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**REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978*
(REFERRAL NUMBER 2021-R06)**

Project

Hazelwood Rehabilitation Project

Proponent

ENGIE Hazelwood

Description

The project involves the final rehabilitation of the former open cut Hazelwood coal mine for the purpose of managing mine stability and fire risk, and creating a safe, stable and sustainable landform capable of supporting productive land uses. The proposed final landform for the Hazelwood mine void is a lake to a relative level (RL) of +45 metres Australian Height Datum (+45m AHD), using approximately 637GL of water across a period of between 10 and 35 years. Key proposed works include:

- putting water in the mine (pit) void to create lake to a final level of up to RL +45m AHD using predominately groundwater, surface water and any other approved water sources;
- final rehabilitation and reprofiling works on the upper mine batters (i.e. above the surface of the future mine lake);
- final decommissioning and drainage of the Hazelwood Cooling Pond (HCP) and restoration of the natural alignment of Eel Hole Creek; and
- decommissioning remaining redundant infrastructure, such as redundant roads, car parks, buildings, pumphouses on the HCP and Saline Water Outlet Pipeline (SWOP); and
- construction and operation of infrastructure necessary to maintain lake depth and water quality following completion of lake/landform, including potential Morwell River interconnection.

Decision:

The Minister for Planning has decided that an environment effects statement (EES) is required for the Hazelwood Rehabilitation Project as described in the referral accepted on 2 December 2021.

Reasons for decision:

- i. The project has the potential for significant environmental effects, including on:
 - surface water and groundwater resources, including hydrology, water quality, availability and associated environmental values;
 - existing land uses and landscape values;
 - the Gippsland Lakes Ramsar site;
 - native vegetation, listed ecological communities and species of flora and fauna; and
 - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage values.

- ii. The project has the potential for cumulative adverse effects on the above-mentioned values from the combination of proposed works, previous and approved rehabilitation works at the site and other works/ projects yet to be undertaken in the area.
- iii. An EES process would enable an integrated and transparent assessment of the environmental effects of the project to inform decision-making for required approvals, including opportunities to avoid or minimise significant adverse effects through alternatives (e.g. landforms, water sources) and other mitigation measures. It also responds to the significant community interest in the project and its assessment.

Date of Decision: 3/2/22