

November 26, 2024

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
TO BE HELD
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2024

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA NO. 1

JAY NANKIVELL
GENERAL MANAGER

MAYORAL MINUTES

1. MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 19/24 - DATED NOVEMBER 25, 2024 - SUPPORT FOR COBALT BLUE HOLDINGS LTD CRITICAL MINERALS BATTERY RECYCLING PROJECT (D24/56858)..... 3
2. MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 20/24 - DATED NOVEMBER 26, 2024 - EXCLUSION OF SACRED HEART PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM BROKEN HILL PRIMARY SCHOOLS SPORTS ASSOCIATION (PSSA) CARNIVALS AND EVENTS (D24/57239) 6

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

November 25, 2024

ITEM 1MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 19/24

SUBJECT: SUPPORT FOR COBALT BLUE HOLDINGS LTD CRITICAL
MINERALS BATTERY RECYCLING PROJECT D24/56858

Summary

Cobalt Blue Holdings Ltd (Cobalt Blue) are seeking financial support from the NSW Government to repurpose their Broken Hill Demonstration Plant, at their Kanandah Road premises, to a refinery to produce refined critical minerals from a variety of feedstocks, including recycled battery material.

Cobalt Blue has operated their Demonstration Plant since 2020 investing millions of dollars in the Plant to build and operate a cobalt-nickel refinery that can produce battery-grade sulphate chemicals for the Electric Vehicle production chain.

Cobalt Blue's Demonstration Plant employs 15 staff, 12 of which are based in Broken Hill; and Cobalt Blue has invested considerable effort in training local staff to become competent in hi-tech mineral refinery operations. The Demonstration Plant will wind up its current testwork program by the end of the first quarter of 2025 unless the Plant can be repurposed.

Cobalt Blue are seeking NSW Government Funding of \$4 million to repurpose the Broken Hill Demonstration Plant to a commercial scale refinery to allow for the processing and recovery of critical minerals from various feedstocks including from the recycling of batteries.

If successful in receiving government funding, this funding will be matched dollar-for-dollar by Cobalt Blue for a total \$8 million project (capital and overheads) over two years and would result in the establishment of the only critical minerals refinery based in NSW. This project is consistent with the NSW Government's *Critical Mineral and Hi Tech Metals Strategy 2024-2035* where critical minerals value-add manufacturing is promoted.

Several additional feedstocks are under investigation, including:

- Black mass reprocessing from Li-ion battery recycling operations.
- Refinery residues from nickel and/or copper smelting operations.

A repurposed Demonstration Plant would be one of a few critical minerals refineries in Australia, able to process spent battery material as well as raw materials, producing battery grade chemicals or critical minerals products.

Highlights of the Project would include:

- **Broken Hill and NSW Leading the Charge in Critical Minerals:** Establishment of Broken Hill as a global hub for critical minerals, transforming a variety of feedstocks and battery recycling materials into high-value products (cobalt and nickel intermediates, plus other critical minerals in metal or other forms).

- **Expanding the Broken Hill Demonstration Plant:** An asset in the critical minerals landscape, it houses a Technology Development Centre and is capable of processing various feedstocks to produce high-purity cobalt and nickel sulphate. Expanding the facility will enable continuous commercial production at sustainable scale.
- **Australian Capability:** The facility is one of a few critical minerals refineries in Australia capable of processing:
 - Refinery residues from nickel and/or copper smelting operations
 - Black mass reprocessing from Li-ion battery recycling operations
 - Waste streams from tailings facilities (Australia and worldwide)
- **Elevating Broken Hill and NSW into the Battery Metals Landscape:** The plant is currently operating and can directly position Broken Hill/NSW as a key player in the global battery metals supply chain. This project has been tested, optimised, and has four years of operating experience to date.
- **Alignment with NSW Strategy :** Cobalt Blue aligns with the NSW Government's *Critical Minerals and High-Tech Metals Strategy 2024-2035*.
- **A Catalyst for Change in the Far West:** A new industry for Broken Hill, new jobs/skills/training, new opportunity for local suppliers, new international interest, new appeal for visitors...in alignment with transition to Green Energy (solar, wind, hydro) this enhances the reputation of Broken Hill/NSW as being on the forefront of positive change.
- **Unique Low Risk Opportunity, Maintain Momentum:** This refinery is ready to go, providing a significant 'right now' opportunity to capture momentum and create an immediate outcome.

Should Cobalt Blue's funding application be successful, their repurposed Demonstration Plant at Kanandah Road, would be an excellent small scale and commercially viable facility that could further develop scalable refinery capacity to treat and value add to the rapidly expanding battery recycling critical minerals resource in NSW and Australia; and given the existing Plant infrastructure it could be repurposed to process spent battery material within 6-12 months of the project start.

Ongoing commercial operations in Broken Hill would enable Cobalt Blue to maintain employment levels and likely expand the number of local employees, and is an opportunity to create positive economic benefits for the region with the introduction of a new industry.

A \$4 million grant from the NSW Government (to be matched by Cobalt Blue) would support:

- \$2m for capital investment to repurpose the metallurgical Demonstration Plant to a small scale critical minerals refinery.
- \$1m per year (x 2 years) towards labour and local costs to operate the facility.

Without NSW Government support, the repurposing of the Broken Hill Demonstration Plant is unlikely to be achieved by Cobalt Blue given the current depressed market faced by critical minerals startup companies.

Cobalt Blue is seeking support from Council in their negotiations with the NSW Government to secure funding for the project which would bring economic benefits for the region and further establish Broken Hill as a centre for green energy (wind/solar/hydro) and minerals recycling.

This Mayoral Minute recommends that Council provides all necessary advocacy support to Cobalt Blue's Critical Minerals Battery Recycling Project to repurpose the Demonstration Plant at their Kanandah Road premises.

Recommendation

1. That Mayoral Minute No. 19/24 dated November 25, 2024, be received.
2. That Council takes every opportunity to strongly advocate for funding for the establishment of Cobalt Blue Holdings Ltd Critical Minerals Battery Recycling Project by repurposing the Broken Hill Cobalt Project Demonstration Plant at 14 Kanandah Road, Broken Hill.
3. That Council forwards correspondence to the NSW Premier The Hon Chris Minns MP, Minister for Finance and Minister for Natural Resources The Hon Courtney Houssos MLC, and the Minister for Energy and Minister for the Environment The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC, seeking meetings to discuss the project and Cobalt Blue's government funding application.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.

T. KENNEDY
MAYOR

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

November 26, 2024

ITEM 2MAYORAL MINUTE NO. 20/24

SUBJECT: EXCLUSION OF SACRED HEART PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM BROKEN HILL PRIMARY SCHOOLS SPORTS ASSOCIATION (PSSA) CARNIVALS AND EVENTS D24/57239

Summary

I bring this Mayoral Minute to express my strong opposition to the recent motions passed by the Broken Hill Group of Public School Principals regarding the exclusion of Sacred Heart Parish Primary School from Broken Hill Primary Schools Sports Association (PSSA) individual sports carnivals and Gala Days from 2025 onwards.

The motions passed result in the Sacred Heart Parish Primary School being excluded from participating in PSSA events despite the school's participation in Barrier PSSA from its commencement and the Principal, Mr Trevor Rynne, being a life member of the Association; citing that students from Sacred Heart already have access to alternative pathways through the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes and the Polding region for sport progression. Disappointingly, these motions being passed are short sighted and undermine the broader benefits of inclusive participation in community sports events, which foster social cohesion, community spirit, and equality of opportunity for all children in Broken Hill.

Broken Hill has long been recognised for its inclusive and supportive community values. By removing Sacred Heart students from PSSA events, we risk damaging this reputation and fostering division among our local schools. PSSA events offer an important platform for students to engage with their peers, develop social bonds, and build mutual respect, regardless of the school they attend. Excluding a segment of our students from these activities undermines these principles and creates unnecessary barriers within our community.

While it is true that Sacred Heart students have access to alternative sports pathways through their diocesan system, these do not provide the same opportunities for local engagement and camaraderie offered by PSSA events. These local sports carnivals and Gala Days allow all children to compete and connect on equal footing. Excluding Sacred Heart students denies them the unique experience of participating in these shared community events, which are critical to building a sense of belonging and unity.

The argument that declining public school enrolments necessitate these exclusions is also problematic. Public, independent, and systemic schools should not be pitted against each other. Sacred Heart families contribute to the Broken Hill community just as public-school families do, and this contribution should be respected and valued. Addressing enrolment challenges requires constructive solutions, not exclusionary measures that risk alienating a portion of the community.

It is also important to consider the broader implications for Broken Hill as a liveable and attractive city. Families considering relocating to Broken Hill assess the availability and quality of both public, independent, and systemic education options for their children. A strong and successful education system, comprising both public, independent, and systemic

schools is critical to attracting and retaining new families. By ensuring Sacred Heart's inclusion in PSSA events, we reinforce Broken Hill's reputation as an inclusive and fair community that offers diverse opportunities for all families. This is essential for sustaining population growth and enhancing our city's appeal.

Participation in community-based sports events like PSSA carnivals and Gala Days should reflect values of inclusivity and fairness. Decisions regarding these events must promote unity rather than division among local schools and their students. All children, irrespective of the school they attend, deserve equal opportunities to participate in activities that contribute to their physical, social, and emotional development.

In light of this, I propose that Council formally opposes the motions to exclude Sacred Heart Parish Primary School from PSSA events and advocates for a more inclusive and collaborative approach to sports and community engagement. By doing so, we reaffirm our commitment to the principles of equity and mutual respect and ensure that Broken Hill remains a welcoming and united community for all its residents.

Recommendation

1. That Mayoral Minute No. 20/24 dated November 26, 2024, be received.
2. That Council writes to the Minister for Education and Early Learning, The Honourable Prue Car MP, Shadow Minister for Education, The Honourable Sarah Mitchell MLC, Local Member, Mr Roy Butler MP, and Director, Educational Leadership – Far West, Mr Peter Macbeth, expressing opposition and disappointment in the decision to exclude Sacred Heart Parish Primary School from Broken Hill PSSA events.
3. That Council advocates for the continuation of Sacred Heart Parish Primary School's participation in Broken Hill PSSA events to maintain unity, equal opportunity and educational choice for all residents within our community.

Attachments

There are no attachments for this report.

T. KENNEDY
MAYOR



CITY COUNCIL

www.brokenhill.nsw.gov.au