

ASX ANNOUNCEMENT

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## SUSTAINABILITY REPORT FY 2024

Blackstone Minerals Ltd is pleased to release the Company's fourth sustainability report, covering the reporting period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 (FY24).

This report reflects our business-as-usual commitment to ESG as we continue to grow our ambition to become one of the cleanest and lowest carbon nickel producers on the planet and having a positive impact on climate change. Our Ta Khoa Project is already industry leading with regards to carbon footprint, but our team continues to explore initiatives and ideas to drive our carbon impact even lower.

Blackstone Minerals' Managing Director, Scott Williamson commented:

*"The sustainability report and accompanying sustainability databook provide stakeholders with an accurate and transparent account of our efforts, impacts and achievements around material Environmental, Social, and Governance topics."*

Read the full report including the sustainability data book [here](#):

Authorised by the Managing Director on behalf of the Board of Blackstone Minerals Limited.

Ends.

**Scott Williamson**

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Investors are also encouraged to join and engage through the Blackstone Minerals Investor Hub, post questions and feedback through the Q&A function accompanying each piece of content, and [engage directly](#) with the Blackstone team.

### How to join the Blackstone Minerals InvestorHub

1. Head to our [Investor Hub](#) or scan the QR code with your smart device
2. Follow the prompts to sign up for an Investor Hub Account
3. Complete your account profile and link your shareholdings if you are a current shareholder.







**BLACKSTONE**  
MINERALS

**Sustainability  
Report FY 2024**

LOOKING FORWARD.

MINING GREEN.



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### ABOUT BLACKSTONE

Blackstone Minerals Ltd (ASX: BSX / FRA: B9S / OTCM: BLSTF) is focused on studies and potential partnerships for an integrated battery metals processing business in Vietnam that produces Nickel:Cobalt:Manganese ("NCM") precursor products for the globally growing lithium-ion battery industry.

The existing business has a modern nickel mine, located in Vietnam built to Australian standards, which successfully operated as a mechanised underground mine from 2013 to 2016. This will be complemented by a larger concentrator, refinery and precursor facility to become an integrated in-country production facility.

The Company is focused on a partnership model and is collaborating with groups who are committed to sustainable mining, minimising the carbon footprint, and implementing a vertically integrated battery metals supply chain.

The Company's development strategy is underpinned by the ability to secure nickel concentrate and the Company's Vietnamese Ta Khoa Project is an emerging nickel sulphide district through its strategic investments.

Blackstone's FY24 Annual Report has a detailed review of operations.

### FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

Welcome to our fourth sustainability report, covering the reporting period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 (FY24).

This report reflects our business-as-usual commitment to ESG as we continue to grow our ambition to become one of the cleanest and lowest carbon nickel producers on the planet and having a positive impact on climate change. Our Ta Khoa Project is already industry leading with regards to carbon footprint, but our team continues to explore initiatives and ideas to drive our carbon impact even lower.

These include technical studies validating the Ta Khoa Project's low-carbon credentials, an enhanced ESG governance structure, progress on environmental and social baselines, and a commitment to sustainable development that creates shared value with the citizens of Vietnam.

The sustainability report and accompanying sustainability databook provide stakeholders with an accurate and transparent account of our efforts, impacts and achievements around material Environmental, Social, and Governance topics.

We believe in a continuous improvement approach to sustainability and ESG and invite comments on our report, performance and overall ESG approach. Please forward any comments or ideas to [admin@blackstoneminerals.com.au](mailto:admin@blackstoneminerals.com.au).

### ROBUST GOVERNANCE

Deeply integrated into Blackstone's business, ESG performance is driven by the board, led by the executive team, incorporated at all levels of the organisation and supported by a robust set of corporate policies, with ESG risks and opportunities embedded in the enterprise risk register and an established board level Audit, Risk and Environment, Social and Governance Committee.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Identifying and acting on material sustainability issues that affect Blackstone's financial performance and its impact on the environment and society – in both the short and long term – remains a focus. The Company uses a range of processes to keep abreast of sustainability related issues. These include monitoring of industry ESG trends, periodic discussions with institutional shareholders, materiality assessments [FY21 and FY23], social baseline studies at the proposed refinery and mine locations [FY23 and FY24], and feedback from ongoing consultation with Vietnamese government and community stakeholders.

### FY23 Materiality Assessment



## UN GLOBAL COMPACT

Blackstone has been a signatory to the UN Global Compact and its ten principles since 2021. Activities and progress are reported in accordance with the requirement to provide an annual communication on progress. The 2024 communication on progress report can be viewed [here](#).

## DIGBEE

Starting in 2021, Blackstone has engaged leading global mining sustainability platform Digbee ESG™ to conduct a third-party review of the business and its operations, ensuring a robust and continuous improvement approach to sustainability risk and disclosures.

In 2023 the company maintained its overall BBB rating with improvements in key areas including ESG risk management [A to AAA], board capability [BBB to AA] and local team representation [AA to AAA]. The full scorecard is available in the sustainability databook.



### LOW CARBON & LOW COST

Globally, there is increasing awareness about the impacts associated with nickel production, as well as other critical raw materials sourced for the Lithium-ion battery industry and electric vehicle sector, with end users now demanding a level of traceability for all products.

Blackstone's low-carbon focus is totally aligned with the global push towards achieving net zero. The July 2023 European Union Council declaration that from 18 February 2025, every industrial or electric vehicle battery on the EU market with a capacity of over 2 kWh will require a battery passport containing information on items including carbon footprint declaration is a clear indication of societal expectations on producers and manufacturers.

When developed, the Ta Khoa Project will produce nickel for use in technologies around the world. Blackstone embraces both the responsibility and opportunity to ensure future products are responsibly produced and thereafter, responsibly used. In 2021, the Company announced a partnership with Circulor Ltd, the UK-headquartered industry leader in supply chain traceability to establish a full nickel and cathode precursor traceability system, with dynamic CO<sub>2</sub>-e and ESG performance tracking.



## ALIGNMENT WITH VIETNAMESE NATIONAL STRATEGY

The Project was recently included in Vietnam's National Power Master Plan, demonstrating that renewables projects such as the Ta Khoa Project are considered as 'significant value' for Vietnam. Inclusion in the Master Plan also opens the opportunity to enter into Direct Power Purchase Agreements (DPPA) for the provision of renewable energy when the new legislation is implemented.

## CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT

Climate impacts are shaping corporate and investor activity, and Blackstone is committed to providing stakeholders with clear, comparable, and consistent information on the climate risks and opportunities relating to our business. In FY23 the Company completed its third GHG assessment, issued a Climate Change Policy and used the Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosures framework to identify and document climate related risks. These risks now sit within the Corporate Strategic Risk Register. Developing and implementing an operational decarbonisation strategy remains a priority when the definitive feasibility study is complete and a clear pathway to development has been defined. The strategy will focus on identifying the opportunities, plans, pathways and costs required to achieve our low carbon nickel goal.

## LOW CARBON FOOTPRINT

**Life Cycle Analysis** has shown the Project can produce a nickel product with one of the lowest carbon footprints in the industry, with identified pathways to reduce the carbon footprint further with additional studies.

**Increasing renewables** is one of the pathways that Blackstone has continued exploring, entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with independent power producer Limes Renewables Energy S.r.l. to collaborate on the supply of wind renewable energy to the Ta Khoa Project via a direct power purchase agreement (DPPA). Limes is currently advancing a 200 MW wind farm in the province of Son La, Vietnam, where the Ta Khoa Project is located. Blackstone and Limes will work together to develop strategies to allow Blackstone to maximise the use of renewable energy which could include strategies such as energy storage batteries.

**Carbon mineralisation technology** is another pathway being considered to further reduce the Project's carbon footprint. To this end, Blackstone has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Arca Climate Technologies Inc. to further investigate the carbon capture potential at Ta Khoa Project via carbon mineralisation and explore opportunities to utilise Arca's carbon capture technologies within the Project.

Arca will expand on previous characterisation work which has indicated the Ta Khoa Project contains minerals such as brucite, known to be highly reactive to CO<sub>2</sub> in air, with studies completed to date indicating that passive CO<sub>2</sub> capture is possible at a scale of kilo-tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year from the Project's mine waste. Data collected from this engagement will inform future design considerations to maximise carbon mineralisation, further reducing the Ta Khoa Project's carbon footprint and providing a pathway to carbon-negative mining.



## LOW-COST PCAM PRODUCTION

Blackstone's low carbon strategy is complemented by the low-cost of pCAM production, with the Ta Khoa Refinery's current estimated operating cost ranking in the lowest cost quartile of nickel sulphate producers driven by:

- Low labour cost base of US\$2.99 per hour (Source: US Trade Office, 2022), approximately half that of China,
- Access to low-cost, hydroelectric power (US\$0.06 to 0.10 per kWh),
- Streamlined pCAM focused hydromet flowsheet,
- Low-cost concentrate from Blackstone mining operations,
- Opportunistic access to low cost, off-spec nickel concentrates,
- Low neutralisation requirements (reagents) compared to other ore types (e.g. nickel laterites),
- Byproduct credits for copper, magnesium sulphate and sodium sulphate,
- Ability to source many construction materials and reagents within Vietnam,
- Close proximity to other South-East Asian supply chains.

## CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Blackstone's development strategy prioritises the responsible use of natural resources with a focus on recycling, re-use, maximising value for local communities, and technology enabled traceability.

In 2021 Blackstone identified the potential for conversion of refinery residue into building materials. In mid-2023 the Company commenced investigations into the repurposing of its residue into construction material, specifically if the material would be suitable for the manufacturing of residential bricks. Small-batch testing with Perth-based company [Real Material Solutions](#) demonstrated the potential to apply the technology to Ta Khoa Refinery residues.

Subsequently, Blackstone has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Phu Minh Vina Environment and Viet Trung Refractory Material Construction to research opportunities to repurpose and trade residue from the Ta Khoa Refinery into construction material products. Under the MoU, a test work program has been undertaken by licensed Vietnamese analytical laboratories to certify the residue material as non-hazardous waste and fit for use as a construction material. Subject to certification, all residue could be commercialised as input for construction materials (brick, cement, concrete etc.), negating the need for long term residue storage facilities.

Blackstone sees this as a significant opportunity as the repurposing of residue material would:

- Generate additional industry opportunities for the people of Son La Province, Vietnam,
- Reduce the dependency of a residue storage facility, ultimately yielding both capital and operating cost benefits to the Ta Khoa Project,
- Significantly reduce the environmental and community impacts of the project and thus improve permitting timelines,
- Improve social licence to allow Blackstone to operate within Son La Province, Vietnam,
- Generating a new circular economy within Vietnam.

The Company is preparing to distribute a larger shipment of test work residue to Vietnam to allow technical partners to progress their studies and research. Within Australia, the Company, with the aid of Real Material will produce larger batches of bricks and other construction materials to assist with optimising design and test the structural integrity against Australian Standards.

A second significant development in Blackstone's circular economy strategy has been the signing of non-binding MoUs with three Vietnamese companies to develop opportunities to trade byproducts (copper cathode, magnesium sulphate in the form of epsomite and sodium sulphate) produced from the Ta Khoa Refinery.

The engaged companies will use refinery byproducts to produce products such as fertiliser, detergents, construction materials and other chemical products. These products are then used in Vietnamese and global industries such as, but not limited to, agriculture, construction, industrial cleaning products, medical, textile, chemical, paper and glass manufacture.

Importantly, the engaged companies can take the full amount produced by the refinery. The companies confirmed the byproduct volumes produced from the refinery are only a small portion of what is currently being imported into Vietnam, demonstrating offtake security. Blackstone believes it has a competitive advantage to displace the imported epsomite and sodium sulphate products given its location within Vietnam.

Blackstone has also been investigating the capability of these Vietnamese companies to supply high quality reagents to the Ta Khoa Refinery, reducing supply risk for the project. This strategy aligns with previous announcements to explore and contract local companies to assist with project development and execution (refer ASX announcement 20 July 2023).

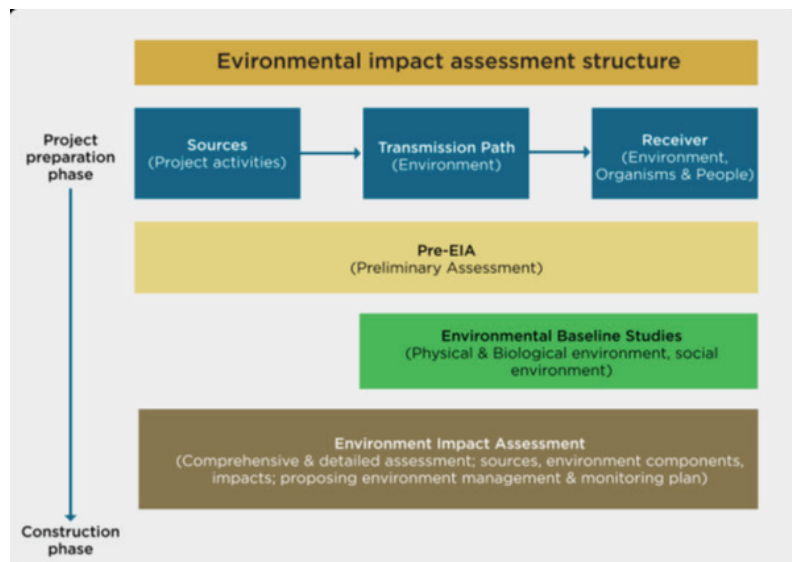
## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Blackstone's approach to environmental management is to avoid creating an impact where possible, and if avoidance is not possible then minimise, rehabilitate, and compensate or offset for residual damage.

Environmental and land management for the Ta Khoa Project is managed by our Vietnamese-based leadership team, with oversight from the executive team and ultimately, the board. These activities are guided by our environmental and sustainability policies.

In FY24 the Company completed all baseline studies required for the Ta Khoa Project and has submitted all documentation required by the Vietnamese regulatory authority (MONRE) to enable the environmental impact assessment (EIA) to be completed.

As the Project moves through the next phases of development the Company will establish the environmental management and monitoring plans needed to meet regulatory requirements and deliver on its Green Nickel™ strategy.





## SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE

Developing the Ta Khoa Project with shared prosperity in mind is a cornerstone of Blackstone's Green Nickel™ Strategy.

The Company approach to socially responsible development of the Ta Khoa Project is to invest in the people who work for us, in the communities that host us, and in skills and infrastructure initiatives that will continue to benefit the province and the nation beyond the life of the project.

Over the past few years, Blackstone has set the groundwork for engagement to ensure the project is mutually beneficial for the Company and host communities. We continue to work hard to grow our teams, build relationships, support local businesses and employment and invest directly into projects in local communities.

The Hanoi-based team has taken on many of the corporate services for the Perth office, including human resources, travel and executive support, a result that is both cost effective and a recognition of the highly capable in-country team the Company has assembled. The skills and expertise of Blackstone's exploration team are being recognised by other explorers in the South-east Asia Region and has resulted in contracts for technical support services to small operators within Vietnam and Laos, with potential to export these services more widely across the region. This has enabled Blackstone to retain its highly skilled exploration team during what has been a period of low activity on the Company's own projects. Looking to the future, the Wabowden Project in Manitoba, Canada, has the potential to take the provision of these technical support services to another level.

To assist with future planning, the Company completed a rapid assessment of supplier capability within Son La Province, with a focus on Son La City, Phu Yen District and Bac Yen District. The study comprised a review secondary data relating to business activity within Son La Province, a sample survey of businesses within the project area and identification of existing enterprise development programmes operated by government and national or international development agencies. The survey identified that the majority of enterprises in Son La Province are micro-enterprises (<10 employees; <10,000,000 VND revenue) and small enterprises (<100 employees; <100,000,000 VND revenue). Fifty-four enterprises were identified as capable of meeting Blackstone criteria for consideration as suppliers, with 17 of these businesses being current or past suppliers to the company.





The Blackstone Mining Information Office located in Son La City was inaugurated in February 2024 during a visit by His Excellency, Mr Andrew Golezinski, Australian Ambassador to Vietnam. The Company has also started running mine site tours to promote the benefits of mining, show case high environmental standards and educate on the Ta Khoa Project. The information office and mine site visits add to Blackstone's multi-faceted approach to engagement, which aims to meet the needs of the Company's diverse stakeholder base.

During May, the Company entered into an agreement with the Phu Yen District Land Fund Development Centre. The Centre is the government agency which has the responsibility for land acquisition and compensation when the Government acquires land and then leases land to investors, as will be the case for the Refinery. Blackstone's agreement will see the Land Fund Development Centre certify the area to be acquired, classify land types, identify and consult with the land users, measure the individual landholdings and determine the compensation due.

One organisation [Bac Phong Commune People's Committee], one collective [Hop Phong Community] and 134 households will be affected by the change in land-use due to the construction and operation of the Refinery.

Supported by Blackstone's community team, the Centre held its first community meeting with the 134 households to explain their work and obtain their agreement to have the Centre undertake the measurement of the land.

Blackstone continues to provide direct benefit by supporting one-off community requests. In FY24, the Company received seven requests for community assistance, with three approved and implemented. All requests are vetted and assessed against a standard set of criteria to ensure a fair, consistent approach; aligned with Company ESG objectives and complying with anti-bribery and corruption laws in Vietnam and Australia.

