



## **VITAL METALS UNVEILS RARE EARTH PROCESSING PLANT IN SASKATOON**

**Saskatoon, Sask. (Sept 20, 2022) - With the click of a symbolic chain link, Vital Metals and guests today officially unveiled the company's multi million-dollar rare earth processing facility in Saskatoon, Canada.**

From India to Estonia and Germany to Australia, some 200 leaders in the global rare earth industry gathered to celebrate Vital's progress in establishing a responsibly sourced supply chain of rare earths for friends and allies.

Representatives of 11 jurisdictions ranged from Indigenous, federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments to the governments of Australia, Norway, Germany and the United States. They joined Vital Metals interim CEO Russell Bradford as friends and allies in linking together a symbolic rare earth supply chain to mark the event.

"The Vital Metals and Cheetah Resources teams are intensely proud of what everyone has achieved to date," said Bradford at the site of Vital's 3,087 square meter plant. "The foundations have been laid for a great future for all our stakeholders to develop our rare earth business. What we just demonstrated represents our partners and customers in our supply chain, and we are grateful that you are with us today to help celebrate this milestone in our journey."

In the three years since Vital procured the world class Nechalacho rare earth deposit 110 kilometres southeast of Yellowknife, it has applied innovative, low impact technology and practices that cut the mine's carbon and physical footprint by 90 per cent compared to conventional metal mining. In its 2021 production season, it achieved extensive resident engagement with Indigenous employees making up over 70 per cent of its management and workforce.

Referencing Vital Metals' impressive achievements, alongside the major investment by the provincially owned Saskatchewan Research Council, the Hon. Jonathon Wilkinson, federal Minister of Natural Resources Canada, called the evolution of the rare earth industry "a generational opportunity" for Canada. "Ultimately our aim is to grow the supply of critical minerals and rare earth elements, and position Canada as an indispensable nation within the global supply chain," he said in a videotaped message to the Rare Earth Summit event.

"In the NWT, perhaps more than anywhere, we pride ourselves in understanding the important relationship between resource development and socio-economic wellbeing," said the Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, Northwest Territories Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment. "The NWT model for mining projects is at the forefront of Indigenous participation in mining, exploration and development in Canada. We believe it is what sets us apart from global competitors — and makes our territory a great place to invest and do business."

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“Vital Metal’s investment of over \$20 million dollars will be an important part in establishing our province as a rare earth hub,” said the Hon. Jeremy Harrison, Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Research Council. “Partnerships like these reflect the global recognition that Saskatchewan will be an important part of meeting the growing global demand for rare earth elements.”

The Mining Association of Canada, in presenting its membership to Vital Metals Executive Vice President Matthew Edler, commended the company on its leadership in Indigenous participation and its innovation in reducing the environmental impact of mining.

Earlier in the day, Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark welcomed Vital as the first private sector investor in the city’s goal of creating a North American rare earth processing, research and education hub. With related investment by the Saskatchewan Research Council, the city will see tens of millions of dollars injected into the economy, creating an estimated 100 jobs.

Underlining federal support for Vital's achievement as Canada's first producing rare earth mine, the Hon. Dan Vandal, Minister of Northern Affairs, Prairies Economic Development Canada and the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency (CANNOR), announced \$5 million in funding to Vital to advance its Saskatoon processing facility.

In Saskatoon, beneficiated ore from the NWT will be processed to a high purity, mixed rare earth carbonate. This product will be exported to REEtec in Norway and to Ucore in the United States for separation into individual magnetic rare earth metals. The supply chain continues overseas, where Schaeffler Group of Germany, a major European auto parts manufacturer, has contracted with REEtec for the rare earths required to build electric motors for the burgeoning electric vehicle industry.

The Summit began with a breakfast panel of post-secondary institutions, organized by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Mines, focused on preparing the workforce for Saskatchewan's emerging rare earth industry. The day-long event concluded with a reception hosted by the Hon. Jeremy Harrison, Minister of Trade and Export Development for Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Rare Earth Summit was cosponsored by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Critical Minerals Council, Vital Metals, and the Saskatchewan Research Council.

For more information:

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EDITORS NOTE: See Photo and caption on following page



### **LINKING THE GLOBAL RARE EARTH SUPPLY CHAIN**

By linking a ceremonial chain representing the global rare earth supply chain, Vital Metals CEO Russell Bradford (centre with tie) and guests officially unveiled Vital's Saskatoon Rare Earth Processing Plant on Sept 20. Joining Mr. Bradford were officials of four levels of governments in Canada, Indigenous and Metis stakeholders, and guests representing four nations in Vital's rare earth supply chain.

From left: Aaron Carroll, First Secretary, Australian High Commission in Canada; Kimberly Lavoie, Director General, Natural Resources Canada; Dr. Abdul Jalil, ADM, Prairies Canada; Mayor Charlie Clark, City of Saskatoon; Hon. Caroline Wawzonek, NWT Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment; Chief Ed Sangris, Yellowknives Dene First Nation; Ron Hyggen, Treaty 6 representative; Russell Bradford, Interim CEO, Vital Metals Ltd.; Hon. Jeremy Harrison, Saskatchewan Minister of Trade and Export Development; Milton Tootosis, Metis representative; Heather Quale, Honourary Norwegian Consul; Yvonne Denz, Canadian German Chamber of Industry and Commerce; Andrew McIntyre, US Dept of State Consulate General – Calgary. *PHOTO: Vital Metals/Bill Braden*