

Community consultation



OPEN LETTER FROM HAZELWOOD ASSET MANAGER, TONY INNOCENZI

Hazelwood is, and will continue to be an important part of the Latrobe Valley community even after closure.

That was particularly evident when we held the first of many planned community consultation sessions in Morwell last week, with about 150 people attending to hear what happens at Hazelwood after closure on 31 March 2017.

I understand the concern over the impact of closure and ENGIE's future commitment to rehabilitation. It is important for the community to be given information about the initial shutdown project and what happens next.

The message I also took away from the meeting was that people appreciate being kept informed and want to be involved in the consultation process. I can assure you we are committed to this.

After closure next week, our priority is to decommission and make the site - station and mine - safe. We need to mitigate risks from either fires or accidental spills that could escape into the environment while the station is sitting idle. Simultaneously, decommissioning work will be carried out in the mine.

Be assured this work is all done under a strict regulatory regime. Safety is paramount in our decommissioning so there will be a strong emphasis on managing any possible risk to our employees or the community.

A questioner was concerned about asbestos removal in the station. We have an extensive asbestos register and any known locations will remain contained and sealed until the demolition process starts. A comprehensive inspection will be done by qualified personnel, under regulatory oversight, to identify any previously unknown asbestos that may be present.

I was asked why we would destroy critical infrastructure in the station. Again, the decommissioning phase is to make the station safe for our employees. Boilers need cleaning and hazardous substances removed.

We then move into a stage called "awaiting demolition", which is when there will be further discussion and consultation with government regulators and the community.

Water was a concern for several people, including the stability in the base of the mine and where water would come from if the final recommendation adopted was a partial or full pit lake. Again, no decision has been made - the mine's future use depends on a decision from the government in consultation with the community.

Meanwhile, we will continue to dewater the aquifer and put overburden in the base of the mine to ensure its stability.

People were concerned we might walk away from our obligations. Nothing could be further from the truth. The current assumption is Hazelwood will close and ultimately be rehabilitated. There will also be an after-care period where we will maintain responsibility until it is eventually handed back to government and community.

Some criticism was levelled at ENGIE for not closing Hazelwood in stages. I can assure you the company investigated every possible option before announcing closure, including renewables. These were not viable.

There is a long road ahead in this process and many decisions have not yet been made. Ultimately we will need your support in making those decisions. As I told the meeting, our initial focus is to close our plant safely and successfully.

I urge you to read about the extensive work to be done in the months ahead by going to the dedicated Hazelwood Closure section on our website, which contains comprehensive fact sheets on all aspects of the shutdown project. This will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Meanwhile, be assured we are committed to ongoing engagement with the community.

Tony Innocenzi, Asset Manager

