

Collaborative planning for post-mining development in the Latrobe Valley (Stage 2)

STAGE 2: THREE COMMUNITY DELIBERATIONS ON THE VISION FOR FUTURE LAND USE IN THE LATROBE VALLEY



INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2023, an update to the Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act, which formed part of the revision to the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy (LVRRS), required that each of the coal mines in the Latrobe Valley must have declared mine rehabilitation plans, including some concepts for future land use.

The first Stage of this project involved working closely with mine licensees, relevant state and local government departments and Traditional Owners to determine potential future land use mixes for the mine land surrounding the Latrobe Valley pit voids, post coal-fired power generation. These land use mixes have been built into a regional economic model, inclusive of three sites (Hazelwood, which closed in 2017; Yallourn, to close in 2028; and Loy Yang, to close in 2035 – refer Figure 1, below), and incorporating three scenarios: business as usual, regenerative, and new energy focused. The land use options and scenarios have been evaluated, using multi-criteria codesigned by participants from diverse organisations with a strong knowledge and understanding of the Latrobe Valley.

This second stage of the project is presenting these land use mix options to the public through three separate public forums for deliberation:

- Demographically representative local community panel
- Indigenous community reference group
- Youth design summit.

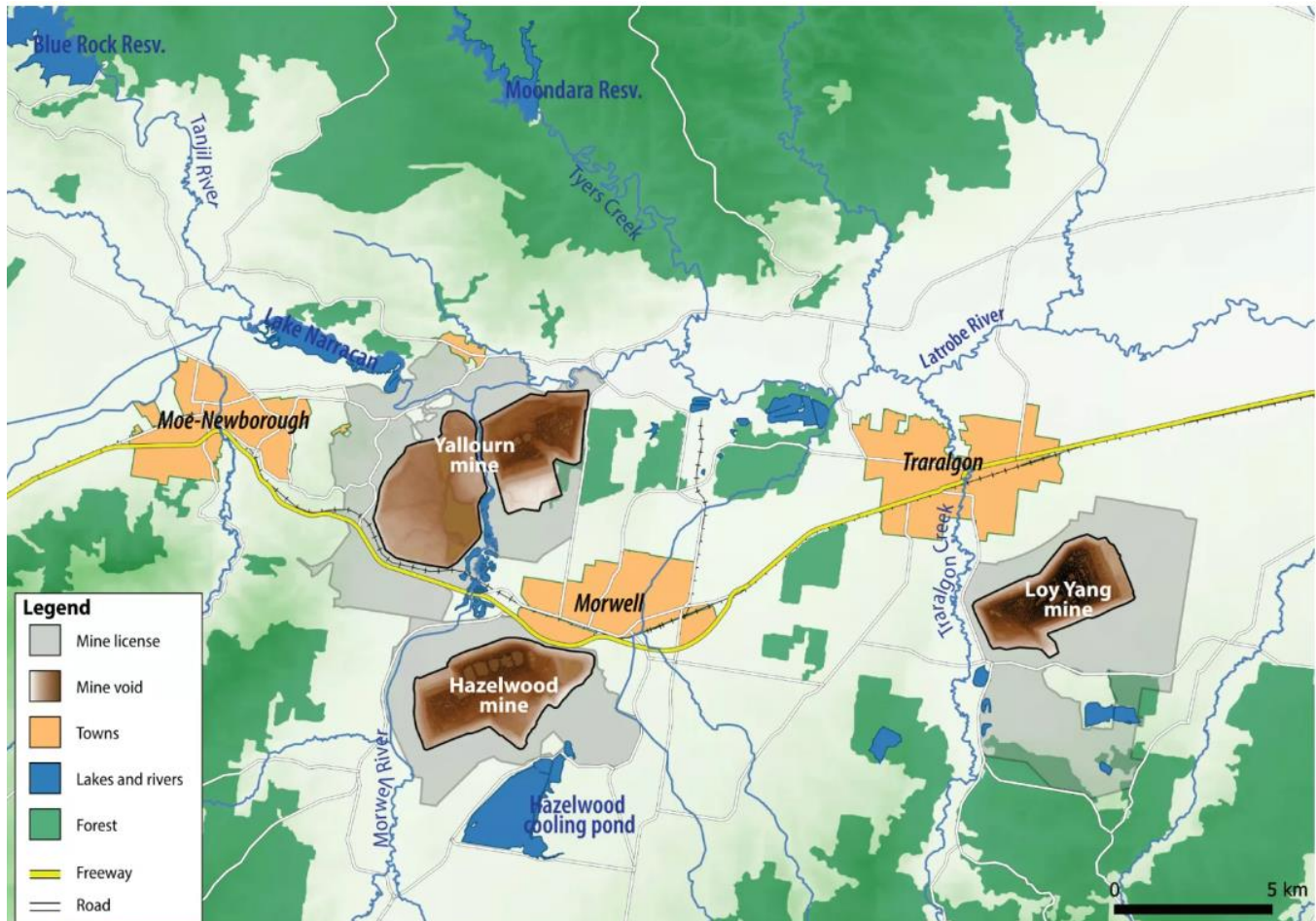


Figure 1: The three Latrobe Valley mines (grey) are located in the Latrobe Valley, around 150 km east of Melbourne. The focus of the community discussion will be around the land around the pit voids, and its potential use. (Image courtesy Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority)

PROJECT PURPOSE

This project will invite the community to imagine what future opportunities they want to have across the three sites. It will provide an avenue for the mine operators and future land owners to gain an indication of community sentiment around potential land uses, and their vision for the future of the Latrobe Valley beyond mine relinquishment. The values of the wider community can then be taken into consideration for future land use planning.

This stage of the project responds to previous criticism of consultation fatigue and lack of genuine listening to the community voices of the Latrobe Valley – particularly youth and First Nations voices, by providing up-to-date and accessible information, making space for different modes of deliberation and building on previous studies and community consultations to ensure that a diversity of values, concerns and aspirations are captured. The project will also provide a vehicle for the community aspirations to be expressed and incorporated into both mine closure planning and the regional development plans of the Latrobe Valley. This methodology would also

have applicability in other regions in transition, particularly where mines are near regional townships and identity is associated with mining.

OUTCOMES

Responses from the three public deliberations, which will capture community sentiment from young people, Indigenous people and other Latrobe Valley citizens, will be synthesised in a report on the future vision for the mine lands of the Latrobe Valley, clearly identifying the aspirations, concerns and opportunities elucidated by each group. It is proposed that the report will help inform not just the mine closure plans, but also the future regional development plans of the Latrobe Valley.

Stage 2 will, in effect, increase the literacy of the closure space, driving dialogue and increasing the trust between community, operators and government, and the understanding of the complexity of the processes of mine closure, relinquishment and future land use development.

The learnings from this method of multi-stakeholder engagement will be applicable to other regions in transition.

The outcomes of the *whole project* – all stages – will then help co-create a vision for the Latrobe Valley's mine lands beyond coal-fired power generation, and will focus on the opportunity these lands provide for future sustainable development of the Latrobe Valley, moving away from the deficit narrative of closure.

USERS

The project outcomes will be useful for all stakeholders, including First Nations people, by providing a mechanism to work across licensee, government and non-government agencies and community groups that will, in turn, deliver an independent and holistic framework, giving an opportunity to all groups to have their values, aspirations and concerns considered fairly. It will also be useful to other regions facing mine closure and transition to post-mining development, with the outcomes set to contribute inter- and transdisciplinary frameworks, methods, and techniques of relevance.

HOW CAN I ENGAGE?

The project team is keen to hear from CRC TiME partners and third parties interested in exploring collaborative deliberation for the benefit of the Latrobe Valley region – or other regions interested in undertaking a similar process. The team is interested to hear from anyone engaged in developing a shared vision for the region's mine lands, enhancing public reputation of responsible licensees and state government agencies within the local community, and suggesting a framework of how to design and conduct collaborative planning processes in other regions of Australia.

PROJECT PARTNERS

Federation University Australia; Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO); Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Victoria); Mine Land Rehabilitation Authority; Energy Australia Yallourn Pty Ltd; AGL Loy Yang; Engie (Hazelwood Power); Loy Yang B; Latrobe Health Assembly; University of South Australia.

FIRST NATIONS PARTERS

Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation.

ADVISORY GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Baw Baw Local Learning and Education Network; Gippsland Tech School; Gippsland Water; Regional Development Victoria; GHD; Gippsland Trades and Labor Council.

MORE INFORMATION

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ABOUT US

The Cooperative Research Centre for Transformations in Mining Economies is part of Australia's national innovation ecosystem. Our diverse partnership brings scale, collaboration and coordinated investment to tackle the most complex mine closure and post-mine transition challenges. Together we're rethinking what's possible to improve outcomes for people, communities, the environment and industry.

**We acknowledge the traditional custodians across all the lands on which we live and work,
and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present.**

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