

# Media Release

## Setting a Vision for the Latrobe Valley Mine Areas

Latrobe Valley communities have an opportunity to shape their future by contributing to the development of the Land Use Vision for the region.

The Department of Environment, Water, Land and Planning (DELWP) is seeking local input to help shape the draft Preliminary Land Use Vision, which will provide a long-term land use planning outlook for rehabilitating the landscape of the Latrobe mine region.

The Vision will set a framework for transforming the land in the vicinity of the coal mines and support the development of Latrobe Valley as a sustainable, productive, prosperous and liveable regional location.

The Vision identifies opportunities in tourism, agriculture, food, energy production, services and education. It provides a direction for consideration of future land use and development, based on achieving positive social, economic and environmental outcomes.

The Vision is to inform the final Latrobe Valley Regional Rehabilitation Strategy (LVRRS) which is to be released by June 2020. The rehabilitation of the mines will take place over many years and future land uses will evolve over time as closure and rehabilitation activities are concluded.

The LVRRS is a government commitment to set a safe, stable and sustainable landform for the Latrobe Valley coal mine voids and surrounding areas following the closure and rehabilitation of three major open-cut coal mines and associated power stations.

As part of the LVRRS, the findings of the Regional Water Study for the Latrobe Valley region and Latrobe Valley Regional Geotechnical Study have been released, which are designed to inform decision-making on Victorian mine rehabilitation for decades to come.

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The Geotechnical Study examined ground movement and fire risk issues associated with mine rehabilitation, whether these risks could be mitigated by filling the mines with water and what ground movements might result from doing so.

The water study found that using water in the mine rehabilitation would require huge amounts of water, at a time when water availability in the Latrobe River system has decreased significantly in the past 20 years.

In assessing potential water rehabilitation options we need to consider the security and reliable access to water for residents, industry, farming, emergencies and the environment in the region – which includes the water needs of rivers, wetlands and the Gippsland Lakes system.

The study found water security for other water users and the environment could only be protected if filling the voids took place slowly – or only during wetter periods.

Under this approach the mine voids would take decades to fill and filling the voids would need to be restricted or halted under dry conditions so that enough water could continue to be provided to other users and to the environment.

These technical reports will help to continue conversations within the community about the way forward and will be taken into account as part of the final LVRRS, to be released next year.

Consultation on the draft Land Use Vision includes a submission period from until 4 November 2019.

To view the Draft Vision, Regional Water Study and Regional Geotechnical Study or to contribute, visit: <https://engage.vic.gov.au/latrobe-preliminary-land-use-vision>