

South
Australian
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Of
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Media Release

Date: 21 October 2025

SACOME Welcomes US-Australia Critical Minerals and Rare Earths Framework Announcement

The total investment package will support a \$US8.5 billion pipeline of critical minerals projects both in Australia and the United States.

Through this partnership, the United States-Australia Critical Minerals and Rare Earths Framework will assist both countries to achieve resilience and security of critical minerals and rare earths supply chains. Development of the supply chains includes mining, separation, and processing, through use of economic policy tools and coordinated investment.

To accelerate the supply chain development, this framework has been accompanied by the announcement of a joint investment of \$US2 billion, with an even commitment of \$US1 billion from both Australia and the United States to be invested over the next six months into different strategic projects across Australia.

Two of the projects to support the international trade agreement include Alcoa and Sojitz's gallium recovery project in Western Australia and Arafura's Nolans rare earths project in the Northern Territory.

Significantly, in South Australia as part of this project pipeline, SACOME member Nyrstar has received a non-binding, conditional letter of support from Export Finance Australia (EFA) to support in financing the company's production of antimony in Port Pirie, and investments that support production of critical and strategic metals at its Australian sites.

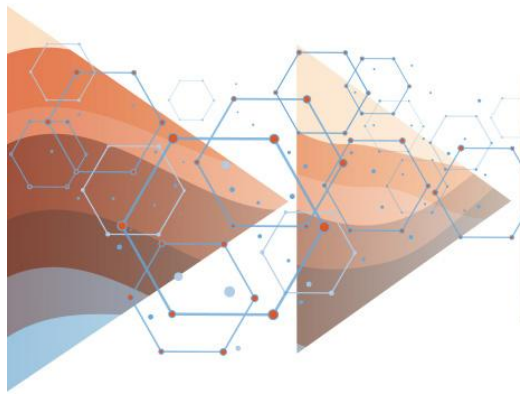
This commitment would bolster the \$135 million state and federal government funding package announced in August for Nyrstar's Port Pirie smelter and zinc refinery in Hobart.

Nyrstar is in the process of developing a pilot plant to produce antimony at their Port Pirie plant, which will enable initial batches of antimony metal to be produced and exported in the first half of 2026. It is projected that production could reach up to 5,000 tonnes of antimony metal per annum by 2028, equivalent to approximately 15% of the global market.

Antimony can be recovered as a by-product of lead processing, and Port Pirie is Australia's only lead refining facility. It is critical to key sectors in Australia and the US including defence, AI and data centres, energy and consumer goods.

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SACOME acknowledges the significant momentum gained at Federal and State level for the development of critical minerals and metals supply to meet both energy transition, advanced manufacturing and defence sector supply chain demand, and economic growth and security objectives.

With today's framework and funding announcement, Federal and State policy alignment, together with funding made available through other mechanisms such as *Future Made in Australia*, the *State Prosperity Project* and the national *Critical Minerals Strategic Reserve* present a window of opportunity to catalyse development of South Australian critical mineral supply chains.

SACOME looks forward to the collaboration between Industry, State and Federal government to support the coordinated development of South Australia's endowment of critical minerals and metals, including rare earths, antimony, cobalt, lithium, graphite and kaolin as well as copper and magnetite.

Linking South Australian mining, smelting and manufacturing capability with national strategies will grow local refining, processing, and manufacturing to elevate the value of the state's resources sector.

Quotes attributable to SACOME Chief Executive Officer, Nicola McFarlane

"SACOME welcomes the acceleration of the partnership and collaboration between the Australian and United States governments in developing a diversified and fair market to enable our South Australian resources sector to add further value to our critical minerals supply chain capabilities."

"SACOME is delighted to support Nyrstar's announcement that their Port Pirie operations in South Australia is part of the pipeline of critical minerals projects being supported as part of the US-Australia Critical Minerals and Rare Earths Framework development as it progresses."

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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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