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ASX ANNOUNCEMENT

Lithium Australia advances recycling plans

Lithium Australia (ASX:LIT) is targeting the recycling of technology metals, including lithium, as part of its broader strategy to generate a range of products, by applying processes with a low-energy footprint, and with minimal exposure to mining costs.

BACKGROUND

As the market for power storage, particularly lithium ion batteries, reaches maturity, recycling will become a necessity. Although it will be some time before that market does reach maturity, the rapidly escalating demand heralds an opportunity for those with the skills to fill the recycling vacancy, and that will involve a number of disciplines, including chemical processing.

THE RECYCLING DILEMMA

Lithium ion batteries contain numerous components; anodes, cathodes, casing, electronics and electrolytes. Much of the driving force behind recycling is the value of cathode metals, cobalt in particular. Current recycling does recover most of the base metals but lithium recovery is close to zero. The reason there is such a disparity is simply the preferred processing technology used by the companies undertaking the recycling.

THE AIM OF LITHIUM AUSTRALIA

Lithium Australia will evaluate the logistic chain from “cradle to grave” to determine the deconstruction of all components of lithium ion batteries and develop a strategy to maximise the recovery of all materials used in the products at the end of their useful life.

ETHICAL SUPPLY

Maintaining recycling at a rate commensurate with battery decommissioning not only creates a more sustainable industry, but also take pressure off some of the more controversial sources of raw materials. Much of the new cobalt supplied into the market, and used for the production of battery cathode, comes from war-torn nations and often involves a large component of child labour. Efficient recycling will never eliminate the use of “conflict” metals, but it can ensure the reliance on such sources is minimised.

SUSTAINABILITY

Lithium Australia will strive towards achieving recycling rates for lithium that are commensurate with the other cathode metals, closing the loop on what is otherwise a single use commodity. Lithium Australia is currently seeking partners to capitalise on the expanding opportunities in Australia and North America.

A COMMENT FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR, ADRIAN GRIFFIN

“We see a lot of waste in the mining industry as a consequence of imposing high cutoff grades to lithium deposits. This is not sustainable and Lithium Australia is developing the technologies to rectify the situation. We see the recycling of batteries in a similar light. Legislative changes, on a global basis, are likely to force industry into more responsible recycling programs and Lithium Australia is positioning itself to become part of the solution.”

Adrian Griffin

Managing Director

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About Lithium Australia

LIT is a dedicated developer of disruptive lithium extraction technologies. LIT has strategic alliances with a number of companies, potentially providing access to a diversified lithium mineral inventory. LIT aspires to create the union between resources and the best available technology and to establish a global lithium processing business.

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