

# Industry news

## Metro Mining reaches key milestones

Metro Mining has reached yet another key milestone in its Bauxite Hills Project approvals process, and it appears to be on track with plans to commence mining operations by September next year.

Bauxite Hills, north of Weipa, on western Cape York, has a direct shipping ore (DSO) resource of 65.3 million tonnes and a mine life in excess of 13 years.

Metro has submitted its environment impact statement to the Queensland Government Department of Environment and Heritage Protection (DEHP). This follows the Queensland Government classifying Bauxite Hills as a Project of Regional Significance, and the company reaching Native Title and Land Access agreements with traditional owners.

Environmental assessment is a key milestone in the approvals process. Metro believes final determination of the environmental impact statement may be achieved later this year, enabling site construction to start straight after the wet season, and mining operations to commence in September 2017.

Overall, Metro expects that 200–250 people will be employed at Bauxite Hills during peak production.

At a glance:

- ▶ environmental impact statement submitted
- ▶ Native Title agreements in place
- ▶ 'Project of Regional Significance' classification by Queensland Government
- ▶ pre-feasibility study completed
- ▶ transshipping contracts completed
- ▶ off-take MOU secured with Xinha Group (major shareholder).

## Netherlands moots electric car future with petrol and diesel ban by 2025

The Dutch parliament will strive towards all-electric sales by midway through the next decade if senate passes the motion into law. Dutch politicians have voted, through a motion, calling on the country to ban sales of new petrol and diesel cars, starting in 2025.

The motion has only passed through the lower house of the Netherlands' parliament, and would need to pass through the Dutch senate to become legally binding. But its success in a majority vote puts the earliest date yet on a major country phasing out polluting transportation.

Initially, the motion – proposed by the Labour Party (PvdA), the junior member of the Netherlands' Coalition Government – aimed to ban petrol and diesel cars entirely, but it was dialled back. As it stands, the proposal would allow existing cars to stay in use, but would 'strive to prevent' the sale of any future ones, ensuring that Dutch roads gradually electrify over the next decade or so.

But the motion was opposed by the Labour Party's coalition partners, the centre-right VVD, whose leader, Halbe Zijlstra, called the plan 'unrealistic', according to a report from the Dutch state broadcaster NOS. Zijlstra was particularly concerned about whether or not the proposed law would conflict with the country's energy agreement, which commits the Netherlands to certain decarbonisation targets by 2020.

The leader of the PvdA, Diederik Samsom, says that the

proposal would be feasible – and that the energy agreement wouldn't conflict with it. 'That agreement runs until 2023; we are free in what we do after that. We are ambitious, perhaps other parties are less so,' he says.

Electric car sales in the Netherlands currently stand at just under 10 per cent.

## METS Ignited scoping living labs for METS sector

Since the establishment of the METS Growth Centre, METS Ignited, in October 2015, in-depth consultations with the sector has identified a number of immediate areas to be addressed. One significant gap identified is the lack of pilot facilities for researchers and METS companies to trial and prove their product.

Accordingly, METS Ignited Chair Elizabeth Lewis-Gray says METS Ignited will be working on the scope of living labs over the next six months, including virtual or pilot mine sites which, no doubt, will attract attention from the METS sector, miners and researchers.

'A pilot mine site can showcase METS capabilities and innovation, and demonstrate to miners the value-add that METS bring, without miners taking on that risk,' says Lewis-Gray.

'Developing ways to assist METS companies and miners to work together more collaboratively towards common goals will result in a step-change in the adoption of innovation.'

Recently, METS Ignited also established a partnership with Austmine, and together these two industry-focused organisations will develop a number of collaborative activities and projects for the METS sector.

In 2016, METS Ignited developed its first Sector Competitiveness Plan for METS. This plan addresses short- and longer-term challenges and opportunities facing the METS sector.

'The plan focuses on key levers to strengthen sector growth, focusing on collaboration, commercialisation, innovation, global supply chains, and skills and workforce development,' she says.

'It identifies strategies to strengthen the global position of the METS sector and support customers of the global mining innovation ecosystem.'

The plan is the culmination of research and, together with Austmine, an industry engagement program that has taken place over several months, involving more than 200 leaders from the METS sector and mining industry, as well as researcher and consultants. Naturally, it also builds on the consultation that the organisation undertook last year.

'For the plan to be relevant to industry, the insights shared at our workshops with METS companies, miners, researchers and consultants gave us perspectives from the whole supply chain.'

'The Sector Competitiveness Plan reinforces that the success of the mining industry and METS sector could position itself through better collaboration,' says Lewis-Gray.

Visit [www.metsignited.org](http://www.metsignited.org) for more information about METS Ignited strategies and the collaborative projects that the sector can leverage.