

# Community Reference Group

## Meeting #7

15 May 2026

Quest Hotel, Bairnsdale



# Meeting #7 Agenda

| Agenda Item                                                           | Start | Finish | Lead             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|------------------|
| Lunch, Welcome & MRDP Site Induction                                  | 11:30 | 12:00  | All              |
| Mining & Rehabilitation Demonstration Pit Tour (Incl. Travel Time)    | 12:00 | 13:50  | Stefan / Allison |
| Apologies                                                             | 13:50 | 13:55  | John (Chair)     |
| Approval of Previous CRG Minutes                                      | 13:55 | 14:05  | John (Chair)     |
| Pecuniary Interest Declaration                                        | 14:05 | 14:10  | John (Chair)     |
| Votes on Sale Tennis Club Proposal & CRG Sub-Groups                   | 14:10 | 14:20  | John (Chair)     |
| Questions from the CRG / On-Notice Items                              | 14:20 | 14:45  | All              |
| Project Approval / EES Update                                         | 14:45 | 15:15  | Michelle         |
| RedBridge: Community Sentiment Survey Findings & Q&A                  | 15:15 | 16:00  | Kos Samaras      |
| Community Engagement Update & Land Management / Good Neighbour Policy | 16:00 | 16:20  | Mick             |
| Meeting Wrap Up & Next Steps                                          | 16:20 | 16:30  | John (Chair)     |
| Potential In-Camera Discussion for CRG Members                        | 16:30 | 17:00  | CRG Members      |

Gippsland Critical Minerals acknowledges the Gunaikurnai People as the Traditional Custodians of Country that encompasses the proposed Fingerboards Project area.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and recognise their enduring connection to the land, waters, culture, and community.

# Procedural Matters

- Apologies
- Approval of Previous CRG Minutes
- Pecuniary Interest Declaration
- Voting Items

# Voting Item #1: Sale Tennis Club Proposal

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Sale Tennis Club has requested funding support to purchase courtside tennis scoreboards for its 14 courts. The request follows feedback from players and officials during the 2025 Sale Sporting Legends tournament, where scoreboards were identified as a key improvement to reduce score disputes, support match scheduling, and improve player and spectator engagement.

The club is seeking \$6,132 to purchase 14 Australian-made scoreboards at \$438 each.

**CRG vote:** Whether to approve a community grant to Sale Tennis Club for the purchase of courtside scoreboards.

*The CRG will vote by a show of hands – for or against.*

# Voting Item #2: CRG Sub-Groups Proposal

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The CRG is asked to consider whether to establish two sub-groups, as previously proposed:

- **Technical Sub-Group:** To provide a focused forum for discussion of technical project matters.
- **Communications Sub-Group:** To support discussion on community engagement and communications for the project.

**CRG vote:** Whether to establish two CRG sub-groups: a Technical Sub-Group and a Communications Sub-Group.

*The CRG will vote by a show of hands – for or against.*

# Questions from the CRG / On-Notice Items

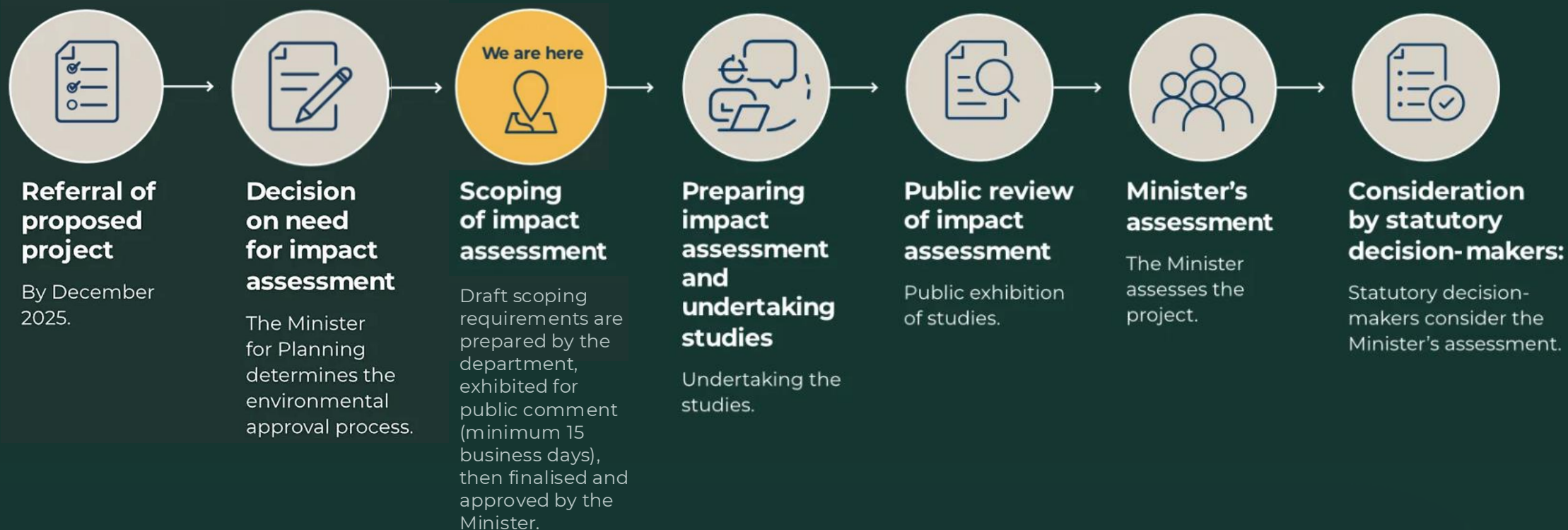
# Project Update



Michelle Wood  
GCM CEO

# Current Project Status

## Steps in the Environmental Assessment Process



# Environmental & Technical Studies

| Study                               | Status        | Key Activities                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ecology, Flora and Fauna</b>     | ■ In progress | Spring surveys completed; summer surveys underway to inform biodiversity impact assessment                                                   |
| <b>Cultural Heritage</b>            | ■ In progress | Demonstration pit CHMP completed; specialist engaged for overall project CHMP and impact assessment                                          |
| <b>Visual and Landscape</b>         | ■ In progress | Background reviews completed; site visit completed; viewshed analysis commenced                                                              |
| <b>Economic Development</b>         | ■ In progress | Consultant engaged for economic assessment; report underway                                                                                  |
| <b>Social Impact</b>                | ■ In progress | Impact assessment commenced                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Agriculture and Horticulture</b> | ■ In progress | Community interviews commenced – including local landowners, horticultural enterprises, and agricultural industry bodies and representatives |
| <b>Soils</b>                        | ■ In progress | Specialist engaged for soils impact assessment                                                                                               |
| <b>Rehabilitation</b>               | ■ In progress | MRDP approved; rehabilitation trials targeted for commencement in early March 2026                                                           |
| <b>Noise</b>                        | ■ In progress | Modelling study underway contributing to design optimization                                                                                 |
| <b>Air Quality</b>                  | ■ In progress | Modelling study underway contributing to design optimization                                                                                 |
| <b>Surface Water</b>                | ■ In progress | Background reviews completed; site visit completed; modelling commencing                                                                     |
| <b>Groundwater</b>                  | ■ In progress | Perched groundwater investigation underway, localized and regional modelling next steps                                                      |
| <b>Radiation</b>                    | ■ In progress | Impact assessment commenced                                                                                                                  |

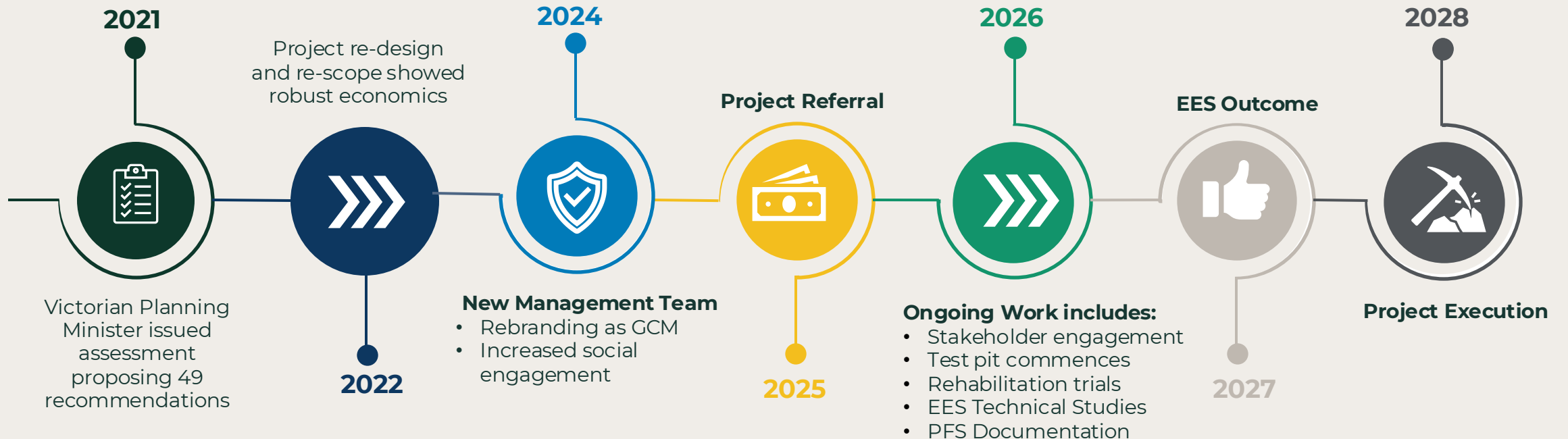
# Environmental & Technical Studies

In addition to the environmental and technical studies currently underway, the following studies are scheduled to commence in 2026.

| Study                   | Status       | Timing    |
|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Land Use and Planning   | ■ Commencing | Scheduled |
| Traffic and Transport   | ■ Commencing | Scheduled |
| Human Health            | ■ Commencing | Scheduled |
| Geotechnical Conditions | ■ Commencing | Scheduled |

# Timeline

## State & Commonwealth Govt Alignment



# RedBridge: Community Sentiment Survey



Kos Samaras  
Director Strategy and Analytics, RedBridge

RedBridge is an independent research and strategy consultancy engaged by GCM to deliver a structured research program alternating between qualitative focus groups and quantitative surveys every six months. This approach enables GCM to continuously track community sentiment and identify changes in awareness, attitudes and information needs over time.

## Research Undertaken:

- November 2025 – Quantitative Survey
- August/September 2025 – Focus Groups
- May 2025 – Quantitative Survey
- March 2025 – Focus Groups
- June 2024 – Quantitative Survey
- May 2024 – Focus Groups
- February 2023 – Quantitative Survey
- February/March 2023 – Focus Groups
- July 2022 – Quantitative Survey
- September 2021 – Quantitative Survey
- February 2021 – Quantitative Survey
- February 2021 – Focus Groups



INFLUENCE WITH INTEGRITY

# Methodology – May & Nov 2025 Studies

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Two quantitative community sentiment studies were conducted by Redbridge in May and November 2025.

## Survey Approach

- Phone surveys conducted weekday evenings and Saturdays.
- Timing designed to avoid over-sampling non-workers and stay-at-home respondents
- Phone numbers sourced from a commercial provider, including landline and mobile numbers

### May 2025 quantitative study

- Conducted 14–21 May 2025
- Mixed automated phone and SMS survey
- Sample: n=787 adults aged 18+
- 76.4% reached via mobile phone
- Data weighted by gender and age

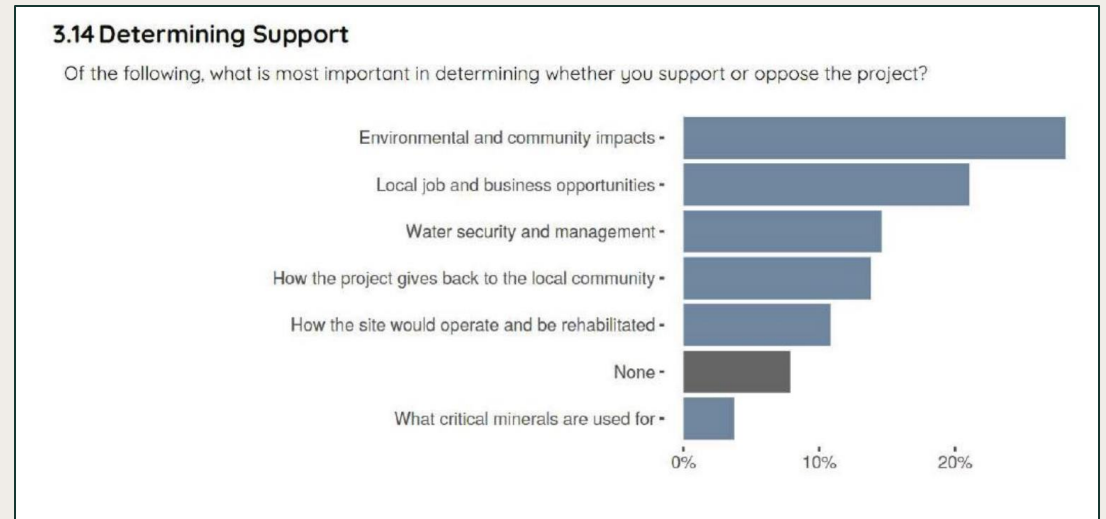
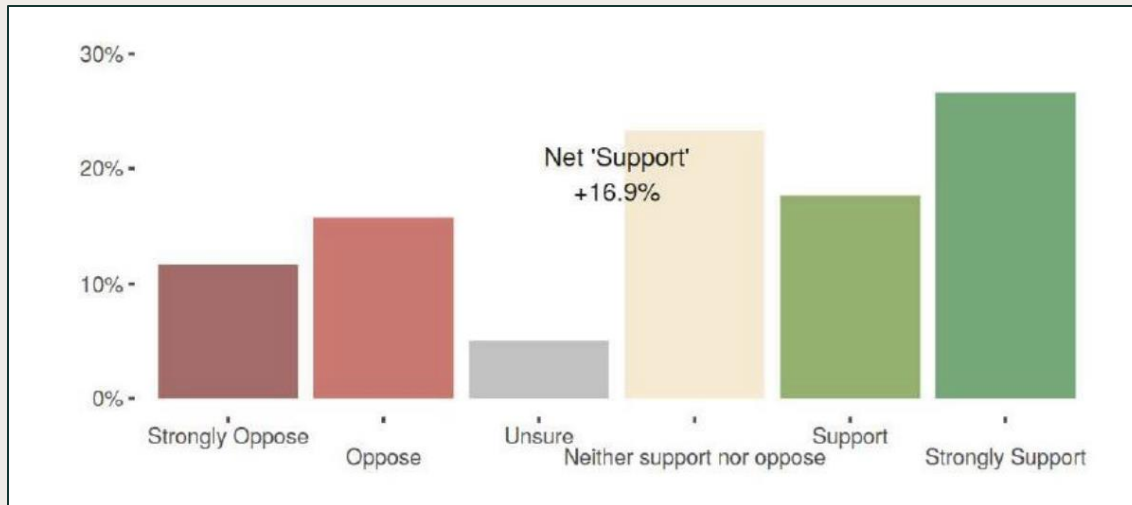
### November 2025 quantitative study

- Conducted 6–13 November 2025
- Mixed automated phone and SMS survey
- Sample: n=722 adults aged 18+
- 76% reached via mobile phone
- Data weighted by gender and age

# Summary of May Findings

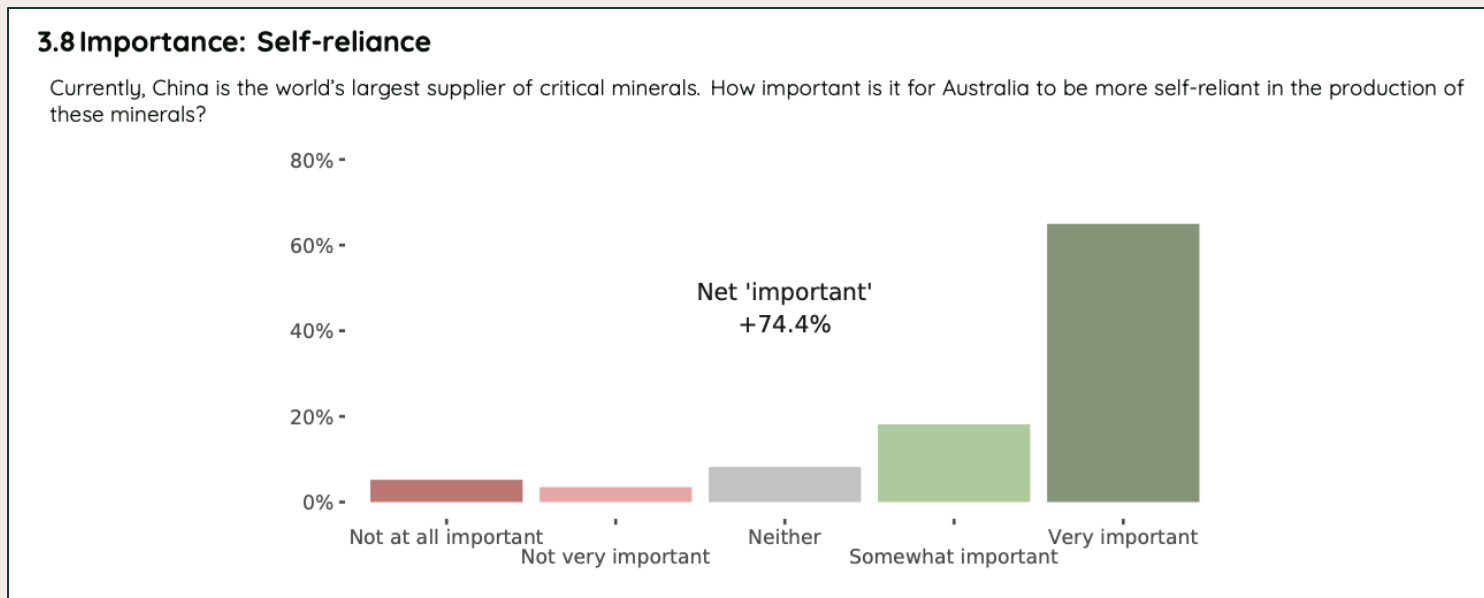
The region is more supportive and open to the concept of a critical minerals mine and to the Fingerboards project specifically than previously found.

- Awareness is up by 15%: overall project awareness has increased by 15% from 2021 to May 2025 (73% aware in May 2025).
- Support for the project was at 45% compared to 28% who oppose.
- Overall support was 45% with 27% strongly supporting and 18% supporting, while opposition is 28% with 12% strongly opposing and 16% opposing.
- Favourable views for the project based on use of critical minerals for renewable energy has increased by 12% - up to about 43% in the current survey from 31% in 2021.



# Summary of November Findings

- Support for the project remains steady at 44%. 21 percent are neutral.
- More than 30 percent of people said their support or opposition to the project is based on their assessment of environment and community impacts. 17.4 percent on jobs and 16.7 percent on how the site would be operated and rehabilitated. 83 percent of East Gippslanders think Australia should be more self-reliant in the production of its critical minerals resources
- 73 percent of East Gippslanders believing that it's important for Australia to develop new critical minerals projects.
- 64 percent said it is important for these projects to proceed in regional areas, when appropriate safeguards are in place.



# Community Engagement Update & Land Management / Good Neighbour Policy



Mick Harrington  
East Gippsland Community & Stakeholder Lead

# Community Engagement Update

## What I've been doing

Feb 21 - Heyfield Timber Festival  
March 5 – Bairnsdale Economic Synergy Session  
March 18 – Sale Community Visit  
March 27 – Eastwood Community Visit  
April 2 – Project Update Webinar  
April 10/11 – East Gippsland Field Days  
April 15 – Fernbank Drop-in Session  
May 2 – Sale Community Visit

## Coming Up

June 6 - Eastwood Community Visit  
June 17 - Project Update Webinar  
June 17 – Lindenow South Community Visit  
July 8 – Eastwood Community Visit  
July 16 – Lindenow South Community Visit  
July 22 – Maffra Careers Expo  
August 1 – Eastwood Community Visit  
August 19 – Webinar



# Good Neighbour Policy

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- Gippsland Critical Minerals has developed a **Land Management & Good Neighbour Policy** as a public commitment to responsible land stewardship across its East Gippsland landholdings.
- The policy was developed with input from technical experts and has sought feedback from the Community Reference Group, ensuring it reflects both best practice land management and the real expectations of the local community.
- At its heart, the policy is about being a **good neighbour** – treating adjacent landholders as partners and taking a proactive, not reactive, approach to any issues that could affect others.
- It includes a **science-based weed management program** will target species including (but not limited to) Blackberries, African Lovegrass and Apple of Sodom – all known to impact agricultural productivity.

# Good Neighbour Policy

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- Featured is an **active pest animal management program** will address rabbits, foxes, wild dogs and Sambar Deer in a humane, compliant manner, coordinated with neighbouring properties for landscape-scale effectiveness.
- Fencing across GCM-managed properties will be audited, maintained, and repaired to meet or exceed obligations under the **Fences Act 1968 (Vic)**, with quarterly inspections and a five business day response commitment to neighbour concerns.
- **Rigorous biosecurity protocols** require all contractors entering GCM farmland to arrive clean and follow site-specific requirements, minimising the risk of spreading weeds, pests, or diseases to neighbouring properties. GCM will hold itself publicly accountable through quarterly land management reporting, an annual community report, and an independent annual policy review — because transparency and continuous improvement are core commitments

# Community Benefit Sharing Workshops

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GCM will host a series of Benefit Sharing Workshops to give the community and key stakeholders a direct voice in shaping how the Fingerboards Project delivers lasting benefits to the East Gippsland region.

## **The workshops will focus on three key themes:**

1. Local Workforce & Supply Capacity and Industry Partnerships
2. Investment in Local Infrastructure & Legacy Assets
3. Community Vibrancy and Liveability.

Sessions will be publicly advertised, with community members and stakeholders invited to register and attend – GCM wants to hear from the broadest possible cross-section of the region.

Each workshop will be facilitated, creating an environment where participants can share ideas and priorities freely, with insights directly informing GCM's Benefit Sharing plans.

# Meeting Wrap Up & Next Steps



John Mitchell  
CRG Chairperson