Hazelwood EES Community Webinar

environment victoria



Healing Wurruk After Coal



Read the Position Statement – Wurruk after coal

The Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) has released *Healing Wurruk after Coal*, a position statement outlining Gunaikurnai principles, rights and priorities for the remediation of coal mines in the Latrobe Valley.

For more than a century, the Latrobe Valley's coal industry has powered Victoria, providing most of the state's electricity and supporting tens of thousands of jobs that shaped Gippsland's economy and identity. But alongside those benefits, coal mining has also damaged Country, destroyed cultural heritage, and harmed the health of Gunaikurnai people. Now, as the industry transitions to cleaner energy production, GLaWAC is asserting its cultural responsibility — and right — to lead in the healing of Wurruk (land), Yarnda (water) and Watjapoon (air).



House keeping

- Tonight's webinar is being recorded and we'll send the recording, slides and resources out afterwards.

- Please drop questions into the chat as they come to you. We'll have people responding where they can throughout the session and we'll leave time for questions at the end.

Evening Overview

01/
Hazelwood Mine and whats happening

02/
Water and connection

03/
Isssues and concerns

04/
How to make a submission





Source: GLaWAC / CrcTime
'Healing Country after Coal'

Why we are here

The Valley powered Victoria. Now its mines need a responsible clean-up.

- Hazelwood's proposed pit lake would use huge amounts of water and last centuries.
- It could set the standard for Yallourn and Loy Yang.
- Our rivers already need more water, not less.
- The EES is your chance to question the plan and shape the future.
- You don't need to be an expert. Tonight will help you have your say.

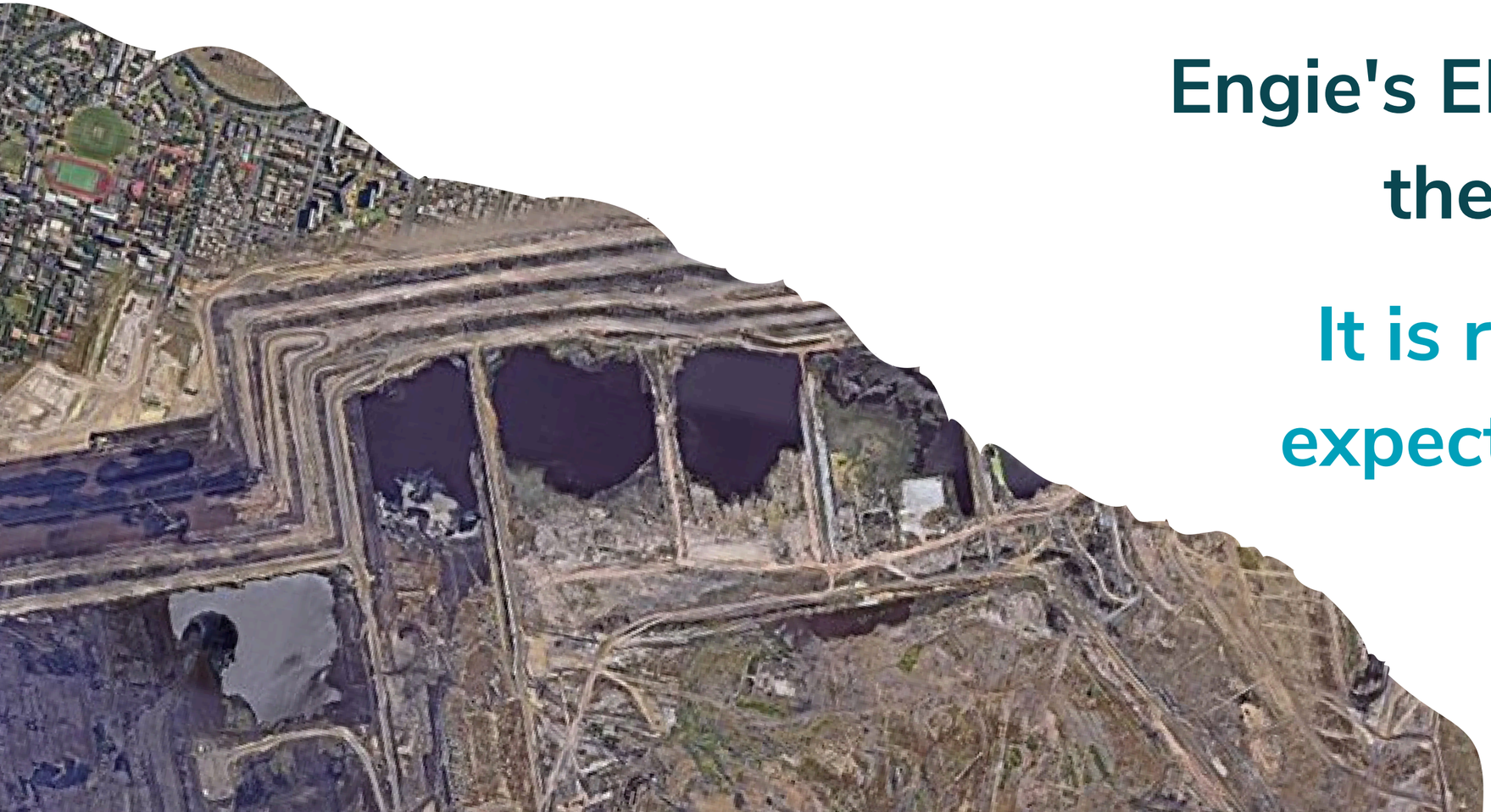
Issues and Concerns

Dr Kat Lucas-Healey, Environment Victoria



A rehab plan should be based on:

- protecting existing river values
- a clear, realistic vision for what the pit lake will be used for
- passive long-term management



Engie's EES does none of these things.

It is reasonable to expect much better.

Engie claims best practice while largely ignoring it

- There are many well-established, relevant best practice guides for mine rehab, and a wealth of scientific research

- The EES barely mentions them

- We want to see that Engie understands good practice and has followed it

*Good mine closure is an **iterative**, **integrated** process that works towards **an agreed-upon vision**, progressively **reducing liabilities** and planning for **lasting benefits**.*



Citing the wrong water quality standards

The EES dismisses the Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for freshwater aquatic ecosystems as “highly conservative”	The Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for freshwater aquatic ecosystems are appropriate because they cover all water quality values
The EES tests against the 95% species protection benchmark under the freshwater aquatic guidelines	The 99% species protection benchmarks should be used because of the potential for chemicals to bioaccumulate and biomagnify
The EES models against livestock and drinking water guidelines	There is no plan to use the pit lake for livestock or drinking water
The EES only includes dissolved contaminants	It should include all contaminants



The water quality modelling ends too soon

- A 100-year model is insufficient to show long-term biological and chemical stability
- It shows contaminants still increasing - we need to see it is possible for the pit lake to reach equilibrium
- Industry-leading practice dictates that phases including 200 to 500+ years should be modelled



In 2025, the Independent Expert Scientific Committee advised that Engie should model beyond 100 years.
Engie dismissed this advice.

Interconnection with the Morwell River

It creates multiple avoidable risks

- 0.743 ha of Swampy Riparian Woodland cleared
- Reduced flows in the Latrobe River
- Trapping, injuring, blocking aquatic fauna
- Contaminant discharge to the Morwell River
- Feeding algal blooms in the pit lake
- Catastrophic capture of the Morwell River
- New erosion dynamics in the Morwell River

The channel and inlet gates would require active management forever

- Who pays after Engie leaves?
- Who is responsible for managing the gates after Engie leaves?

The only benefit is reducing fill time by 0.3 to 1.1 years.



Missing groundwater data

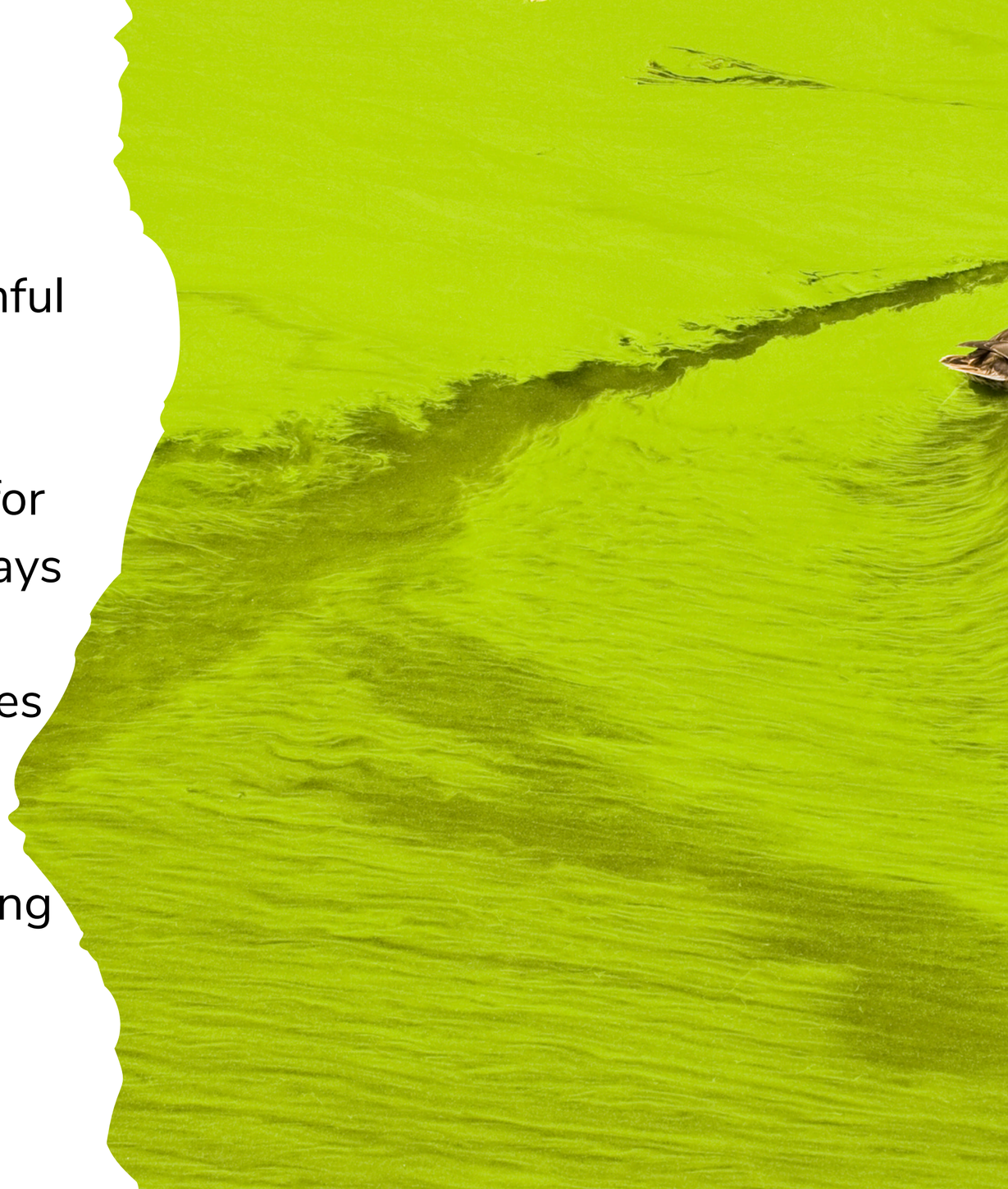
- Groundwater is to be used to fill the pit lake and top it up in future
- Insufficient data on groundwater dependent ecosystems
- The modelling doesn’t describe how groundwater chemistry will affect pit lake water quality



In 2025, the Independent Expert Scientific Committee advised that Engie should conduct more surveys of groundwater dependent ecosystems.
Engie dismissed this advice.

Hazardous algal blooms overlooked

- The pit lake creates a a new risk of harmful algal blooms due to excess nutrients
- Algal blooms can make the water unfit for use and can harm downstream waterways
- The EES does not consider nutrient cycles in its water quality modelling
- We want to see nutrient modelling - using appropriate standards - and risk assessments



What about the submerged ash dump?

- Coal ash can contain serious contamination, or it can be benign - we just don’t know
- The Hazelwood Ash Retention Area (HARA) treatment is being negotiated behind closed doors
- Engie needs to publish all HARA studies and the EES should model all contaminants and processes





*Lusatia Germany/ Wikimedia

Mine rehab can be done well!

- Adopt industry-leading practice
- Realistic, agreed-upon outcomes
- Transparent and quantified assessment of alternatives
- Long-term, comprehensive water modelling
- Ecological risk assessment following the right standards
- Benefits and residual liabilities assessed together
- Closure criteria that are ‘SMART’ - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound

How to make an effective submission



Timeline

EES exhibition - **now**

Submissions close - **Mon 2 Nov**

Directions hearing - **26 Nov**

Public hearing - from the week of **1 Feb 2027**

Report to the Planning Minister, then the final decision



How to use the website

Hazelwood Rehabilitation Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee



Overview | Participate | Timeline

Form

Hazelwood Rehabilitation Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee Submission Form

Have your say on the proposed Hazelwood Rehabilitation Project (the Project). Make a submission to the Inquiry and Advisory Committee (IAC) here.

I have read the Privacy Collection Statement (below) and acknowledge that personal information I provide to the Inquiry and Advisory Committee may be used or published as part of the Inquiry and Advisory Committee process. Required

◉ Yes

Privacy Collection Statement ⌄



What to include

1. Who you are
2. Why you care
3. Your key points and what you want done

Our top tips

- Pick the issues you care most about
- Say what you’re asking the Planning Minister to do
- Write in your own words
- Stay in scope
- **Ask to be heard!**

Check out our **submission guide** and make a submission by **Monday 2 November.**

