In May 2015 the Victorian Government re-opened the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry, to examine, among other things mine rehabilitation options for the Latrobe Valley’s three brown coal mines.

The Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry (the Inquiry) concluded that “the pit lake option is currently the most viable rehabilitation option, [however] considerable further investigation is required, as new knowledge could result in an alternative preferred option".

In June 2016 the Government released the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry: Victorian Government Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan outlines how the Government will address the Inquiry’s findings and recommendations, including how the knowledge gaps relating to the pit lake rehabilitation options will be addressed through the development of a Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy (LVRRS) by June 2020.

The LVRRS will be informed by an assessment of the potential regional impacts of rehabilitating all three coal mines to pit lakes, with particular attention to water and land stability issues. Additionally, preparation of the LVRRS will include examination of potential end land uses and associated social and economic implications.

The LVRRS is being prepared in four stages. **Stage One** is Project Initiation. Completed in March 2017, Stage One established the necessary resources, structures and plans for the project. This included consultation with key stakeholders to plan the preparation of the LVRRS over Stages Two to Four and the establishment of the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Advisory Committee.

**Stage Two** is an Existing Conditions Review. Its purpose is to create an understanding of existing regional water and environmental conditions and to establish the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner. This Stage will be completed by December 2017.

**Stage Three** is Modelling and Analysis. Its purpose is to investigate the potential regional impacts of a range of pit lake rehabilitation scenarios at each coal mine. This Stage will be completed by July 2019.

**Stage Four** is to Integrate Findings. Its purpose is to identify technically feasible and socially, economically and environmentally acceptable pit lake rehabilitation options. The options will consider the community and other key stakeholders’ acceptability of different rehabilitation scenarios and what can be done to enable these. This Stage will be completed by June 2020.

The LVRRS will establish a permanent knowledge base of pertinent information to inform planning for rehabilitation of the coal mines with public access. This is consistent with the Government’s commitment to an open and consultative process.

Community and stakeholder engagement during all four stages will be key to informing the LVRRS. There will be a number of opportunities for the community and other key stakeholders to have input into the preparation of the Strategy, including via the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, the Latrobe Valley Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner and through the project team.

**CONTACT US**

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