

Mining Journal **SELECT**

LONDON, UK 26-27 JUNE, 2018

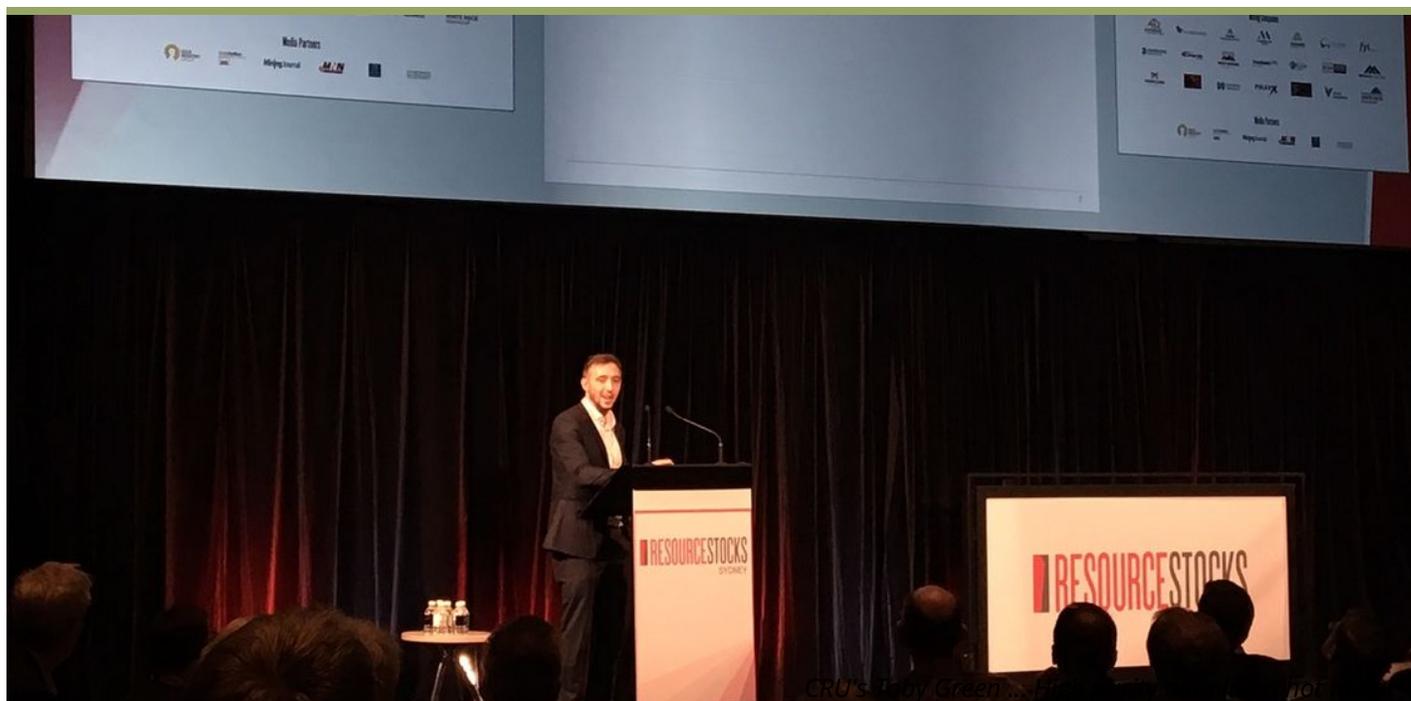
Mining Journal

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## Batteries fuel HPA demand: CRU

The searching eyes of the world's car makers are at least partly fixed on a new "hot" commodity, CRU senior consultant Toby Green told the RESOURCEStocks Sydney conference, and it's not cobalt, lithium or even nickel sulphate.



16/05/2018

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Green told delegates during a presentation on lithium-ion battery growth commodity stories the global advisory group continued to see bullish prospects for lithium, natural graphite and nickel sulphate on the back of LiB demand growth.

But high-purity alumina (HPA) "is a huge growth story" albeit one emerging off a low base in the form of the estimated US\$1.1 billion HPA market.

Green said HPA ran a close second to lithium in terms of the projected scale of the impact of LiB demand on an existing battery mineral commodity up to 2025, with plus-60% growth forecast.

HPA is used in LiB battery separator coatings, in electric vehicles and portable electronics. Rising sapphire glass use by smartphone manufacturers is also increasing demand for HPA.

"The eyes of the car companies turn from time to time and they've landed at the moment on HPA," Green said.

"The demand [and higher pricing] is for high-purity 4N [99.99%] product. There is quite a lot of competition in China at the lower end, which has driven down prices there."

ASX-listed HPA producer Altech Chemicals (ATC) said last month 4N HPA was fetching US\$27,000 a tonne. A sub-30,000tpa market in 2017 could expand to more than 55,000t in 2021, and 86,000t in 2024.



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