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EU backs Australian company to make battery materials in Europe

BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA – 13 October 2026 – Australian-founded critical minerals refiner Pure Battery Technologies (PBT) has been selected by the European Commission as a Strategic Project under the EU Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), as Brussels considers stronger sourcing requirements to support the commercial viability of Europe's critical minerals industry.

PBT's German refinery expansion was one of 46 projects selected through a competitive process across the European Union. It was also one of just five recognised for integrated processing and recycling. The designation provides access to coordinated support for project development, including mechanisms to facilitate financing and long-term offtake agreements with European manufacturers.

Speaking in Brussels on Friday, European Commission Executive Vice-President Stéphane Séjourné emphasised that building new processing capacity would not be sufficient without securing customers for European-produced materials. He signalled his willingness to introduce more binding obligations to diversify if existing incentives fail to deliver.

PBT CEO Staffan Ever said the announcement addressed one of the most significant challenges facing Europe's emerging critical minerals refining industry: securing long-term customers.

"A refinery without customers does not get built. Europe has recognised that, and is now helping projects find buyers early, alongside faster permitting and finance," Mr Ever said.

"Being selected as a Strategic Project is a strong endorsement of our expansion in Hagen, which will both process and recycle battery metals. The biggest benefit for PBT is early commitment from European customers. That is what lenders and investors want to see first, so we expect it to make funding easier to secure."

Permitted German refinery expansion

PBT owns and operates a nickel refinery in Hagen, Germany, which is permitted to expand production to 15,000 tonnes per annum of NMC precursor cathode active material (pCAM), a key ingredient in lithium-ion battery manufacturing. The company's technology can also produce precursor materials for emerging lithium manganese-rich (LMR) and lithium manganese nickel oxide (LMNO) battery chemistries, providing opportunities to diversify its product range and support potential expansion into France.

The plant is strategically located to supply Europe's automotive and battery industries, with PBT's proprietary refining process designed to produce battery materials at competitive costs to imported materials and provide a recycling pathway for end-of-life and battery scrap materials.

PBT has previously announced that the expansion is supported by a €36.7 million loan from the European Investment Bank (EIB) under InvestEU and a €23 million conditional grant from the German Government.

Mr Ever said the combination of European production and cost competitiveness would be increasingly important to manufacturers seeking to diversify their supply chains.

"European manufacturers are under pressure to diversify their supply chains, but they still need materials at internationally competitive prices. Our technology is designed to deliver both — European production and competitive costs," Mr Ever said.

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Pure Battery Technologies is a critical mineral refiner headquartered in Brisbane, Australia, with a processing plant in Hagen, Germany operated as Königswarter & Ebell Chemische Fabrik GmbH (K&E). PBT's proprietary hydrometallurgical refining process, originally developed in conjunction with the University of Queensland, enables the production of battery materials from both primary mineral feedstocks and recycled battery material for up to 40% less cost than other traditional methods.