



Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner

Factsheet – The Commissioner

The Office of the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner was established in response to a recommendation by the 2015-16 Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry. Emeritus Professor Rae Mackay was appointed to the role in June 2017.

About the Commissioner

Before taking up the role of Commissioner, Professor Mackay was the Director of the Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Engineering Research Group (GHERG) at Federation University, working on issues of geotechnical stability and risk at the Latrobe Valley coal mines. He has more than 40 years' experience in water engineering and hydrogeology and has worked on a wide range of problems from deep geological disposal of nuclear waste to arid zone groundwater resource and agricultural development, spanning many countries around the world.



Why mine rehabilitation?

Mine rehabilitation involves restoring mined land to a final landform that is safe, stable and sustainable, enabling future use.

The Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry found that a greater emphasis by the mines on progressive rehabilitation was required to help reduce the risks of a further mine fire. It also noted that, due to the unstable nature of brown coal, a pit lake would be the most viable rehabilitation option for the three brown coal mines.

Before any final landforms can be agreed, substantial efforts are needed to prove they are feasible and justified and meet the requirements of 'safe, stable and sustainable' set by the Victorian government (see *Factsheet – Mine rehabilitation*).

Geotechnical, land and water studies are being undertaken as part of the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy. The strategy is being developed by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). It is expected to be completed in June 2020.

The Commissioner's role

The Commissioner provides independent advice directly to the Victorian government on mine rehabilitation and works closely with the community, stakeholders, and the three mine operators (AGL Loy Yang, ENGIE Hazelwood and EnergyAustralia Yallourn) on mine rehabilitation planning.

What the Commissioner oversees

The Commissioner's role oversees the planning for rehabilitation of the three mines. This includes the feasibility studies that are underway under the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy project.

Each of the three mines are at a very different stage of planning for mine rehabilitation and closure, with Hazelwood the most advanced following the decision by ENGIE to cease power production and mining in 2017.

A large number of studies are underway that are building greater understanding of the requirements to create a final landform that is safe, stable and sustainable and can support productive future land uses to enhance the region and its economic prosperity.

The Commissioner and his office reviews each of these studies as needed on the scope, completeness, and direction of the work. The Commissioner also has a role in providing advice on the Victorian government's regulations and policies relevant to mine rehabilitation.

Engaging with the community

An essential part of the Commissioner's role is to engage with and educate the Latrobe Valley community on mine rehabilitation issues and listening to the community's views. The Commissioner has had many discussions with local community members about mine rehabilitation planning in the region, and community members are encouraged to meet with the Commissioner

to discuss and share ideas about mine rehabilitation planning. The Commissioner is focused on keeping the community informed of the work being done and encourages lively discussions about the proposals for future landforms and land uses.

Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority

New legislation introduced in September 2019 now make it clear that closed mines must be rehabilitated to a safe and stable landform.

The *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Amendment Bill 2019* will guide how landowners will monitor and maintain former mines and will establish a Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority and Post Closure Fund.

The Authority will replace and succeed the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner in June 2020 in time for the completion of the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy. It will be based at the Latrobe Valley's new GovHub in Morwell.

Before the Bill comes into effect on 30 June 2020, the state government will appoint the Authority's Board which will be based in the Latrobe Valley and led by relevant experts.

More information

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