

Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

MEETING #27 MINUTES (WITH CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION REDACTED)

THURSDAY 26 AUGUST 2021

VIDEOCONFERENCE VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

ATTENDEES

Mr Roland Davies (Chairperson), Latrobe Valley community
Ms Susan Lloyd (Deputy Chairperson), Latrobe Valley community
Mr Ron Mether, Latrobe Valley mine operators (EnergyAustralia Yallourn)
Mr Jon Missen, Latrobe Valley mine operators (AGL Loy Yang)
Mr Tony Hicks, Loy Yang B
Ms Gail Gatt, Latrobe City Council
Cr Graeme Middlemiss, Latrobe City Council
Mr Terry Flynn, Southern Rural Water
Mr Chris Wood, Gippsland Water
Ms Anne Murphy, Gippsland Trades and Labour Council
Ms Jane Burton, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Mr Anthony Feigl, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Ms Anna May, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Mr Alan Freitag, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
Mr Brett Millsom (secretariat), Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

OBSERVERS

Mr Jamie Lowe, Latrobe Valley mine operators (ENGIE)
Emeritus Professor Rae Mackay, Chairperson, Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority
Mr David Salmon, Chief Executive Officer, Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority

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Agenda Item	Minutes
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1 Welcome and introduction from the Chairperson

- The Chairperson opened the meeting and acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land.

Update from the Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority

Delivered by David Salmon, Chief Executive Officer

- The Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority (MLRA) is continuing to build its team having recently recruited a technical officer and an education officer. Work is underway to recruit a finance officer and an engagement officer.
- The MLRA has been supporting the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy (LVRRS) Project Team with its implementation action consultation activities.
- The MLRA has also been actively supporting the Morwell River Diversion repair works. Submissions to allow for water diversions into the Hazelwood mine have now been made. Ron Mether noted that there is some concern from landholders surrounding the Yallourn mine that Morwell River Diversion-related issues have resulted in flooding on their properties.
- A key area of focus for the MLRA in coming months will be continuing community and stakeholder engagement.

2 Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy Implementation Action Five Study Findings

Delivered by Anthony Feigl, Acting Director Coal Resources Victoria, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

The Committee was provided with an update on the draft findings from studies completed as part of implementation action five of the LVRRS to identify alternative/contingency rehabilitation options to manage land stability and fire risks if sufficient water is not available.

- The information provided as part of this presentation represents current considerations of the LVRRS, but does not take account of all potentially relevant factors. It is not a representation of the views of the Latrobe Valley coal mine licensees' or stakeholders.
- The objective of this action is to identify:
 - Non-water-based rehabilitation options (i.e. rehabilitation options that do not require filling the mines with water); and
 - Contingency options, where filling with water commences, but water availability subsequently impacts the final fill level.
- A number of important factors unique to each site have been identified and must be taken into account in considering alternative and contingency rehabilitation options. For Yallourn, these include its proximity to major transport infrastructure, the Latrobe River and Morwell Wetlands as well as issues related to the Morwell River Diversion and significant legacy batters.
- In the case of Hazelwood, these issues include its proximity to transport and other infrastructure and the Morwell township, as well as ongoing groundwater depressurisation.
- In the case of Loy Yang, these issues include the proximity of the mine to current and proposed (Traralgon Bypass) transport infrastructure, ongoing groundwater depressurisation and the proposed final depth of the mine (>200 metres).
- A third option (specific to Yallourn) in addition to the alternative and contingency options put forward was suggested that would see a dry void pursued, but a failure of the Morwell River Diversion breaking into the mine.
- The key findings from the studies completed as part of this action include:
 - Access to material to stabilise the mine voids remains challenging.
 - The need for access to soil increases significantly with reduced access to water and vice-versa.
 - All rehabilitation approaches will involve significant establishment costs and require significant ongoing management.
 - Even with intensive ongoing management, failures can still occur with significant impacts on the use of the site, infrastructure (inside and outside the mine), public safety and environmental values.
 - There is no single solution for the rehabilitation of all three mines; rehabilitation approaches need to be optimised based on the specific site.
- The LVRRS Project Team will be undertaking stakeholder consultation on these draft findings, with further analysis in

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2021/22 to address any further knowledge gaps.

- A technical report of the findings from the studies completed as part of this action will be released later this year.
- The Committee discussed uncertainties related to groundwater use for mine rehabilitation and the potential impacts this might have on other water users, subsidence, etc. There is need to ensure the full range of risks associated with regional subsidence are understood.
- There are several community groups concerned about regional ground subsidence and are making representations to Latrobe City Council and other stakeholders with concerns about this and how mine rehabilitation may contribute to it.
- Subsidence across the Latrobe Valley is relatively well understood, and the mines operators generally work to make this information available as appropriate.

3 Integrated Mines Research Group

Delivered by Jon Missen, Rehabilitation and Closure Principal, AGL Loy Yang and Integrated Mines Research Group member

The Committee was provided with an update on the Integrated Mines Research Group (IMRG) Research Program.

- The IMRG was established as a result of recommendation 18 of Volume IV of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry's 2015/16 Report.
- Each mine has made significant progress in delivering the original plan's actions, in some cases over and above what was originally envisaged.
- Areas of research for the IMRG have included coal cover, the benefits of full pit lakes, lake fill rates and water quality, stability and the social and economic effects of closure.
- Since the development of the IMRG's original research plan, the broader environment for mine rehabilitation planning in the Latrobe Valley has changed. ENGIE has closed its Hazelwood Coal Mine, the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner was established and replaced by the MLRA, the LVRRS has been completed and there have been changes to each mine's rehabilitation bond and how this is calculated.
- A review of the IMRG's research plan was undertaken in 2019 to ensure research priorities remained current given the large amount of work and technical studies completed since the plan was first conceived. As part of this, the IMRG committed to review the research plan annually.

4 Community engagement

The Committee discussed the various community engagement tools and techniques used by various member organisations and the merits of each.

- Public consultation processes are seen by many organisations as attracting a particular audience; engaging the broader community is challenging.
- Incentives can sometimes be helpful in getting a broader cross-section of the community.
- Using market research agencies to screen participants and secure participation of broader community members or particular demographics can help engage an audience beyond the local interest groups.
- The allure of something to see (i.e. one of the Latrobe Valley brown coal mines) helps to encourage broader participation. The Latrobe Valley coal mine operators have had some success with this.
- There may be an opportunity to explore virtual tours. The MLRA recently participated in a virtual tour of the Latrobe River System that was very informative and well-delivered.

5 Operational updates from members

Ron Mether, Latrobe Valley mine operators (EnergyAustralia Yallourn)

- Greg McIntyre has replaced Julian Turecek as EnergyAustralia's Head of Yallourn.

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Terry Flynn, Southern Rural Water

- Southern Rural Water has been heavily involved in the remediation of the Morwell River Diversion and associated water diversions.
- Southern Rural Water understands the high priority of maintaining water levels that support recreational activity in Lake Narracan for Latrobe City.

Roland Davies, Latrobe Valley Community

- There is increasing community interest in the issue of water and its use for mine rehabilitation.

Rae Mackay, Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority

- The International Mining and Resources Conference has been deferred due to COVID-19. It is now scheduled to occur in January 2022 and will include a session regarding how industry can work to improve post-mining legacies.

Chris Wood, Gippsland Water

- Gippsland Water is focussed on its five-year pricing submission, Urban Water Strategy and the Environment Protection Authority's new *Environment Protection Act 2017*.

Graeme Middlemiss, Latrobe City Council

- There is a need to better understand subsidence associated with mining and mine rehabilitation within the Latrobe Valley. A number of community groups are presenting to council with concerns about this.

Gail Gatt, Latrobe City Council

- Maintaining water levels that support recreational activities within Lake Narracan remains a priority issue for Council.

Tony Hicks, Loy Yang B

- Loy Yang B is heavily focussed on ensuring protection of its workforce during COVID-19.
- Loy Yang B is currently approaching the end of a series of minimum generation trials.

Jane Burton, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

- The Hon. Jaala Pulford MLC has been appointed as Victoria's new Minister for Resources.
- Mehnaz Yoosuf will be joining the Coal Resources Team for the next three months and will be stepping into the role of Committee Secretariat.

Anthony Feigl, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

- Work is continuing to support the Yallourn energy emergency.

Anna May, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

- The draft *Central and Gippsland Region Sustainable Water Strategy* is due out for consultation later this year.

Jon Missen, Latrobe Valley mine operators (AGL Loy Yang)

- Work is continuing on the disaggregation of the AGL business.
- Christo van Niekerk has been appointed as the new General Manager AGL Loy Yang.
- AGL is currently working through a number of outages on site at Loy Yang as part of its summer readiness plan.

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Other business and next meeting

- Next meeting date to be confirmed.
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