



GOSCHEN PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project

ISSUE 1 – FEBRUARY 2024

PROJECT UPDATE

Hello everyone – I look forward to headlining future community newsletters and am keen for you to join me on the Goschen Project journey.

As a member of the VHM executive team, I am responsible for site construction, infrastructure development which includes water, power, roads and transport, and working to ensure everything is ready for the mine to be established and become operational.

It's an honour to be a part of such a significant project for the Loddon-Mallee region, Victoria, and indeed for Australia. If approved, the Goschen Project will make a massive contribution to the local and broader economy.

I strongly believe it's important that I am regularly in the region to meet with landowners, forge strong relationships with local Shires, and to gain a first-hand understanding of local issues so they can be addressed.

The Project is currently working through the rigorous State government Environment Effects Statement (EES) assessment process. VHM respects the viewpoints of community members who have made submissions as part of this process. We are fully committed to working with the local community and to minimise potential disruptions from the proposed mine. The environmental studies which form the EES have been undertaken by experts in their fields and have taken more than five years to gather, analyse and present data, giving us a solid platform upon which to develop the Goschen Project. It's important to note that environmental monitoring is ongoing and will continue throughout the life of the Project.

Our team is aware that attracting a regionally based workforce and ensuring there is suitable accommodation are key challenges - not only for VHM, but for other new and expanding industries in the Loddon-Mallee region. This has prompted our involvement in key strategic 'think-tanks' such as the recently held Swan Hill Housing Summit and the Cross-Border Future Industry Workforce Forum. Our continued involvement with these groups ensures we are part of the conversation in developing solutions to known and emerging issues.

This year we are happy to continue our sponsorship of the Golden Rivers and Central Murray Football-Netball Leagues, the Kerang and District Agricultural Show, the Teacher Earth Science Education Program (TESEP) and the Rotary Club of Kerang Annual Art Show.

Bernie Hyde
VHM Executive General Manager - Projects

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VHM IN COMMUNITY

- Kerang Community Market: **24 February; 23 March**
- Swan Hill Harmony Day: **2 March**
- Kerang Traders Easter Market: **28 March**
- Rotary Club of Kerang Annual Art Show: **29 March**
- Quambatook Tractor Pull: **30 March**

CONTACT US

Have you got a question or comment?

Feel free to contact us and share your views on the Goschen Project.

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What's next in the Approvals process?

As part of the process to seek approval to establish the Goschen Rare Earths and Mineral Sands Project, the public exhibition of the Environmental Effects Statement (EES) closed on 17 January 2024. All submissions made during the exhibition period are public documents and can be viewed on the Engage Victoria website: engage.vic.gov.au/project/Goschen-IAC/page/Submissions

The next step in the process was the Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC) Directions Hearing which was a Zoom Webinar video conference on 13 February 2024. During this Hearing the IAC gave directions for the Public Hearing including how it will be conducted, consider procedural matters, and site inspections. Members of the community were able to listen to the Directions Hearing and the audio recording can be found here: engage.vic.gov.au/Goschen-IAC

The Public Hearing will commence in the week beginning Monday 25 March 2024 and will run for five weeks. The purpose of this Hearing is to provide VHM and submitters the opportunity to speak in support of their written submission. The Hearing will be open for anyone to watch and a timetable for the Hearing was published after the Directions Hearing. The IAC will consider all written submissions made towards the Goschen Project, irrespective of whether a submitter requests to be heard at the Hearing.

At the completion of the Public Hearing, the IAC will write and submit its report to the Minister for Planning within 40 business days from the last day of proceedings. The Minister will then consider the report and make a determination on the Goschen Project.

Mining Licence application

Alongside the EES, VHM placed the Goschen Project's Mining Licence Application on public notice on 9 January 2024. The review and issue of a mining licence by the Earth Resources Regulator (ERR) is dependent on the outcome of the EES approvals process. Statutory advertising for the mining licence application has run concurrently with the EES public exhibition phase.

The Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources is responsible for granting the mining licence and the decision will depend on a positive endorsement of the EES by the State Planning Minister. If granted, the mining licence allows application for approval to construct, operate and close the Goschen Project. A Work Plan will be submitted to ERR which details how VHM will manage community engagement, rehabilitation, monitoring, and auditing (the draft work plan was exhibited as part of the EES).

Federal Government Critical Minerals Prospectus

On 29 January 2024 the Federal Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia the Hon Madeleine King MP and Trade and Tourism Minister Senator the Hon Don Farrell released the Australian Critical Minerals Prospectus. This document showcases 52 high quality, investment-ready critical mineral projects. The Goschen Project is included in this prospectus (refer page 61 of the document).

This latest Prospectus showcases projects from the new Critical Minerals List as well as Australia's capability to meet rising global demand in critical minerals while building supply chain security.

The Australian Critical Minerals Prospectus is available on the Australian Trade and Investment Commission (Austrade) website: globalaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-01/ATIC_Australian_Critical_Minerals_Jan_2024.pdf

Drilling rehabilitation

Did you know that in order to hold an exploration licence in Victoria, the Company is required to rehabilitate any surface disturbances resulting from its activities? Each exploration licence is also subject to a minimum bond of \$10,000, which is only returned upon completion of the rehabilitation program.

VHM has been working closely with the landowners to ensure they are satisfied with our rehabilitation efforts, not only soon after the drilling program ends, but also later on to ensure the rehabilitation is successful on a long-term basis.

The photo below illustrates the rehabilitation of a paddock after 233 holes were drilled in it during the VHM drill program in May 2022.



First season of crop and harvest after successful rehabilitation within the Goschen footprint, following exploration drilling activity in 2022.

Environmental monitoring program

Since 2018 VHM has been monitoring a range of environmental elements to establish baseline and background scientific data. All these baseline results have been published in the EES document. Some of the monitoring being undertaken is explained below.

Dust monitoring – VHM currently has six Australian standard-compliant depositional dust gauges located on and around the proposed mine site. These passive gauges collect naturally deposited dust, before being sent for analysis for a range of metals.

Groundwater – eight groundwater bores are being monitored every six months to capture water samples, measuring groundwater depths, salinity levels, and measuring chemicals and dissolved oxygen in the water.

Aquatic surveys – monitoring is underway at Kangaroo Lake to establish baseline information on the fish populations in Kangaroo Lake.



Fish monitoring in Kangaroo Lake.



One of the six dust monitoring stations that continues to gather data on and around the proposed mine site.

Reminder for local businesses to register on ICN Gateway

In 2023 we advised via our Project Update newsletter that the Goschen Project is now registered on the ICN Gateway: icn.org.au – a digital platform that supports local industry participation, allows small and medium enterprises the opportunity to compete for work on major projects, and which assists VHM with the Project procurement process.

We encourage all businesses and suppliers in the Loddon Mallee region interested in working with, and servicing, the Goschen Project, to create a company profile using the template on the ICN Gateway: gateway.icn.org.au/docs/Creating_an_ICN_Gateway_Company_Profile.pdf. There is no cost to creating a company profile on the ICN platform.

Once your company profile is created, you can then register an Expression of Interest to provide services to the Goschen Project – refer to the User Guide: gateway.icn.org.au/docs/EOI_User_Guide.pdf

At the appropriate time, Project work packages will be uploaded to the ICN Gateway, so we recommend that businesses check the ICN Gateway website on a regular basis in future to keep up to date with the latest work packages.

VHM's preference is local product and service suppliers wherever practical, with the longer-term view of developing local business capability and capacity.

Swan Hill Housing Summit

In mid-November VHM participated in the Beyond Bricks and Mortar Housing Summit 2023 hosted by Regional Housing Victoria on behalf of the Swan Hill Rural City Council. More than 120 government, business and industry representatives came together in this forum to discuss and develop strategies to attract new skills and people to the region – a complex issue with not enough housing and accommodation options currently available to suit the many different and individual needs.

VHM will continue to work closely with Swan Hill Council and the State government to help develop solutions to address the shortage of different types of accommodation that will be needed by workers who will develop the Goschen Project, the workforce needed to service the expanding horticultural sector, as well as the burgeoning renewable energy projects and energy transmission infrastructure projects.

Cross-Border Future Industry Workforce Forum - a Victoria and New South Wales government initiative



VHM's Bernie Hyde participating in panel discussions during the Forum.

As new and expanded projects across the critical minerals, renewable energy and irrigated horticulture industries begin to come on stream, the question is rightly asked, 'Where is the workforce going to come from?'

Being part of this regional challenge prompted VHM to participate in the Future Industry Work-force Forum in December 2023 to discuss ideas on how to develop a localised, skilled workforce that meets both short- and long-term needs and leaves a positive legacy for the region.

Facilitated by Regional Australia Institute, the forum brought together key players from all sectors to develop a shared understanding of up-coming workforce needs, and to find solutions for the benefit of all industries. This will lead to collaborative strategies across the region with VHM volunteering to be part of the taskforce to progress and implement actions.

Community update - what's coming up in 2024?

2024 Victorian Mine Rescue Competition

VHM will once again be part of the annual Victorian Mine Rescue Competition organised by the Australian Minerals Council – Victoria Division, as sponsor of the Winning Team Captain Award. The 2024 competition will be held between 15-17 March at two locations in Bendigo – the Fosterville Gold Mine and Central Deborah Tourist Mine. Members of the public will be able to witness a number of the rescue and response scenarios which also involve Victoria Police and Ambulance Victoria.



Emergency simulation exercise taking place during the 2023 event.

2024 Rotary Club of Kerang Art Show

VHM is proud to continue its sponsorship of the Rotary Club of Kerang Annual Art Show, which will be held in Kerang during Easter from 29-31 March 2024.

The Art Show has been established to showcase Kerang and district during a time when many visitors are holidaying in the area and both locals and visitors can enjoy a quality display of fine art. Funds raised from the event are injected directly back into the community and support a wide range of local projects and initiatives.



2024 Football-Netball season

VHM is again supporting the Golden Rivers and Central Murray Football Netball Leagues and looks forward to another great season of regional football and netball. Roll-on April when the competition begins.



2024 Teacher Earth Science Education Program (TESEP)

Building on the 2023 TESEP program, VHM will be involved in delivering the earth science education program to local schools and their teachers in 2024. Stay tuned for further updates that we will provide once TESEP announces this year's schedule for providing rock kits to schools and professional development workshops for their teachers.



TESEP consultant geologist Dr Rodney Boucher inspiring Swan Hill College students about earth science in December 2023.

Come and chat with us

VHM will have pop-up information stands at the following community events:

Saturday 24 February:	Kerang Community Market
Saturday 2 March:	Swan Hill Harmony Day
Saturday 23 March:	Kerang Community Market
Thursday 28 March:	Kerang Traders Easter Market
Friday 29 March:	Kerang Art Show
Saturday 30 March:	Australian Tractor Pull Championships, Quambatook

