

Rehab focus on Eastern Batters



FIRE READINESS A HIGH PRIORITY

Fire prevention and readiness will continue to be a high priority across the Hazelwood Power Station and Mine sites.

After the official closure date, extensive work around fire prevention and readiness will continue until the rehabilitation of the mine has been completed and the station demolished.

Mine Services Superintendent, Dave Shanahan, said a comprehensive program remained in place to reduce the risk of fire.

"After closure, Mine Fire Services will have approximately 18 full-time employees managing fire risk on a 24/7 basis, as happens now," he said. "This team can deploy additional personnel to protect the mine prior to any extreme weather days. All our mine staff and contractors are trained as 'First Responders'."

Mr Shanahan said once Hazelwood stopped digging coal, the fire risk would reduce significantly.

He said overheating idlers under the conveyors could be an ignition source as could equipment digging the coal but as the conveyors and coal digging dredgers would not be operating after closure, this risk was also mitigated.

Mr Shanahan said an extensive pipe, spray and

pump system protected coal surfaces across the mine and significant measures were in place around the mine perimeter.

The current procedures in place for days of high, very high, severe and extreme fire danger will continue. On severe and extreme fire risk days, a Mine Fire Readiness Plan is issued the day before the expected hot weather. An Emergency Command Centre is set up on days of Extreme fire risk.

The CFA is an integral stakeholder for emergency response at Hazelwood and this will continue until the completion of mine rehabilitation.

Mr Shanahan said this cooperation with the CFA was recently enhanced by installing a radio in the Hazelwood Gatehouse which links directly with the CFA control centre.

Hazelwood also employs an emergency services provider onsite 24/7 and this will continue after the business closes. Its employees are well trained in both security and emergency response such as a fire.

"They monitor security cameras across the site, including the outside perimeter of the station and mine, and can respond immediately to any situation," Mr Shanahan said.

WORK UNDERWAY

Rehabilitation work in the Hazelwood Mine has moved into a section now visible from the Princes Freeway.

Work is now well underway on the Eastfield Eastern Batters and should be completed by the end of the year.

Senior Mine Planner, Romeo Prezioso, said work in the adjoining area known as the 'Knuckle' was almost complete after 18 months of reshaping activities.

"This is the large clay covered sloping area that can clearly be seen from the freeway on the outskirts of Morwell," Mr Prezioso said. "It has been reshaped with a 5:1 and 3:1 profile and now all that remains of this project is for the new fire service pipes to be installed."

The Eastfield Southern Batter walls, like the Knuckle, are very steep and require a 3:1 reshaping profile. As with other rehabilitation work on site, the overburden is firstly removed to access the coal below and then the coal is re-profiled. Once this has been done, the exposed coal will be covered with clay and then topsoil before seeding.

"The Eastfield Eastern Batters is quite a large area," Mr Prezioso said. "We are starting at a point known as the Old Southern Outlet, directly below the mine office, and working in the direction of Energy Brix."

"We should have half of the work completed before winter, then we will resume around October. This work is very weather dependent but we aim to have it completed by early next year."

Once this section of rehabilitation is completed, the focus will return to the Eastfield Northern Batters, which is a continuation of the work started in 2014.



CLOSURE OF POWER STATION

The closure of Hazelwood Power Station will be carried out in a staged process, at all times adhering to relevant regulatory and legislative requirements.

These stages are: shutdown, decommissioning, awaiting demolition, demolition and rehabilitation.

The shutdown of the eight generating units will progressively occur over several days leading up to the business closing date of 31 March 2017. The units are taken off gradually because an uncontrolled shutdown could increase the risk of injury to employees and damage to plant.

As part of the shutdown of the units, Hazelwood staff will also be working with AusNet Services to ensure electricity supplies remain secure.

This first phase of the decommissioning process starts from 1 April 2017 and will continue until at least the end of May 2017. Work includes draining fluids, and removing oil and industrial gases. This is to mitigate risks from either fires from leaks or accidental spills that could escape to the environment while the station is sitting idle before demolition.

The decommissioning will take about 12 months.

A systematic approach will ensure the facility is left safe for the work over the remaining stages to be carried out in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

Detailed surveys will also be undertaken during this time to validate and update the existing hazardous materials registers, such as asbestos.

The ENGIE Hazelwood website www.engie.com.au/hazelwood-closure contains a dedicated closure section with fact sheets available on every aspect around closure and decommissioning.