

**MINISTER FOR MINES AND PETROLEUM — OVERSEAS VISIT —  
BATTERY, CRITICAL MINERALS AND ENERGY SECTORS**

*Statement by Minister for Mines and Petroleum*

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum)** [9.09 am]: I rise today to inform the house of the recent mission to Canada, the United States, South Korea and Japan to promote Western Australia's world-leading battery, critical minerals and energy sectors. Since the launch of the McGowan government's *Future battery and industry strategy* in 2019, Western Australia now hosts a multibillion-dollar battery and critical minerals processing industry that includes global-scale investments in battery-grade lithium hydroxide and nickel sulphate and rare earths processing projects. Such success in the industry is driving further investment to increase mineral processing and start local manufacture of precursor and cathode active materials in collaboration with international joint venture partners.

Although the state is in a strong position to build upon existing relationships and capitalise on the many mutually beneficial opportunities emerging in the battery and critical minerals sector, the key message I delivered to all I met was that Western Australia is open for business and welcomes the opportunity to forge ahead with new partnerships. Of course, the development and execution of projects relies on a robust regulatory framework that provides investors with the certainty they need to build globally significant projects. I was pleased there was acknowledgement of Western Australia's regulatory framework and the efficient pathway through the permitting and approvals process.

Western Australia's model for permitting, approvals and engagement with First Nations people was discussed at length with Canada's Minister of Natural Resources, Hon Jonathan Wilkinson, and counterparts from Quebec and Ontario such was their appetite to learn about how a strong and consistent regulatory environment underpins successful project developments. Permitting and approvals were also key themes of discussions with the staff of Senator Joe Manchin, chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee; Bruce Westerman, chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources; Eric Swalwell and Guy Reschenthaler, co-chairs of the Congressional Critical Minerals Caucus.

While meeting with US Government staff on Capitol Hill, the US Inflation Reduction Act was a point of discussion, as it was in both South Korea and Japan. In South Korea and Japan, I had fruitful meetings with key decision-makers and business leaders across major global trading houses, steel mills, future energy off-takers, battery producers and government bodies. South Korea is the second largest producer of electric vehicle batteries in the world, and I was encouraged by the genuine consideration by some of these companies to pursue downstream processing activities in this state. Another highlight was the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Korean Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources and the Western Australian government through the Minerals Research Institute of Western Australia to collaborate on R&D across the minerals value chain. Companies in Japan were also looking to expedite development of similar activities in WA, while capitalising on carbon capture storage opportunities was high on the radar. I table the itinerary.

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