

# Fingerboards Project Newsletter

## Community feedback drives changes to the Fingerboards Project

Gippsland Critical Minerals (GCM) work to rescope the Fingerboards Critical Minerals Project is making good progress with the announcement of a series of initial design changes to address community feedback and help develop a better project for East Gippsland.

Twelve initial design changes were shared at the first meeting of the GCM Community Reference Group (CRG), held in Lindenow in March.

As part of the meeting, we conducted a tour of the Fingerboards site to help the group understand our plans and provide feedback.

Key questions raised by the CRG focused on why the Fingerboards area was chosen as the site for the project, the mining methods and the approval process.

Key concerns raised included potential impacts on water supply, mature trees and native vegetation.

The 12 changes we announced are big decisions that aim to minimise or mitigate these and other issues and are a direct response to the feedback we have received. The changes also aim to address the findings from the 2021 EES process.

We also shared the changes at community webinars. GCM's presentations shared with the CRG are available on our website.



## Our Project Timetable

GCM will rescope the project through an iterative design process during 2025, with regular opportunities for the community to influence the project design.

By December 2025, we will resubmit the project to the Minister for Planning, and we expect to commence a Environmental Effects Statement in 2026 including formal community consultation.



# Fingerboards Project - Key Initial Design Changes

<b>Prioritising Australian interests</b>	Prioritising onshore processing of Fingerboards critical minerals and rare earths to support jobs and national security.
<b>Mitigating dust and noise concerns for local horticulture</b>	No mining within 1.5 kilometres from the Lindenow Valley horticultural area.
<b>Reducing noise, dust and truck traffic</b>	Slowing the rate of mining from 1500tph to 900tph and spread over two smaller mining units to reduce noise, dust and truck traffic at any one location while extending the life of the mine to 22-years.  Using 'in-pit' dozers to reduce dust and noise caused by moving dirt 'on-surface' with trucks.
<b>Prioritising the return of mined land to pasture</b>	New rehabilitation strategy in response to farmer feedback to prioritise a return to pasture vegetation along with native grasses.
<b>Showing and testing for the community</b>	Undertaking a demonstration pit to show the community what the mine will look like and test our approach to rehabilitation.
<b>Preserving the Fingerboards Junction</b>	Maintaining the historic junction and fewer road relocations will help preserve local history and conserve more large trees.
<b>Reducing truck movements on public roads</b>	Examining options for a new process plant location so that concentrate is moved on private roads.
<b>Improved long-term community water security</b>	As a legacy benefit of the mine, improved dam infrastructure will support irrigation for local horticulture during drought periods.
<b>Improved environmental and safety outcomes</b>	New co-disposal and below-ground tailings approach preserves vegetation in the Perry Gully and eliminates the need for centrifuges as well as above-ground tailings dam storage risks.
<b>More initiatives to reduce dust</b>	New purpose-built concentrate storage shed will replace previously proposed open-air stockpiles to reduce dust.
<b>More protections for biodiversity and native vegetation</b>	No mining the Perry, Simpson and Lucas Creek gullies and conservation areas established to protect biodiversity and native vegetation.

More details on GCM's Initial design changes for the Fingerboards Project are available on the GCM website.

## GCM on the Road. Save the Date

Commencing mid-June, the GCM team will be on the road visiting town centres across East Gippsland to provide more information, listen to feedback and answer questions.

The roadshow listen and learn sessions will be held on Saturdays at the following locations.



### **Saturday, 14 June - Bairnsdale Library**

22 Service St, Bairnsdale from 9.00am to noon.

### **Saturday, 21 June - Lindenow General Store**

149 Main Rd, Lindenow from 9.00am to noon.

### **Saturday, 28 June - Port of Sale Function Gathering Area**

154 Princess Hwy Service Rd, Sale from 10.30am to 2.00pm

### **Saturday, 5 July - Segue Community Hub & Arts Café**

166 Tyers St, Stratford from 10.00am to 2.00pm.



# Message from GCM's CEO

Critical minerals are very much on the national and international agenda, and it was exciting to see progress in April in unlocking Victoria's critical minerals potential with the approval of VHM's Goschen Mineral Sands Project near Swan Hill.

Victoria is now on the move and on the global map with the strategic importance of its critical minerals' projects receiving growing recognition from governments, and international investors and markets.

The Fingerboards resource, which is rich in Dysprosium and Terbium - or heavy rare earths - is more significant than ever following China's recent decision to restrict the supply of these minerals. China's actions highlight the importance of securing Australia's supply of critical minerals and validates GCM's decision to prioritise onshore processing.

Onshore processing is one of 12 significant changes to the Fingerboards Project that we have been discussing with the community to help develop the best critical minerals project for East Gippsland.

In March, we held the first meeting of our Community Reference Group to share those initial changes. We also

held our first webinars, and we spoke to people at the East Gippsland Field Days.

These conversations tell us that the community wants to get involved and play a constructive role in shaping the project. This includes how we address key issues such as rehabilitation, water use, protecting local agriculture, creating jobs and economic benefits, managing dust, noise, and traffic impacts, and protecting environmental and cultural heritage.

We are looking forward to sharing the next round of project change details in the coming months, including at our roadshow through Bairnsdale, Lindenow, Sale and Stratford in June and July.

I am proud of the progress we have made - but there is plenty more to do to test and validate these changes through monitoring work, technical and environmental studies.



**Michelle Wood**

CEO



## GCM at Gippsland Field Days

Our team was pleased to exhibit at the East Gippsland Field Days, where we shared information and listened to feedback from the community about the Fingerboards Project.

Visitors expressed strong interest in local employment, procurement opportunities, mine design, and land rehabilitation. We also had some robust conversations with people who held concerns about the old 2021 project. We took the opportunity to explain to visitors that we are currently rescoping a new project and the 12 significant changes we have made to address community feedback.

We shared our next steps which include sharing more technical data, expanding environmental monitoring networks, and continuing our stakeholder engagement and work on community benefit-sharing initiatives.



# Fingerboards Resource Analysis

## 7.1% of the global supply in the Heavy Rare Earths

Dysprosium and Terbium (DyTb) essential for the production of high-performance permanent magnets, especially for applications such as wind turbines, electric motors, and hard disk drives.

## 1.4% of the global supply in the Light Rare Earths

Neodymium and Praseodymium (NdPr) used in ultra-strong permanent magnets with uses in renewable energy infrastructure, electric vehicles, drones, robots, consumer electronics and industrial applications.

## 7.2% of the global supply of Zircon

used in ceramics, dental products such as implants and crowns, aircraft and defence components, electronics and specialist paints and varnishes.

Source: Adamas Intelligence, April 2025

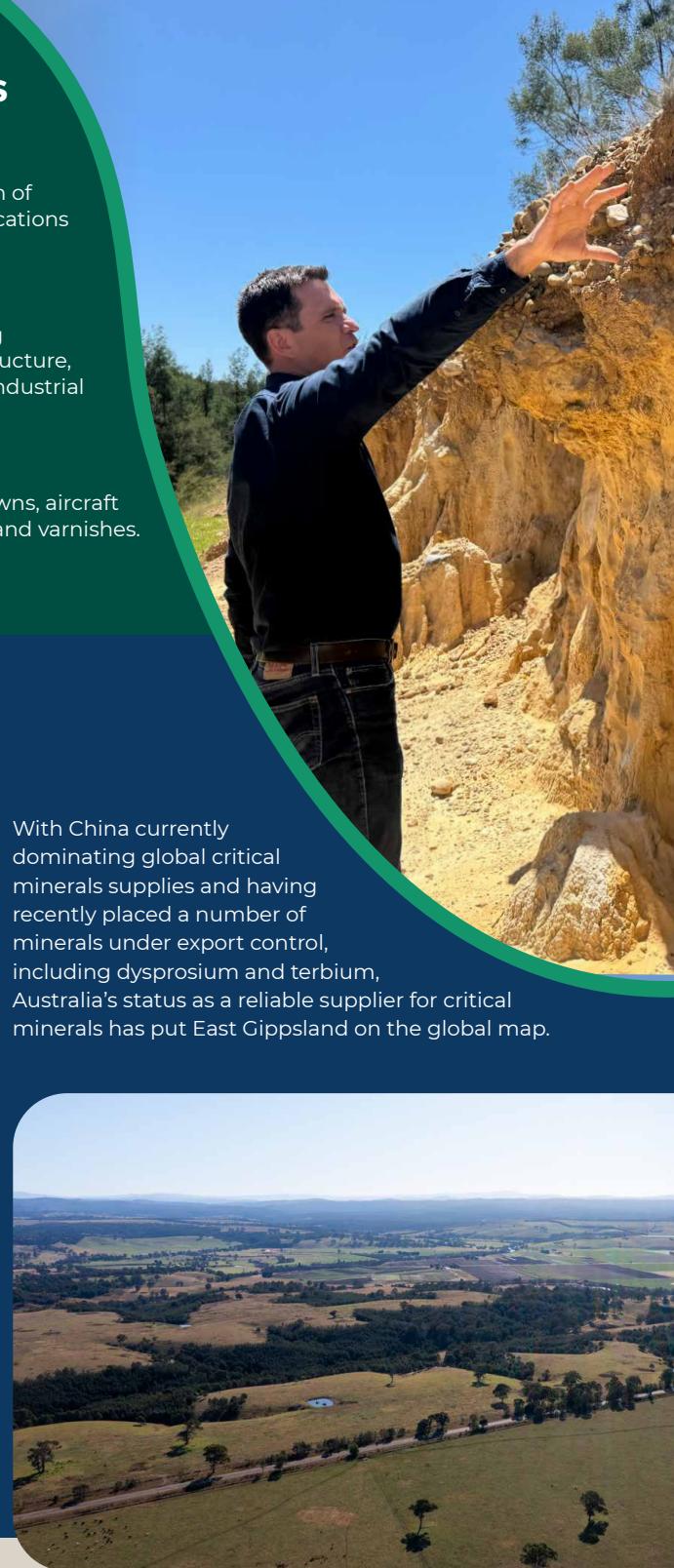
## Critical Minerals put East Gippsland on the global map

East Gippsland's Fingerboards resource could make a major contribution to the global supply for heavy rare earths and present a major new export opportunity for Australia.

Samples from the Fingerboards area, analysed as part of rescoping work for the Fingerboards Critical Minerals Project, indicate the area is rich not only in zircon but it contains a globally significant deposit of heavy and light rare earths.

This includes more than 7% of the global supply of rare earths Dysprosium and Terbium (DyTb) and 1.4% of Neodymium and Praseodymium (NdPr).

Global demand for these rare earths is surging, primarily because they are essential components for magnets used in renewable energy infrastructure and electric vehicles. In fact, if the Fingerboards Project were in production today, it could help put over 3 million EVs on the road annually or help bring online over 10 GW of new wind power each year, enough to power more than 5 million homes.



With China currently dominating global critical minerals supplies and having recently placed a number of minerals under export control, including dysprosium and terbium, Australia's status as a reliable supplier for critical minerals has put East Gippsland on the global map.



GCM is committed to open engagement and communication.

Whether you have a question, a suggestion, or simply want to learn more, please get in touch.

