

ADVERTISING LIFTOUT

Growing Kalgoorlie-Boulder

KALGOORLIE BOOSTED BY SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Offering a number of sweeping announcements expected to provide a significant boost for the Goldfields region, the Growing Kalgoorlie-Boulder Economic Development Conference heralded a new era for the mining hub.

Held on Wednesday June 6 in Perth, delegates from far and wide attended, with a star-studded line-up of speakers sharing a number of game-changing developments for the region and showcasing what is great about the city.

With Kalgoorlie celebrating its rich 125-year history in 2018, it was a fitting time for community leaders to share their thoughts.

High on the agenda was lithium – coming from a rising global demand for batteries, the resource was touted as the region's next major economic commodity.

A major shakeup for the town centre was also at the forefront of discussions, with the city aiming to improve amenities and grow its population by 30 per cent by 2030.

A recurring theme throughout the conference was a love for Kalgoorlie and its sense of community, with attendees looking to work together in an exciting time for the region.

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The Growing Kalgoorlie-Boulder Economic Development Conference jumped out of the blocks in the morning session, with lithium miner Neometals revealing its plans to build a new lithium refinery 5km outside Kalgoorlie-Boulder township.

In a major economic shake-up for the Goldfields region, the downstream processing plant will create more than 100 jobs and the capacity to produce an initial 10,000 tonnes of lithium hydroxide annually – a substance crucial to the battery-making process.

In coordination with the State Government and the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Neometals will sub-lease the 40-hectare site for two years, during which time it will undertake feasibility studies, before moving ahead with construction.

The lithium miner has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the city to receive critical infrastructure essential to the refinery's success.

Speaking at the conference last week, Neometals Managing Director Chris Réed said the development could be a game changer for the region.

"It will be a massive project," he said. "It will be like when they put the nickel smelter there – there will be a new generation of jobs for Kalgoorlie-Boulder.

"It's all about batteries for lithium. Traditionally it's been used in glass and ceramics, but now it's all about batteries and they are getting bigger.

"As lithium is not substitutional in lithium batteries, we need more lithium hydroxide, and it is easier to make the best-quality lithium hydroxide from rocks."

The refinery will be fed by Neometals' 13.8 per cent stake in the Mt Marion lithium project, the third-largest known deposit of lithium in the world.

"If you've bought an Apple product in the last year, there is a 50 per cent chance the lithium in that battery came



Neometal's stake in the Mt Marion project will provide feed for its Kalgoorlie lithium refinery. Image: Neometals.

from Mt Marion, 40km south of Coolgardie," Mr Reed said.

"The opportunity for us is to supply lithium hydroxide into the west, because currently 70 per cent of the world's lithium is processed in China.

"Australia has a very significant role to play – we are producing half the world's lithium."

STATE GOVERNMENT CONTINUING TO BACK LITHIUM

Attending the conference, Minister for Regional Development Alannah MacTiernan said Western Australia was well placed to take advantage of the boom in battery metals.

"This is very exciting for the state," she said. "We see lithium absolutely as the new gold. We are going to be one of the world's largest producers of rock lithium.

"This time around we don't just want to be digging a hole in the ground, we want to be doing the value add."

With the State Government setting up a taskforce to drive lithium production values across WA, Ms MacTiernan said this announcement was the start of a long-term plan to eventually begin producing batteries.

"We have put about \$6 million on the table for research excellence around lithium and energy metals to ensure we are well placed for the 21st century battery boom."

The state's investment will be supplemented by the work being done at the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Mining Innovation Hub operated by CRC ORE, which will translate leading Australian mining research into real economic outcomes.

ENHANCING OPPORTUNITIES LOCALLY

While Kalgoorlie will remain predominately

a gold mining town, City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Mayor John Bowler said it was important to broaden the city's economic base.

"This is a great boost for our economy," he said. "We've got gold, we've got nickel and now we've got lithium and cobalt.

"When you add to that base it strengthens you."

With vacancies for jobs already appearing, Mr Bowler made a strong case for making the move to the city.

"People who move here fall in love with the place," he said.

"If you're employed and only getting \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year, come to Kalgoorlie. You will earn a lot more money and a better quality of life."

According to the latest data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Kalgoorlie-Boulder has the highest average wage in the country, sitting just under \$100,000 per annum.

"We will be bending over backwards to make sure this is a successful project for our city and the state," Mr Bowler said.

Mr Reed said he was proud to be bringing a lithium refinery to the doorstep of Kalgoorlie.

"We are going to process our lithium locally, so we don't have to drag it 700km down to Kwinana," he said.

"We can't think of a more secure jurisdiction, when we go to sell our product to customers, than WA."

A final investment decision for the refinery is due by the middle of next year, with Neometals hoping to then begin a two-year construction period, to be finished by 2021.

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Neometals

The evolution of lithium

ASX: NMT



Neometals Ltd ("Neometals" - ASX:NMT) is a developer of industrial mineral and advanced materials projects.

Neometals has two key divisions – a fully integrated Lithium business and a Titanium-Vanadium development business. Both are supported by proprietary technologies that assist downstream integration and cost efficiencies.

Neometals' strategy focuses on de-risking and developing long life projects with strong partners and integrating down the value chain to increase margins. The company aims to leverage its cashflows to grow opportunities that provide sustainable mineral and material solutions to customers and to return value to shareholders.

- Ownership of a 13.8% stake in the Mt Marion lithium mine near Kalgoorlie.
- Holds lithium concentrate offtake option forming the backbone to the Neometals fully integrated lithium business.
- Lithium – 'cradle to the grave': with secure mine source, lithium hydroxide refining and lithium ion battery recycling process.
- 100% ownership of Barrambie Titanium-Vanadium-Project – one of the world's highest grade hard rock titanium-vanadium deposits.



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