The Infrastructure Challenge

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# ABSTRACT - The Infrastructure Challenge

While the Australian Critical Minerals industry is not challenged by the extent of Australia’s resource endowment (quality and quantity) nor really its extraction, the path to industry success is critically dependent upon adequate supply chain infrastructure. This might seem obvious, but it is a challenge for Australia’s Critical Minerals industry and achieving any appreciable position in a world market.

In this presentation we will consider a sample set of key characteristics important in establishing adequate supply chain infrastructure.

A characterization of adequate is simply what is needed to support extracted mineral move from a mine to its offtake. As a minimum this includes having adequate - processing and refinement, energy, water, chemicals, production facilities, skills and skilled labour housing, transport – road / rail / ports and airports and technical support – laboratories, R&D etc., much of this does not exist.

Access to these, their existence and development (extent and timing) to support a Critical Minerals industry is lacking. There is little to no existing infrastructure to support the growth anticipated and expected in Australia’s Critical Minerals industry. There is little to no investment ready infrastructure opportunities progressed with adequate detail (business case) to entice the levels of investment needed to support any form of modest or broad scale industry development.

Even with government support and accelerated delivery, if we start today progress in this area would see a 3–5-year study / planning and business case development period, let alone actual delivery, even with government support and accelerated input.

We need government, at the Federal and State levels to take more than a pro-active approach to support acceleration of development pathways, in addition to making a level of contribution. Contribution that will at the very least send positive market signals, most significantly to the investment community.

Enabling an environment where there is healthy investment opportunity and engagement will benefit attracting the types of investment good for Australia’s mineral wealth and our Critical Minerals industry.

Investment in and the development of suitable supply chain infrastructure will need to consider the extent of capital required to support beyond traditional infrastructure development. It needs to provide for development of premium supply chain infrastructure that will deliver critical minerals that can be delivered in a market with suitable credentials to meet emerging international expectations and standards particularly when we consider the likes of the EU’s Passport imperatives.