



Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2019



Welcome to our second quarterly newsletter. My team and I have been getting out and about in the community, attending meetings and events. We've had some great discussions, which you can read about in *Out and About*. I'd like to thank all the people and organisations that have

hosted us this year. If you're interested in hosting us at your next meeting, just get in touch with my office and we'll be more than happy to organise it.

We've been spending a lot of time in the community lately for two reasons: primarily to hear your views and concerns; but also to educate the community about mine rehabilitation issues.

Mine rehabilitation is complex and has some highly technical aspects. The final landform of the rehabilitated pits (and what they can be used for) will depend on a lot of things, not least of which is the stability of the void. I believe it is vital for the community to understand the technical concepts, so that everyone can fully appreciate and participate in mine rehabilitation decision-making. I've included an introduction to stability in this newsletter as part of an educational series on key concepts – have a read and let me know what you think.

My next community forum will be on Wednesday 19 June at Morwell Bowling Club. Details are included in this newsletter, and I hope to see you there.

Yours,

Rae

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OUT AND ABOUT

You may have seen the Commissioner and the LVMRC team out and about in the community lately. We've been meeting with local groups and attending community events so we can hear your views and ideas on mine rehabilitation.

What you've been saying

We're getting out into the community so that we can hear your questions and concerns firsthand. We've found that people from all over the community are keen to learn more about mine rehabilitation and the future of the Latrobe Valley. What we've been hearing from you is:

- *You'd like to better understand the reasons behind some of the mine rehabilitation decisions.* Why lakes? Why can't we just make the land the way it was? Why can't we just refill the mine with the dirt we've pulled out? We hear these questions a lot, and the answers concern the physical attributes of the mines and the nature of the Latrobe Valley's brown coal. To give you a better understanding of the technical



constraints on mine rehabilitation decisions, we'll be publishing a series of articles and factsheets on our website and Facebook page over the coming months. You'll find the first article in this newsletter – *All about stability* – which gives you an overview of what stability means in a rehabilitated mine, and why it is vitally important to get right.

- *You'd like to know more about how the rehabilitation is progressing.* Many of you are keen to hear updates on what is happening in rehabilitation right now. Mine rehabilitation planning is a complex and long process, as will be conducting the rehabilitation. As planning progresses, we will provide you with

updates through our Facebook page, our website and our newsletter. We will also continue to hold public meetings at least twice a year, so that we can regularly discuss the big issues. Our next big public meeting will be on Wednesday 19 June 2019, from 5pm at Morwell Bowling Club. We will also continue to get out and about to local community groups. If you'd like to come along to any of these, the details of coming events are listed in the *What's On* section of this newsletter.

- *What's going on with Hazelwood Pondage and the power station demolition?* Unfortunately, there are some questions we cannot answer, but we understand these issues are very important to you. The Commissioner's powers are strictly limited to the mine license areas, and as the Pondage and power stations are outside of the license areas, we are not involved in these planning or decisions. However, we can point you in the right direction to get more information: visit [ENGIE's website](#) for more information and points of contact on these issues.



- *Will I get to have a say in what happens to the mines?* In late 2019/early 2020, a discussion paper on the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy should be released for public comment. We also expect several background technical assessment and land use vision documents to be made available through the Strategy project. This will be an important opportunity for you to provide feedback on the future direction for rehabilitation in the Latrobe Valley. Of course, we want to hear what you have to say at any time by getting in touch with us and letting us know what you think.

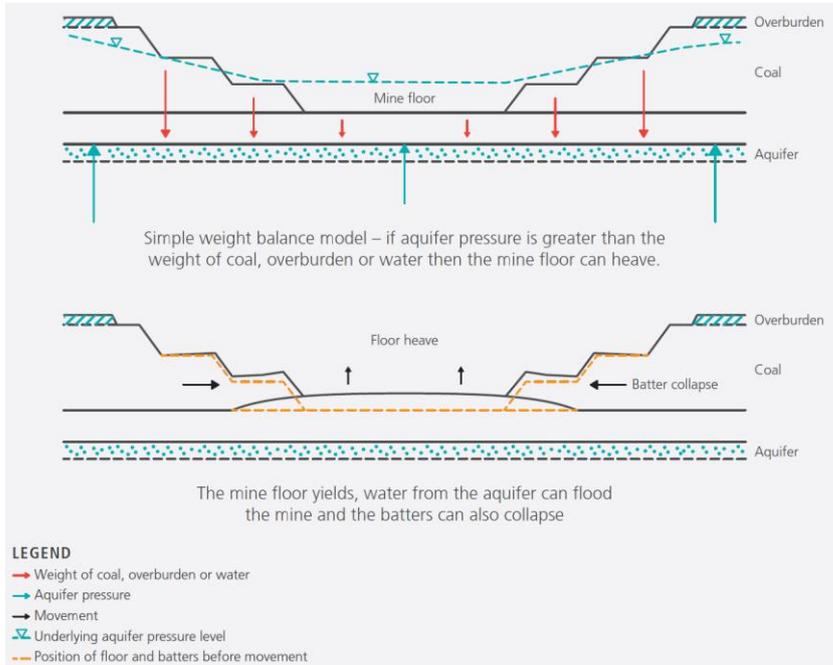
We hope to see you at some of our coming events, and keep the questions coming.

ALL ABOUT STABILITY

Rehabilitation of the mines must produce a final landform that is safe, stable and sustainable. One of the questions we are most frequently asked is what will make the final landform stable?

Why is stability important?

The short answer is: if we do not make the rehabilitated landform stable, we will not be able to do anything with it! An unstable landform will be unsafe, will increase the risk of ground movement in mine-adjacent areas (including towns) and will not be able to be used by industry or the community for any future purpose.

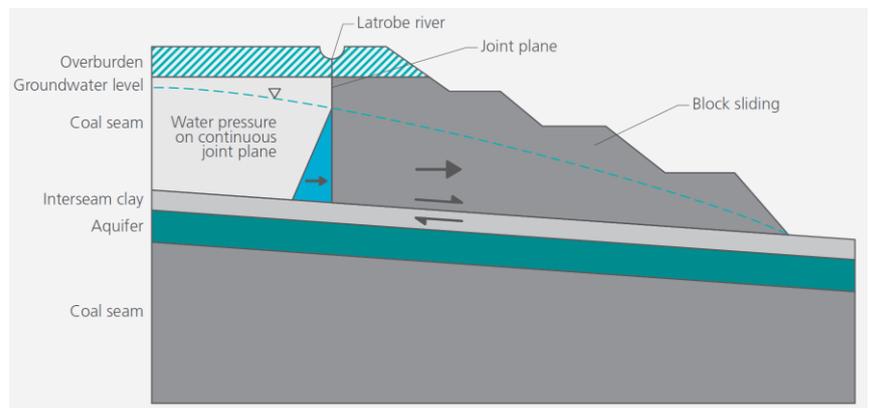


What causes instability in the mine pits?

The interactions between the mine void and the aquifer systems underneath the void are the main drivers of instability. Floor heave and block sliding are the two most significant potential movements that may occur in the Latrobe Valley mines.

Floor heave (as shown on the left) is caused when upwards pressure is exerted on the mine floor from the deep confined aquifers below. It is managed by dewatering the confined aquifers, reducing the upwards pressure exerted on the mine floor. Dewatering must continue in perpetuity unless a material (solid or liquid) is placed within the mine void to counteract the aquifer forces.

Block sliding (as shown on the right) occurs when sustained water pressures in joints within the coal can result in lateral movement of coal and batter collapse. Installing horizontal bores drains water from within the coal joints to reduce pressure and stabilise the batters. Drainage and maintenance of bores must continue in perpetuity unless the water forces exerted on the batter are counteracted by an equally exerted force, e.g. filling the mine void with material (solid or liquid).



What does this mean for rehabilitation?

To prevent floor heave and block sliding, the mine voids must be filled. If they are not filled, then the Latrobe Valley community will be forced to dewater the aquifers and maintain horizontal bores forever, with costs and environmental impacts that come with such a large, ongoing operation. To fill voids the size of our mines, water is the most readily available and cost-effective fill material. This is the short answer as to why we keep talking about pit lakes – if the mine voids are not filled, then stability cannot be guaranteed.

WHAT'S ON

Commissioner's community forum: Regulating rehabilitation

Wednesday 19 June 2019, 5.30pm – 7.30pm

Morwell Bowling Club, 52 Hazelwood Road, Morwell

Forum will feature speakers from Environment Protection Authority, WorkSafe Victoria and Earth Resources Regulation to talk about how government plans to regulate mine rehabilitation. RSVP at [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) or by emailing us at commissioner@lvmrc.vic.gov.au.

Community groups

The Commissioner and his team frequently attend community group meetings to chat about rehabilitation and answer questions, with the following meetings scheduled over the coming weeks. For more information on any of these meetings, or if you would like to host the Commissioner and his team for a mine rehabilitation information session, please get in touch with the LVMRC office at 1800 571 966 or commissioner@lvmrc.vic.gov.au.

Newborough Probus Club

Monday 3 June, 10am – 12pm

Moe Hotel, Lloyd St, Moe

Gippsland Multicultural Services

Tuesday 25 June, 11am – 12pm (with Italian, Arabic, Ukrainian and Spanish interpreters)

Thursday 27 June, 11am – 12pm

100–102 Buckley St, Morwell

Inner Wheel Club of Moe

Tuesday 4 June, 6-8pm

Moe RSL, 63-67 Albert St, Moe

Morwell Neighbourhood House

Thursday 4 July, 11am – 1pm

48–50 Beattie Cres, Morwell

Library display

Our roving mobile display is visiting Traralgon, Morwell and Moe libraries over the next few months. This mini 'info hub' is where you'll find information about the Commissioner's role and mine rehabilitation planning for the Latrobe Valley coal mines. Watch a short video, read a fact sheet or pick up free seedsticks which grow into a scented paperbark native to the Gippsland region. The display is at the Traralgon library until 31 May before heading to Morwell library from 3-19 June and Moe library in July.

ANY QUESTIONS?



A big part of the LVMRC's role is to engage with and educate the Latrobe Valley community on mine rehabilitation issues. We would be delighted to arrange one-on-one meetings or attend community group meetings to discuss any aspect of rehabilitation planning that is underway.

If you have any questions, or if you'd like to arrange a meeting with the Commissioner, you can contact our office.

commissioner@lvmrc.vic.gov.au

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