in Australia and the US with floor prices are at risk of exploitation with potentially detrimental results, executives from the Critical Minerals International Alliance warned.

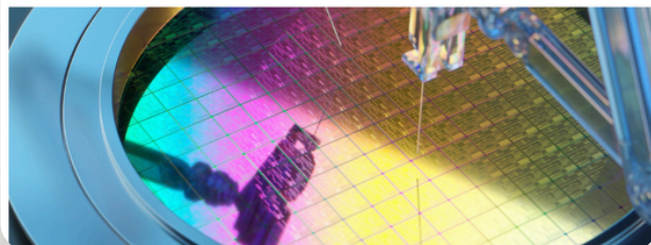
On Feb. 2, President Donald Trump announced a US strategic critical minerals reserve, dubbed "Project Vault," to be funded primarily through a \$10 billion loan from the Export-Import Bank of the United States and \$1.67 billion from private companies. The US is also pursuing critical mineral agreements to establish tariff-free trade and set price floors, Interior Secretary Doug Burgum said Feb. 3.

### Strategic reserve to secure Australia's critical mineral supply

The Australian Government will invest \$1.2 billion to create a Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve.

12 January 2026 · News · 2 min read

Minerals Mining, oil and gas



Strategic mineral reserves in Australia and the US with floor prices are at risk of exploitation with potentially detrimental results, executives from the Critical Minerals International Alliance warned.

# Flexi-Lab Launched in Mackay – New Pilot-Scale Capability for Tailings and Critical Minerals



## Flexi-Lab Launched in Mackay – New Pilot-Scale Capability for Tailings and Critical Minerals

The Resources Centre of Excellence (RCOE) has officially launched the Flexi-Lab in Mackay – a modular, pilot-scale minerals processing facility designed to bridge the gap between laboratory testwork and commercial deployment.

Developed in partnership with University of Queensland's Sustainable Minerals Institute (UQ SMI), Core Resources and DGH, and supported by the Queensland Government and Mackay Regional Council, the Flexi-Lab forms a key component of the Future Industries Hub. It provides a low-risk environment for validating beneficiation flowsheets, optimising recovery and de-risking capital investment decisions.

### A Reconfigurable Pilot Plant

The Flexi-Lab has been engineered for flexibility. The flotation circuit can process up to 77 kg/hour of solids (approximately 0.8 t/day on day shift or 1.8 t/day continuous operation). Skid-mounted mechanical flotation cells and flexible pipework allow rapid reconfiguration of circuits to suit different feedstocks and test programs. The standard flowsheet incorporates reslurry, optional classification/desliming, flotation, thickening and batch filtration, producing up to three filter cake products (two concentrates and a residue stream).

## Applications and Focus Areas

The initial focus is on tailings retreatment, including:

- Coal tailings recovery using fine particle flotation
- Pyrite tailings concentration for sulphuric acid feedstock and associated metal recovery
- Base metal tailings for downstream hydrometallurgical integration

The facility can also support gold-associated sulphides, rare earth minerals, graphite-rich tailings and phosphate slimes. For operators managing closure liabilities and ESG obligations, the Flexi-Lab enables validation of both recovery pathways and beneficial reuse options for residual materials.

## Collaboration Opportunities

The Flexi-Lab is available for industry, OEM, research and training use via commercial agreement.

For CMAA members, this presents opportunities to:

- De-risk reprocessing strategies prior to scale-up
- Trial new reagents, equipment and circuit configurations
- Collaborate on applied R&D programs
- Deliver practical metallurgical and operator training in a live pilot environment

Industry partners interested in collaborative campaigns, research projects or training initiatives are encouraged to connect with RCOE to explore how the Flexi-Lab can support their next stage of technical development.

For further enquiries contact: [info@rcoe.com.au](mailto:info@rcoe.com.au)

# New Member Welcome

We are delighted to welcome the following organisations to CMAA:

## Mining3

Mining3 is a global innovation and research advisory company spanning across the mining value chain. The organisation works with mining companies, universities, equipment manufacturers, and technology providers to develop practical solutions to industry challenges. Its research focuses on improving mining productivity, safety, and environmental performance through new technologies and advanced mining methods. By bridging the gap between research and industry, Mining3 helps accelerate the adoption of innovations that create a more efficient and sustainable mining sector.



## Tivan

Tivan is a diversified critical minerals company, proudly based in Darwin. Our portfolio spans a variety of projects across multiple locations and development stages, focused on critical minerals that are in structural short supply. Working closely with partners in Asia, we are actively creating wealth by rapidly advancing projects, from acquisition and discovery to full production. Tivan is dedicated to generating long-term value for our shareholders while making a genuinely positive contribution to local communities. Tivan strongly supports the energy transition and the strengthening of vital supply chains in Asia.



## Multicom

Multicom Resources is an Australian critical minerals company focused on the exploration, development, and production of high-purity minerals essential to the global energy transition. The company is developing projects such as the Saint Elmo Project in Queensland to produce vanadium and high purity alumina (HPA), materials used in energy storage, batteries, electronics, and advanced technologies. Multicom Resources aims to supply these high-purity products to global markets while supporting emerging clean-energy technologies and low-carbon infrastructure.



# AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY NEWS

## Albemarle lithium refinery closure gives WA government a critical minerals reality check

What was once set to be the biggest lithium refinery in the world has pulled the pin on its operations south of Perth.

It is the latest in a long line of critical mineral processors around Australia to wind back due to the cost of running operations.

### Read More

ABC | 13 Feb 2026

# AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT NEWS

## Not helpful': Australia against tariffs on China minerals, says King

The Albanese Government would resist moves by the Trump administration to slap tariffs on Chinese critical minerals exports as part of a US-led effort to create an allied trading bloc that includes price guarantees.

### Read More

AFR | 4 Feb 2026

## Disruption and opportunity: Australia and critical minerals in a changing global order

In a world defined by accelerating geo-economic competition aimed at reducing China's control of critical-minerals markets and supply chains...

### Read More

Australian Strategic Policy Institute | 24 Feb 2026

## Could Canada and Australia form a critical minerals supergroup?

Next week, Canadian Prime Minister **Mark Carney will address the Australian Parliament** on the relationship between the two countries.

Last month, the former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor delivered a landmark speech to the World Economic Forum.

### Read More

ABC | 24 Feb 2026



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## Canada is set to play a leading role in supplying the world with responsibly produced critical minerals

Already a mining hub, Canada could play a big part in diversifying global mineral supply chains. Canada can serve as a major supplier of key critical minerals. It has abundant reserves of many of the critical minerals necessary for energy technologies; a well-developed, stable regulatory framework, including strong environmental, social and governance standards.

### Read More

IEA | 4 Feb 2026

## Deep Sea Mining in 2026: Feasible or Not?

A realm of possibility: Can deep-sea mining take place in 2026? Deep-sea mining could optimistically begin ramping up from late 2026 to early 2027, according to Ilya Epikhim, Principal at Arthur D. Little.

### Read More

Mining.com | 4 Feb 2026

## Japan retrieves rare earth mud from deep seabed in test mission

A Japanese scientific drill ship departed on January 12 for the remote Minamitori Island to explore rare-earth-rich mud deposits, part of Tokyo's effort to reduce its reliance on China for critical minerals as Beijing chokes off supplies.

### Read More

Reuters | 2 Feb 2026



## US, UK, EU, Australia and more to meet to discuss critical minerals alliance

Ministers from the US, EU, UK, Japan, Australia and New Zealand will meet in Washington this week to discuss a strategic alliance over critical minerals.

### Read More

The Guardian | 1 Feb 2026

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## Trump unveils \$17b critical minerals reserve to counter China

US President Donald Trump formally announced plans to launch a \$US12 billion (\$17.3 billion) critical minerals stockpile, in his latest effort to aid manufacturers while minimising reliance on Chinese rare earths.

[Read More](#)

AFR | 3 Feb 2026



## Lithium refinery shuts in another blow to 'Made in Australia'

The Albanese government's plan to make Australia a global supplier of processed critical minerals has been dealt a major blow with the closure of the nation's leading lithium refinery.

[Read More](#)

AFR | 12 Feb 2026

## 2026 Critical Minerals Ministerial

Today the United States, together with our partners and allies, has set out to reshape the global market for critical minerals and rare earths.

[Read More](#)

U.S. Department of State | 4 Feb 2026

## China adds 20 Japanese entities to dual-use export control list

China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) announced that 20 Japanese entities would be restricted from receiving exports of dual-use goods from China, with an additional 20 placed on a watchlist.

[Read More](#)

Project Blue | 26 Feb 2026



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## USA bolsters downstream germanium refining capabilities for military applications

The US Department of War (DoW) announced an investment of US\$18.1M in Defense Production Act (DPA) Title III funding to 5N Plus (5N+). The initial announcement, which was intended for 15 December 2025, was delayed due to the US government shutdown.

### Read More

Project Blue | 6 Feb 2026

## BIG PICTURE THINKING

### Global battery markets are growing strongly – and so are the supply risks

The global lithium-ion battery market exceeded USD 150 billion in 2025, an increase of over 20% from 2024, but its economic and strategic significance extends far beyond market size. Batteries are becoming a cornerstone of the automotive sector, a critical source of flexibility for power systems..

### Read More

IEA | 13 Feb 2026

### Low cost LFP batteries are outcompeting NCM batteries

Project Blue analysis shows that low cost LFP batteries are outcompeting NCM batteries on a US\$/kWh basis, supported by low lithium prices and low labour and energy costs in Chinese facilities. The largest cost component of both types is cathode costs...

### Read More

Project Blue | 9 Feb 2026

Do you know of an upcoming event that's not listed?  
 Email: [admin@cmaaustralia.org](mailto:admin@cmaaustralia.org)

## 01 | January

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## 09 | September

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## 11 | November

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## 12 | December

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# EVENTS AT A GLANCE

**21 – 22**  
APR

**Paydirt's Critical Battery Minerals Conference | Perth**

PREMIER FORUM FOR STAKEHOLDERS IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

The future of the critical minerals sector has never been more contested with the industry exposed to price swings, geopolitical strains and sudden disruptions.

**16 – 17**  
JUN

**Future of Mining Conference | Perth**

MINING SMARTER. MINING BETTER.

Geopolitical tensions, shifting trade policies, and emerging tariffs are creating uncertainty for miners and investors. Meanwhile, miners must adopt cleaner, smarter technologies to meet net-zero demands.

**21 – 23**  
SEP

**AusIMM Critical Minerals Conference | Brisbane**

LEADING THE CRITICAL MINERALS CONVERSATION

As global demand for critical minerals continues to grow and the world transitions to clean energy, the mining community must engage in open and ongoing dialogue around how it can meet this demand

**27 – 29**  
OCT

**International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC) | Sydney**

COLLABORATING ON TRENDS IN MINING

Where the most influential people in the mining industry come together, delivering ideas, inspiration, and serving as a global meeting ground for industry leaders.

DEC

**Critical Minerals Association UK Annual Conference | London**



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