



Mine Rehabilitation Community Consultations - 4 & 5 August 2015

Summary of Discussion

Latrobe Performing Arts Centre, Traralgon, 2.00 pm & 6.30 pm, 4 August 2015

Ninde Dana Quarenook, Morwell, 9.30 am, 5 August 2015

Kernot Hall, Princes Way, Morwell, 2.00 pm & 6.30 pm, 5 August 2015

Background

The Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Board (Board) is required in part to report on the short, medium and long term options to rehabilitate land on which mining at the Hazelwood, Yallourn and Loy Yang mines has occurred. For each rehabilitation option the Board is to consider the risk of fire, stability of the mine, creation of a stable landform, long term environmental degradation, progressive rehabilitation, timeframes, cost to achieve and whether the option is otherwise sustainable, practicable and effective.

Five facilitated, community consultation sessions were held in Traralgon and Morwell for communities in the region to raise their views on the above. There were 72 participants across the five sessions including representatives from the three coal mines and various community groups.

The Board provided an overview of the Inquiry and invited participants to discuss the following questions:

1. What are the long term infrastructure needs of the Latrobe Valley which this/these mine site(s) could deliver?
2. What should be done towards these desired ends while this/these mine(s) are still operating?

The facilitator introduced the consultant from Jacobs, who has been engaged to assist the Board in undertaking a rehabilitation options analysis that considers alternative land forms and land uses.

Points of discussion

As a precursor to the discussion, each of the mines were asked to give an update on when they expect the mines to close:

- Yallourn 2032
- Hazelwood 2033
- Loy Yang 2048

Question 1. Long term infrastructure needs / uses for the mines?

- The community expressed a desire for jobs. It was questioned whether rehabilitation on its own would provide jobs in the long term. Job creation was viewed as critical for the long term prosperity of the Valley.
- Alternative uses for coal (such as coal to oil, coal to gas) and the development of industries around such uses was seen as a way of creating lasting jobs.
- Pumped hydroelectricity generation and the recent work completed by the Melbourne Energy Institute was referred to. It was suggested that a 1000 MW scheme could be established at Hazelwood utilising the existing Hazelwood Pondage and mine void.
- The reuse of fly ash from the power stations for magnesium smelting was raised following recent media coverage of Latrobe Magnesium entering into an agreement with GDF Suez (Hazelwood). Ash could also be used in the manufacture of construction products. Ash is currently being used in the rehabilitation of the Yallourn North Open Cut. Any commercial operation utilising ash was looked upon favourably by the coal mines.

Other ideas grouped into broad themes:

- Vegetation (conservation / agriculture)
 - Aquaculture
 - Silviculture (pine plantations and similar)
 - Agriculture - grazing, high value crops (irrigation)
 - Conservation, wetlands, land for wildlife
- Recreation and tourism
 - Passive recreation (lakes, gardens, playing fields, walking tracks, hiking, camping, hot springs, golf)
 - Active recreation (extreme sports, hang gliding, mud racing, speed boat / dingy racing). Could potentially become another Christchurch (NZ)
 - Nature reserve (e.g. Healesville Sanctuary)
 - Heritage / cultural heritage parks, encompassing iconic buildings for interpretative centres and art galleries
- Waste management
 - Landfill, recycling, recovery, salvage (particularly with respect to demolition and salvage out of the power stations)
- Development
 - Flood retention structures given the proximity of the Latrobe and Morwell Rivers
 - Water storage
 - Technology industries (another Silicon Valley)
 - Education, training and research (e.g. Cooperative Research Centre for low emissions technology, carbon capture and storage or alternative coal uses)
 - Future and continued uses of coal (e.g. as fertilizer)
 - Rocket, satellite launching pad

- Power generation
 - Alternative energy industries and power generation utilising the existing power infrastructure – bioenergy, hydroelectricity, wind and solar
 - Wind power generation through updrafts up the pit walls

Question 2. What should be done to achieve this?

- The community felt that:
 - Incentives should be provided for industries to establish in the Valley
 - Strategic planning (and community consultation) is needed for future coal utilisation, alternative land uses and rehabilitation which takes into account the overall picture of the three mines
 - A regional approach should be adopted undertaken by a regional planning authority
 - The landform has to be made safe and batters need to be stabilised
 - Separation distances (buffers) need to be re-instated between the township of Morwell and the Hazelwood mine
 - Need to keep your options open
 - Mines need to work together- adopt an integrated approach

General

- The community raised other matters including:
 - The importance of ensuring the mines are safe and what we're breathing is ok
 - Who will own the land once mining has finished?
 - Who will take over the care and maintenance of the mine sites when the operators move on?
 - Is there enough water to fill all the holes?
 - The potential for seismic activity where large holes in the ground occur close to fault zones
 - The need to change the language and mind-set from closure to transition and similarly to train workers to cope with change
 - What can communities do to work in partnership with the mines?
 - People in the Valley are proud of their history in power generation and the challenge is to reproduce the opportunities provided by the power industry

- The community emphasised the need for increased transparency and more effective communication from the mines:
 - The mines need to showcase what rehabilitation has been done to date
 - The mine's Environmental Review Committees (ERCs) need a higher profile and to publicise the results of what they do
 - Establish mine tours and engage with the community
 - All the mines should have look outs
 - The mines should all have a presence in the towns through dedicated shop fronts

The Board described the next steps in the Inquiry and drew attention to the closing date for written submissions and timing of the public hearings.

The Board closed all sessions by thanking attendees for their participation.