

ASX ANNOUNCEMENT

05 September 2023

ASX: BSX

Vietnam Rare Earth Supply Chain Additional Information

Further to its announcement on 5 September 2023 regarding “Developing Vietnam Rare Earth Supply Chain” Blackstone Minerals Limited (“Blackstone” or the “Company”) wishes to provide additional information to clarify the partnership between the Company, Vietnam Rare Earths Joint Stock Company (“VTRE”) and Australian Strategic Materials Limited (“ASM”) (ASX: ASM) collectively referred to as the Parties.

The Company confirms that the Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) between Vietnam Rare Earths Joint Stock Company (“VTRE”), Australian Strategic Materials Limited (“ASM”) and Blackstone on the 25 July 2023 remains on foot. Further to the MOU, the Parties have now entered into a binding side letter to the MOU whereby VTRE agrees it will work exclusively with the Company and ASM on advancing the initiatives as outlined in the MOU for the duration of the term of the MOU.

The Parties continue to progress the initiatives outlined in the MOU with the immediate focus being undertaking appropriate due diligence on the initiatives and to continue good faith discussions to negotiate and finalise binding termsheets on the commercial model and structuring for the business in Vietnam. Subject to completion of due diligence and progression of the binding termsheets the activities of the partnership may include:

- Securing mining concession(s) that are available in the Dong Pao region. The concession(s) will be made available through an auction process conducted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (“MONRE”). To participate in the auction process, companies will need to demonstrate capability and experience across the full value chain from geology through to refining. The Parties are well positioned to demonstrate this in-country capability and expertise;
- Blackstone making the Company’s concentrator and testing facilities available to undertake flotation testwork on the Dong Pao ores. Laboratory scale testwork undertaken by VTRE has indicated that the Ban Phuc Nickel Mine (“BPNM”) concentrator could be suitable for concentrating the Dong Pao rare earths;
- In addition to focusing on Dong Pao, the Parties will also investigate the option to secure ionic clay deposits in Yen Bai Province, with an immediate focus on Van Yen. The Parties acknowledge that in-situ leaching has been adopted within this region of South-East Asia, heavily impacting the environment and surrounding communities. As such, the Parties are committed to investigating current-sustainable leaching technology that adheres to the Parties’ high ESG standards. It is our collective vision to demonstrate to Vietnam, and the larger region, a more sustainable approach to extracting rare earth elements (REE) from ionic clay deposits. VTRE have confirmed that precipitates from the leaching process can be refined through the VTRE Refinery located outside of Hanoi.

Authorised by the Managing Director on behalf of the Board.

Scott Williamson
Managing Director