

From: [Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry](#)
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Subject: Morwell Mine Fire Submission
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Attachments: [Hazelwood-Mine-Fire-Inquiry-WGCMA-Submission-August-2015.pdf](#)

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Content of submission (you can choose multiple): Latrobe Valley Mine

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14 August 2015

Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry
PO Box 24
Flinders Lane, VIC, 8009

Dear Board of Inquiry,

**Re: Inquiry into rehabilitation options at the three Latrobe Valley Coal Mines
(Inquiry Terms of Reference Items 8, 9 and 10)**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry's investigation into rehabilitation options for the three coal mines in the Latrobe Valley - Hazelwood, Yallourn and Loy Yang.

The West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) is a State Government Statutory Authority with responsibilities for the management of land and water resources in the West Gippsland region. We work in partnerships with farmers, landholders, community groups and other organisations to create healthier catchments. The West Gippsland region covers over 17,500 square kilometres including the Latrobe Valley and the whole of the Latrobe River catchment.

In relation to the rehabilitation of the three coal mines in the Latrobe Valley the WGCMA makes the following comments:

- The three coal mines in the Latrobe Valley play a significant role in the water balance within the Latrobe River catchment. All mine rehabilitation options will alter this water balance to varying degrees.
- Possible impacts from changes to the water balance will include:
 - Changed water resource availability for existing water users within the catchment including urban water supplies, industry and agricultural water users.
 - Changes to the hydrology of the Latrobe River including the environmentally significant and Ramsar-listed Lower Latrobe wetlands and Lake Wellington (part of the Gippsland Lakes system).
 - Changes to the water availability for important ecosystems within the catchment including riparian and floodplain vegetation.
- Water allocations within the Latrobe River catchment are capped and therefore any changes to the water balance would need to consider the implications for the cap volume.

- The original mine rehabilitation plans were created prior to the WGCMA's formation and we are unaware of any water resource risk assessment that was done at that time.

Based on the above considerations the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority makes the following recommendations:

- A thorough water resource risk assessment for each rehabilitation option to be undertaken (or updated) using current best science and best available information.
- The assessment should be conducted in consultation with the WGCMA and other relevant agency stakeholders including Southern Rural Water, Gippsland Water, Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning.
- The water resource risk assessment should include, as a minimum:
 - Assessment of risks to surface water and groundwater resources at both a local scale and regional catchment scale.
 - Assessment of the risks to water dependent values within the catchment including water users and water dependent ecosystems.
 - Assessment of the risks associated with the rehabilitation of each mine individually and also the cumulative risks of all three mines.
 - Assessment of the likely changes to the water balance during and after rehabilitation (i.e. consideration of both immediate risks during rehabilitation and long term risks post rehabilitation).
 - Consideration for existing water resource and catchment strategies including the Gippsland Sustainable Water Strategy, West Gippsland Waterway Strategy and the West Gippsland Regional Catchment Strategy.

Thank you again for providing us with the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry. Should you have any enquiries regarding this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me on 1300 094 262.

Yours faithfully,



Martin Fuller

Chief Executive Officer

West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority