

Media Release

The Hon Sonya Kilkeny MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for the Suburbs



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TWO CRITICAL MINERALS PROJECTS GIVEN THE GREEN LIGHT

The Allan Labor Government is unlocking new supplies of critical minerals which will inject billions of dollars into regional communities and are essential for building renewable energy infrastructure.

Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkeny signed off the Environment Effects Statement (EES) for both the Goschen Rare Earth and Mineral Sands Project and the WIM Resources Avonbank Mineral Sands Project with conditions – marking a major milestone in the approval process.

Further approval is still required for a mining licence and a mine work plan which will involve consultation with the community. The projects also require *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* approval from the Commonwealth.

These projects are the first mineral sands mine projects to get the green light since 2008. They will create hundreds of jobs in regional Victoria and unlock critical minerals that are essential for things like wind turbines and electric vehicles as well as for everyday technologies like electronics and computers.

The Avonbank Mineral Sands Project, located in the Wimmera region, would produce around 311 million tonnes of minerals including zircon, titanium and rare earth minerals. The project would deliver a \$3.5 billion economic boost to the region and boost industries across the state by a further \$15 billion.

The Goschen Rare Earth and Mineral Sands Project located 35 kilometers southwest of Swan Hill will inject \$2 billion into the region's economy and would focus on the extraction of rare earths, including neodymium, praseodymium, dysprosium, and terbium.

With strict environmental controls on both projects – they must minimise the clearance of native vegetation, consider local biodiversity and undertake rehabilitation as they mine, limiting the size of the pit and returning it to farmland sooner.

This week the Labor Government released its Critical Minerals Roadmap – giving industry confidence to invest, develop projects and empower regional communities. Victoria's critical minerals resources could position the state as a global leader in the renewable energy supply chain and create 7,000 additional jobs.

Quote attributable to Minister for Planning Sonya Kilkeny

"It's crucial that we balance development with the environment and these approvals put in place safeguards to protect the environment, including vulnerable species and habitats."

Quote attributable to Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio

"We're developing a new critical minerals industry for Victoria – providing the essential minerals we need for our renewable energy transition, and new opportunities and benefits for our State."

Quote attributable to Minister for Economic Growth Tim Pallas

"These projects are another step closer to becoming a reality and once secured will deliver more jobs and great economic benefits for regional Victoria."

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