

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP
Minister for Climate Action
Minister for Energy and Resources
Minister for the State Electricity Commission



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SECURING A FUTURE FOR LATROBE VALLEY MINE REHABILITATION

The Allan Labor Government is ensuring the Latrobe Valley's old coal mines are transformed into safe and stable sites once they retire and result in positive outcomes for the community and region.

Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio and Minister for Water Harriet Shing today released the first amendment to the Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy – to better reflect the context for coal mine rehabilitation, build on water access guidance and provide more certainty on the rehabilitation approval pathway.

Since the strategy's first release in 2020, there has been a significant amount of work on its implementation actions, including technical and environmental studies, to help guide rehabilitation planning from mine operators.

The Government is already implementing a new trailing liabilities scheme, to hold mine operators accountable to their rehabilitation requirements. The regulatory framework has also been strengthened to require mine operators to develop more detailed rehabilitation plans which will ensure more transparent decision making from Government and greater community engagement.

Our transition to renewable energy has accelerated, with two Structured Transition Agreements providing certainty to the energy market and Latrobe Valley community with power stations closures of Yallourn in 2028 and Loy Yang A in 2035.

The amendment allows for Yallourn and Loy Yang A mine operators to apply for surface water access at the same time, meaning the impacts of the projects can be reviewed together. Previously, mine licensees could only apply for water access within five years of their confirmed closure.

These new conditions ensure that water access for mine rehabilitation will not diminish the water entitlements of existing water users and values in Gippsland and will mitigate the future impacts of a drying climate.

Following technical studies and stakeholder consultation, the conditions require that any potential access to surface water for mine rehabilitation should be restricted to the wettest times of the year only and avoid impacts to summer and autumn river flows.

Mine licensees will not be allowed to take more than they have historically used. This historical use is about 35 per cent less than the volume of water AGL, Alinta and Energy Australia are currently entitled to access as part of their annual power generation activities at the Yallourn and Loy Yang mines.

The amendment also gives greater certainty about the future of the coal mines, with improved guidance for mine rehabilitation planning in the Latrobe Valley to ensure the community's safety is maintained throughout mine rehabilitation.

The amendment also includes further details about future opportunities for community and stakeholders to have their say – ensuring the community is well informed and consulted along the way.

Detailed applications and assessments by Government are required before mine rehabilitation begins, ensuring communities understand the potential impacts and opportunities for rehabilitating the mines and have their say, before works are approved.

To learn more visit, earthresources.vic.gov.au/lvrrs.

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Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy and Resources Lily D'Ambrosio

"The transition to renewables brings many opportunities for the Latrobe Valley that include transforming the coal-fired power stations and mine sites for new uses."

"These changes will better protect community interests, ensuring the mines can progress rehabilitation planning and delivery to get the best outcomes possible for the Gippsland region."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

"As planning for mine rehabilitation continues, there will be a range of ongoing opportunities for community to have a say and help shape a positive future for the Latrobe Valley."

"The new conditions ensure water entitlements of existing water users are not impacted and build on our recent agreement allocate 16 gigalitres per year to environmental, Traditional Owner and agricultural outcomes by 2024."