

Australia updates their Critical Minerals List and Adds a second, introducing the Australian Strategic Materials List

written by Tracy Weslosky | December 19, 2023

The Albanese Government of Australia has recently undertaken a notable [revision](#) of its critical minerals policies, underscoring the nation's focus on energy, job creation, and national defense. These revisions include updating the Critical Minerals List and introducing a new Strategic Materials List, an integral part of a larger strategy to establish Strategic Critical Minerals Hubs across the country.

Significant changes to the Critical Minerals List have been made, notably adding fluorine, molybdenum, arsenic, selenium, and tellurium, while removing helium. This update brings Australia's list into closer alignment with those of its international strategic partners. These minerals play a vital role in the energy transition and are heavily utilized in the defense and technology sectors.

Alastair Neill, Director of the [Critical Minerals Institute](#) (CMI), offered an expert perspective on these additions. He remarked, "It was interesting to see some of the additions. Arsenic is involved pretty well in Europe and the US, but again China, has 40% of the world's production, I think the next largest is Peru. So there is lots of arsenic in North America. But just because of the environmental hoops that you have to go through to deal with that I think has prevented sort

of domestic production. They also added molybdenum, which is an interesting choice, and tellurium, and selenium, which are very small markets by themselves.” Neill’s insights highlight the strategic considerations and complexities in the global supply chain of these minerals.

Additionally, the new [Strategic Materials](#) List complements the Critical Minerals List by identifying essential commodities for the energy transition that are not at risk of supply chain disruptions. This list includes copper, nickel, aluminum, phosphorous, tin, and zinc, notable for their established industries and stable supply chains.

A key component of this initiative is the feasibility study for Strategic Critical Minerals Hubs, aimed at identifying potential locations for critical minerals infrastructure precincts, especially for commodities that might face supply chain disruptions. This study is informed by the Government’s Critical Minerals Strategy and input from industry and state and territory resources ministers.

Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, Madeleine King, has emphasized that these changes are the culmination of extensive consultations with industry, the public, and state and territory governments. The updates are poised to enhance Australia’s stature as a significant exporter of clean energy materials, reflecting the critical role of these minerals in the greening of Australia’s economy and its national defense.

The Critical Minerals List and the Strategic Materials List will be updated regularly to reflect changing economic and geostrategic dynamics. The inclusion of minerals like copper, nickel, aluminum, phosphorous, tin, and zinc on the Strategic Materials List highlights their economic and strategic importance, especially in light of the global energy transition.

The Australian Government maintains both the Critical Minerals List and the Strategic Materials List to identify minerals crucial for the nation's modern technologies, economy, and national security. These lists are subject to review at least every three years and may be adjusted in response to global strategic, technological, economic, and policy changes. The Critical Minerals List comprises minerals essential for modern technologies and national security, while the Strategic Materials List includes those important for the global transition to net zero and other strategic applications, but with currently stable supply chains. The government's ongoing support for the extraction and processing of these minerals is a critical aspect of monitoring their market developments.