



Media Release

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SA Liberal Critical Minerals Policy Undermines Science-Based Regulation

The South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy's 2026 Pre-Election Priorities continue to advocate for measures that resolve hurdles to investment in South Australian resources projects.

SACOME expresses concern at the South Australian Liberal Party's election policy announcement to introduce a new, independent vulnerability assessment into rare earth strip-mining on the Limestone Coast within its first 100 days of government.

South Australia benefits from a highly rigorous, transparent and science-driven regulatory system and introducing additional moratoria or duplicative assessments undermines confidence in a system that is acknowledged as among the best in the nation.

SACOME Chief Executive Officer, Catherine Mooney, emphasises that "SACOME has consistently opposed the introduction of moratoria and has long supported the Multiple Land Use Framework, which provides a clear and balanced approach to coexistence between mining, agriculture, tourism, forestry and renewable energy."

The existing Multiple Land Use Framework requires mandatory detailed environmental, social and economic assessments, supported by specialist studies and extensive community consultation for every exploration and mining proposal in South Australia.

"To suggest that further restrictions are needed ignores the strength of the current system and risks sending the wrong signal to investors at a time when global demand for critical minerals is accelerating," Mooney says.

"Politicising what should remain a science-based regulatory environment presents significant risk to the economic prosperity of South Australia."

"South Australia has a real opportunity to benefit from the growing global demand for rare earths and critical minerals. Policies that pre-emptively block development before proposals are even assessed risk jeopardising regional jobs, investment and the state's economic future," Mooney adds.

South Australian Chamber of Mines & Energy

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SACOME also notes that South Australia already requires a comprehensive Program for Environment Protection and Rehabilitation (PEPR) for all exploration and mining projects—an instrument that must meet stringent State and Commonwealth standards.

SACOME remains committed to constructive engagement with all political parties and continues to advocate for policy settings that support coexistence, certainty and long-term economic development for South Australia.

Read SACOME's [2026 Pre-Election Policy Priorities](#)

Quotes from Catherine Mooney, Chief Executive Officer of SACOME

"The proposal represents an unnecessary duplication of South Australia's already comprehensive and science-based regulatory framework and potentially limits opportunity for a burgeoning sector that has global demand.

"South Australia has one of the most rigorous, transparent and science-driven regulatory systems in the country. Introducing additional moratoria or duplicative assessments is not only unnecessary, it undermines confidence in a system that already works.

"The existing framework requires detailed environmental, social and economic assessments, supported by specialist studies and extensive community consultation. These processes are mandated for every exploration and mining proposal in South Australia.

"To suggest that further restrictions are needed ignores the strength of the current system and risks sending the wrong signal to investors at a time when global demand for critical minerals is accelerating.

"The existing regulatory framework is robust, proven and designed to protect the environment while enabling responsible development. What is needed is bipartisan support for the Multiple Land Use Framework, not additional layers of politics."

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About SACOME

The [South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy](#) is the leading industry association representing companies with interests and connections to the South Australian resources and energy sector.

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