# ioneer

## Rhyolite Ridge

American Source of Lithium & Boron for an Energy Efficient Future

**ASX: INR** 

Citi Basic Materials Conference New York, 28 November 2018

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The information in this report that relates to Exploration Results is based on information compiled by Bernard Rowe, a Competent Person who is a Member of the Australian Institute of Geoscientists. Bernard Rowe is a shareholder, employee and Managing Director of ioneer Ltd. Mr Rowe has sufficient experience that is relevant to the style of mineralisation and type of deposit under consideration and to the activity being undertaken to qualify as a Competent Person as defined in the 2012 Edition of the 'Australasian Code for Reporting of Exploration Results, Mineral Resources and Ore Reserves'. Bernard Rowe consents to the inclusion in the report of the matters based on his information in the form and context in which it appears.

In respect of Mineral Resources referred to in this presentation and previously reported by the Company in accordance with JORC Code 2012, the Company confirms that it is not aware of any new information or data that materially affects the information included in the public report titled "Updated Rhyolite Ridge Mineral Resource Statement" dated 23 October 2018 and released on ASX. Further information regarding the Mineral Resource estimate can be found in that report. All material assumptions and technical parameters underpinning the estimates in the report continue to apply and have not materially changed.

In respect of production targets referred to in this presentation and previously disclosed, the Company confirms that it is not aware of any new information or data that materially affects the information included in the public report titled "Outstanding Results from Rhyolite Ridge Pre-Feasibility" dated 23 October 2018. Further information regarding the production estimates can be found in that report. All material assumptions and technical parameters underpinning the estimates in the report continue to apply and have not materially changed.

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# **Capital Structure**

Poised to become a responsible and profitable producer of the materials necessary for a sustainable future, ioneer Ltd (ASX:INR) is focussed on developing one of only two major lithium-boron deposits in the world. Shares

Options (Unlisted)

Performance Rights (Unlisted)

Cash (30 Sep 2018)

A\$0.24

Share Price (27 Nov 2018)

A\$75M

Market Cap

A\$350M

Ownership Top 20 Directors / Management 60% 10%

# Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project



USA supplier of critical minerals



Nevada location

Large deposit



NEVADA

Long mine life, expandable

Shallow, thick & flat lying



Open pit mining, low strip ratio

Integral to energy efficient future

Mining friendly & close to markets

Soft ore & waste rock



Low-cost mining & crushing

Amenable to heap/vat leaching



No roasting or new technology

Lithium & boron end products

\$\$

Two revenue streams



### = world's lowest cost lithium producer at < \$2,000/t lithium carbonate

# Delivering first major lithium mine in the USA

...and the next major boron mine globally.

## In a tier 1 jurisdiction:

- Excellent infrastructure with direct access to rapidly expanding American and Asian markets
- Located on Federal (BLM) land
- No competing land uses or nearby residents
- Permitting via EA or EIS as determined by Federal BLM
- Net proceeds minerals tax not exceeding 5%

**Rhyolite Ridge** 

# Limited Lithium-Ion Battery Supply Chain in USA



## Major Deposits/Districts



Lithium-Boron deposits are rare – only Rhyolite Ridge and Rio's Jadar

# **Two Distinct Types of Mineralisation at Rhyolite Ridge**

Li-only (Clay) Resource\* Li-B (Searlesite) Resource\* Core Core containing containing Li-only Li-B (Searlesite) **121Mt at:** (Clay) 354Mt at: mineralisation mineralisation 1,565ppm Li 1,740ppm Li 12,600 ppm B 1,185 ppm B **Contains Contains** Boron grade 2.9Mt Li Carbonate 1.1Mt Li Carbonate 10x more than 2.3Mt Boric Acid 8.6Mt Boric Acid Li-only Resource To be stockpiled

To be processed

\* Indicated and Inferred Resource

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## **Project Design Layout per PFS**



# **PFS Highlights**

Annual Revenue <b>\$450M</b>	Annual EBITDA <b>\$297M</b>	After-tax Cashflow <b>\$6.6B</b>	After-tax NPV (7% real): <b>\$1.8B</b>	IRR <b>28%</b>
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 \$1,796 per tonne of lithium carbonate (with boric acid credit)

### Long Life Project

- >30 years & expandable
- Initial production Q3 2021



### Lithium carbonate = 20ktpa, Boric acid = 173ktpa

Note: The PFS base case used lithium carbonate sale prices ranging from US\$12,693/tonne to US\$16,862/tonne (CIF China) and a constant boric acid sale price of US\$700/tonne (CIF Asia).

# **Very Competitive Costs**

Rhyolite Ridge to be at bottom of the lithium cost curve

### **PFS Base Case:**

- Operating costs < \$2,000/t lithium carbonate (with boric acid credit)</li>
- Boric acid revenue at conservative \$700/t pays for most of site operating costs



# **Capex Flexibility**

## Project sizing provides flexibility:

- Acid plant key capex driver
- Larger acid plant provides economies of scale
- Base case capital intensity of \$18k/t LCE compares favourably with industry range of \$15-25k/t LCE
- Capital intensity reduces to \$15k/t LCE at 3.6Mtpa
- Rapid payback of capital: 4 years
- Total capex reduces to \$421M for 1.5Mtpa

Base Case (2.7Mtpa) CapEx	US\$M	% of Direct
Acid Plant	173	41%
Processing Plant	190	45%
Other Direct	57	14%
Total Direct Cost	420	
Indirect + Owners Costs	111	
Contingency	68	
Total Project Costs	599	



Note: Lithium carbonate equivalent (**LCE**) based on prices of US\$10,000/tonne for lithium carbonate and US\$700/tonne for boric acid.



# Mining

### Conventional truck and shovel quarry operation

### Lithium-boron ore:

- Outcrops over 3 km and dips gently to west
- 20m to 40m thick and laterally consistent
- Resource open to south, north and east

Near-surface southern extensions currently being drilled:

- Aim to extend highest lithium grades to south
- Likely to upgrade boron grades in early mine plan
- Potential to reduce PFS strip ratio in early years of mining

## Processing

## Using processing technologies proven at commercial scale

- On-site acid plant provides all of the steam and power required (+ circa 38MW surplus)
- Ore crushed to 25mm
- Ore vat leached at 50-60° C and at ambient pressure (similar to oxide copper)
- Boric acid crystallised from solution (similar to Rio's Boron Mine)
- Lithium carbonate crystallised from solution (similar to lithium brines)
- Overall lithium and boron recoveries of >80%
- Very low cash costs due to:
  - Simple process and high recoveries
  - Exothermic nature of producing acid
  - Boron revenue offsetting most of site costs



# **Material Circuits**

- PLS into boric acid circuit to be circa:
  - 50-60° C
  - 0.05-0.10% Li / 5.0-5.5% boric acid
- Boric acid separated from the PLS first, primarily by cooling and then evaporation/concentration
- Heating and evaporation will be used to concentrate the PLS
- Concentrated solution sent to crystallisers
- Brine entering the  $Li_2CO_3$  circuit to contain  $\approx$  1.0-1.4% lithium
- Li<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> circuit similar to Li brine operations
- Impurities to be removed via precipitation are primarily Na, Mg, Ca, Fe
- Technical grade Li<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub> initially
- Install purification circuit to produce battery grade Li<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>3</sub>
- Testwork underway on producing LiOH

## **Boric Acid Circuit**



## Lithium Carbonate Circuit



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# Key steps to production

## Indicative Timeline for Rhyolite Ridge\*



# **Funding Flexibility**

Well positioned to assess and negotiate funding:

## **Detailed PFS completed**

Two substantial revenue streams

Full unencumbered ownership

Funded to progress project to FID with  $\approx$ A\$75M cash

Range of customers for two products

Engaging with multiple parties

USA supplier of critical minerals

Acid plant (≈40% of capex) option to finance separately

Potential co-generation financing for steam turbine

Large, scalable project provides optionality

## **Recent Achievements**

Providing the materials for a sustainable & thriving planet.

PFS demonstrated the Project's scale, long life and potential to become the lowest cost lithium producer in the world as well as the largest lithium producer in the United States.

With forecast annual production of 20 Ktpa lithium carbonate and 173 Ktpa boric acid, Rhyolite Ridge will be a globally significant producer of both lithium and boron.



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Providing the materials for a sustainable & thriving planet.

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# Appendix

## Board with experience in Li-B development:

### James D. Calaway

Non-executive Chairman

### Former:

Non-exec Chairman of Orocobre Ltd

### Key experience: Building & transitioning junior lithium, oil and gas, solar and software companies into

successful commercial enterprises

## Alan Davies

Non-executive Director

### **Former:** CEO, Energy & Industrial Minerals, Rio Tinto

## Key Experience: 20-year career with

Rio Tinto; Led Rio's division containing the Boron Mine in California and the Jadar lithium-boron deposit in Serbia

## **Patrick Elliott**

Non-executive Director

**Former:** Head of corporate finance for Morgan Grenfell Australia Limited

### Key Experience: 30 years experience in investment and corporate management, specialising in the resources sector

### John Hofmeister

Non-executive Director

### **Former:** President, Shell Oil, US-based subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell

Key Experience: Extensive energy industry experience and long-term advocate for better energy policies in the United States

## **Bernard Rowe**

Managing Director

### Former: Managing Director of INR since IPO in 2007

### Key Experience: Qualified geologist with over 25 years international experience in mineral exploration and management, including over 15 years in Nevada

## Commercial & Technical Team:

### Ian Bucknell

**Chief Financial Officer** 

### Key experience:

Ian has worked in several high-growth organisations and financed projects from discovery to production. 20+ years of international resource experience including being CFO of AWE and Drillsearch Energy.

## **Matthew Weaver**

Sr. VP Engineering & Operations

### Key experience:

30+ years working on both small and largescale operations and development projects at BHP, Rio Tinto, Newmont and several smaller mining companies

## Michael Le Page

Commercial Director, Sales & Marketing

### Key experience:

40 years industry experience including various Chief Commercial, VP and GM roles with Rio Tinto. Recently in global sales, marketing and supply chain in salt, gypsum, talc and borates plus project work in lithium and potash

### Yoshio Nagai

Sales & Business Development Director

### Key experience:

25+ years international experience including 10 years with Rio Tinto primarily in Asia and the USA as Sales Vice President for borates, salt and talc products

### Peter Ehren

Lead Process Engineer

Key experience: Extensive experience in process development and optimisation for lithium, boron and potassium including with SQM and Orocobre

**FLUOR**<sub>®</sub>

is the engineering and design firm for the Rhyolite Ridge DFS

## End uses



- 1. Strong demand growth
- 2. Limited supply in North America
- 3. Essential for modern life
- 4. Broad range of uses mitigates reliance on single sector
- 5. Major Boron users also use Lithium
- 6. Small fraction of overall product cost

# **Lithium and Boron Conversion Factors**

- Lithium and boron grades are fundamentally presented in parts per million ("ppm") or percentages of each element in a given sample or estimate.
- Lithium and boron grades are also expressed as various compounds in percentages in order to facilitate comparisons between different types of deposits and/or various products.
- The lithium carbonate grades reported in the Company's Mineral Resource estimates are calculated using the conversion factors in the table to the right and assume 100% of the contained lithium is converted to lithium carbonate
- The use of Lithium Carbonate Equivalent ("LCE") is to provide data comparable with various lithium industry reports. LCE is often used to present the amount of contained lithium in a standard manner, i.e. – to convert lithium oxide into lithium carbonate. LCE is also used to convert revenue from other products (e.g. boric acid) produced at lithium operations into the amount of lithium carbonate that would provide revenue equivalent to a tonne of lithium carbonate.
- The formula used for the LCE values quoted in this report is:

LCE = (lithium carbonate tonnes produced + [(boric acid tonnes produced \* US\$700/tonne))/US\$10,000/tonne]

The conversion factors presented below are calculated on the atomic weights and number of atoms of each element in the various compounds.

Convert from		Convert to Li	Convert to Li <sub>2</sub> O	Convert to Li <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>
Lithium	Li	1.000	2.152	5.322
Lithium Oxide	Li <sub>2</sub> O	0.465	1.000	2.473
Lithium Carbonate	Li <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.188	0.404	1.000

Convert from		Convert to B	Convert to B <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	Convert to H <sub>3</sub> BO <sub>3</sub>
Boron	В	1.000	3.219	5.718
Boric Oxide	B <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	0.311	1.000	1.776
Boric Acid	H <sub>3</sub> BO <sub>3</sub>	0.175	0.563	1.000

## October 2018 Mineral Resource Estimate (1,050ppm Li Cut-off)

<b>Fotal Resource including Lithium-Only</b>	<b>Mineralisation and Lithium-Boron</b>	(Searlesite) Mineralisation
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								Contained			
Group	Classification	Tonnage	Li	В	Li <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>3</sub> BO <sub>3</sub>	K <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>	Li <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	Boric Acid	Potassium	
		Mt	ppm	ppm	%	%	%	kt	kt	kt	
	Indicated	149.6	1,890	7,250	1.0	4.1	1.6	1,510	6,180	2,430	
Upper Zone	Inferred	<u>49.4</u>	<u>1,860</u>	<u>4,300</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>2.4</u>	<u>1.6</u>	<u>490</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>770</u>	
	Total	199.1	1,880	6,520	1.0	3.7	1.6	2,000	7,380	3,210	
	Indicated	192.4	1,370	2,880	0.7	1.6	1.6	1,410	3,060	3,020	
Lower Zone	Inferred	<u>83.9</u>	<u>1,480</u>	<u>1,080</u>	<u>0.8</u>	<u>0.6</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>660</u>	<u>490</u>	<u>1,230</u>	
	Total	276.3	1,410	2,340	0.7	1.3	1.5	2070	3,550	4,250	
Upper & Lower Zone	Indicated	342.0	1,600	4,800	0.9	2.7	1.6	2,910	9,240	5,450	
	Inferred	<u>133.4</u>	1,600	2,300	<u>0.9</u>	<u>1.3</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>1,150</u>	<u>1,690</u>	<u>2,000</u>	
	Grand Total	475.4	1,610	4,100	0.9	2.3	1.6	4,060	10,930	7,460	

## October 2018 Mineral Resource Estimate (1,050ppm Li & 0.5% B Cut-off Cut-off)

### Lithium-Boron (Searlesite) Mineralisation

									Contained	
Group	Classification	Tonnage	Li	В	Li <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	H <sub>3</sub> BO <sub>3</sub>	K <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub>	Li <sub>2</sub> CO <sub>3</sub>	Boric Acid	Potassium
		Mt	ppm	ppm	%	%	%	kt	kt	kt
	Indicated	71.9	1,840	14,110	1.0	8.1	2.0	700	5,800	1,420
Upper Zone	Inferred	<u>14.7</u>	<u>1,970</u>	<u>12,150</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>6.9</u>	<u>2.0</u>	<u>150</u>	<u>1,020</u>	<u>300</u>
	Total	86.6	1,860	13,780	1.0	7.9	2.0	860	6,830	1,720
	Indicated	32.2	1,430	9,750	0.8	5.4	1.7	240	1,730	530
Lower Zone	Inferred	<u>2.6</u>	<u>1,620</u>	<u>6,690</u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>3.3</u>	<u>1.8</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>50</u>
	Total	34.8	1,440	9,520	0.8	5.2	1.7	270	1,820	580
Upper & Lower Zone	Indicated	104.1	1,700	12,800	0.9	7.2	1.9	950	7,540	1,950
	Inferred	<u>17.3</u>	<u>1,900</u>	<u>11,300</u>	<u>1.0</u>	<u>6.4</u>	<u>2.0</u>	<u>180</u>	<u>1,110</u>	<u>340</u>
	Grand Total	121.4	1,740	12,600	0.9	7.1	1.9	1,130	8,650	2,300

For further information on this Mineral Resource estimate, see Company announcement titled "Updated Rhyolite Ridge Mineral Resource Statement" dated 23 October 2018.