



Positioned to meet demand from Asia's growing lithium-ion battery industry | ASX: BSX

**ASX RELEASE**  
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## **Blackstone Attracts \$6.8 million Investment at a Substantial Premium from EcoPro**

### **Highlights**

- Blackstone Minerals signs binding share purchase agreement with EcoPro;
- EcoPro's subsidiary, EcoPro BM, is the world's second largest nickel-rich cathode materials manufacturer;
- Placement of 40 million shares at \$0.17 per share, representing a 62% premium to Blackstone Minerals' last traded price;
- EcoPro and Blackstone partnership to develop a downstream nickel processing facility in northern Vietnam.

Blackstone Minerals Limited (**ASX: BSX**) is pleased to announce it has signed a binding share purchase agreement with EcoPro Co. Limited (EcoPro). EcoPro's subsidiary, EcoPro BM, is the world's second largest and Korea's largest nickel-rich cathode materials manufacturer. The binding share purchase agreement outlines a firm commitment to raise \$6.8 million (before costs) through a placement of 40 million fully paid ordinary shares at an issue price of \$0.17 per share, which represents a 62% premium to Blackstone Minerals' last traded price. The binding agreement outlines an alliance structure whereby EcoPro and Blackstone Minerals will work in partnership (through an additional investment via a Joint Venture Agreement) to develop a downstream processing facility in association with Blackstone Minerals' Ta Khoa Nickel-PGE Project in northern Vietnam.

### **Terms of the Agreement include:**

- Placement of 40 million shares at \$0.17 per share, to be issued under the company's existing placement capacity with shares to be issued and allotted by 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020.
- EcoPro to appoint a director to the board of Blackstone Minerals;
- Blackstone Minerals to exercise the binding option agreement to purchase AMR Nickel Limited's 90% interest in the Ta Khoa Nickel-PGE Project (*see ASX announcement dated 8th May 2019 for full details*);
- EcoPro and Blackstone Minerals to form an alliance whereby the next stage of the partnership will be an additional investment via a Joint Venture Agreement to develop the downstream processing infrastructure project in association with Blackstone Minerals' Ta Khoa Nickel-PGE Project, Vietnam.

Harp Capital of Toronto acted as advisor to Blackstone Minerals.

Blackstone Minerals' Managing Director Scott Williamson commented:

*"We are pleased to announce this investment of \$6.8m at a premium which strengthens our alliance with EcoPro. Our Ta Khoa Nickel-PGE Project has the potential to deliver the critical raw materials required for EcoPro's cathode manufacturing to meet the demand from the imminent electric vehicle (EV) revolution. We look forward to working towards the next stage of our partnership to develop the downstream processing facility in northern Vietnam".*

EcoPro's Vice President of Strategic Planning Division, Sangwook Park:

*"It is very important to secure stable and competitive metal materials in the fast-growing secondary battery and cathode active material business. EcoPro has therefore decided that it is a good time to invest in Blackstone. Based on that, we are looking forward to continuing with our partnership so that we can succeed in a downstream JV in the near future."*

### **Ta Khoa Nickel-PGE Project – Next Steps**

Blackstone Minerals aims to deliver a maiden resource in Q3, focused initially on the disseminated sulfide (DSS) at Ban Phuc and continues to investigate the potential to restart the existing Ban Phuc concentrator through focused exploration on both massive sulfide veins (MSV) and DSS deposits. Blackstone Minerals has commenced a scoping study on the downstream processing facility at Ta Khoa. The scoping study, also to be announced in Q3, will provide details for joint venture partners to formalise the next stage of investment. Blackstone Minerals has commenced metallurgical testing on the Ban Phuc DSS deposit with an aim to develop a flow sheet for a product suitable for the lithium-ion battery industry. In addition, Blackstone Minerals will investigate the potential to develop downstream processing infrastructure in Vietnam to produce a downstream nickel and cobalt product to supply Asia's growing lithium-ion battery industry.

The Ta Khoa Nickel-PGE Project in Vietnam includes an existing modern nickel mine which has been under care and maintenance since 2016 due to falling nickel prices. Existing infrastructure includes an internationally designed 450ktpa processing plant. Previous project owners focused mining and exploration efforts primarily on the MSV at Ban Phuc. Blackstone Minerals plans to explore both MSV and DSS targets throughout the project, initially within a 5km radius of the existing processing facility. Blackstone Minerals will conduct further geophysics on the MSV and DSS targets and continue its maiden drilling campaign. Online readers can click [here](#) for footage taken at our Ta Khoa Nickel-PGE Project in January 2020.

### **About EcoPro**

EcoPro is a South Korea-based company engaged in the battery and environment material businesses principally engaged in the manufacture and sale of secondary battery materials. The Company manufactures cathode active materials and precursors used for secondary batteries. The Company also provides environmental materials including sorbents and catalysts, chemical air filters, and greenhouse gas reduction devices, among others. In addition, the Company is engaged in the lithium crushing and processing.

EcoPro BM is a subsidiary of EcoPro, spun off in May 2016. EcoPro BM produces and sells high-nickel cathode materials and other products. EcoPro BM is a world-leader in the high-volume cathode material market and currently the world's second largest and Korea's largest nickel-rich cathode materials manufacturer. EcoPro BM's major customers include some of the world's largest battery manufacturers.

For further information please visit the EcoPro website: <http://www.ecopro.co.kr/eng>

This announcement effectively lifts the trading halt requested on 2 April 2020. The company is not aware of any reason why the ASX would not allow trading to commence immediately. An Appendix 3B for the proposed issue of shares to follow this announcement.

Authorised and approved by the Board of Blackstone Minerals Limited.

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## **About Blackstone**

Blackstone Minerals Limited (**ASX code: BSX**) is developing the district scale Ta Khoa Project in Northern Vietnam where the company is drilling out the large-scale Ban Phuc Nickel-PGE deposit. The Ta Khoa Nickel-PGE Project has existing modern mine infrastructure built to International Standards including a 450ktpa processing plant and permitted mine facilities. Blackstone also owns a large land holding at the Gold Bridge project within the BC porphyry belt in British Columbia, Canada with large scale drill targets prospective for high grade gold-cobalt-copper mineralisation. In Australia, Blackstone is exploring for nickel and gold in the Eastern Goldfields and gold in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Blackstone has a board and management team with a proven track record of mineral discovery and corporate success.