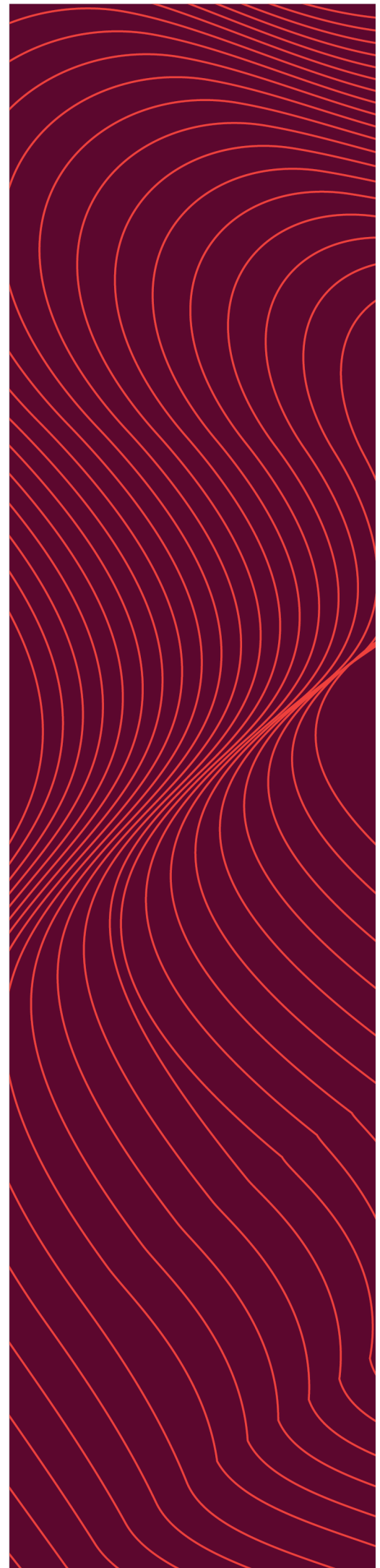


# Latrobe City Council's Submission to:

Energy Australia Yallourn Declared Mine  
Rehabilitation Plan

August 2025



## Introduction

Latrobe City Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on Energy Australia's Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plan (DMRP) for the Yallourn W Mine site. The rehabilitation of this site presents a strategic opportunity to reshape the Latrobe City's landscape and support a strong, diversified economy post the closure of traditional industries.

Council acknowledges the significant work undertaken by Energy Australia and welcomes the collaborative approach being taken towards planning for future land uses. As one of the most significant post-industrial land transformations in Victoria's history, the rehabilitation of the Yallourn W Mine site and other mining land across the Latrobe City community must be managed with foresight, transparency, and collaboration.

Council recognises the critical responsibilities involved in mine rehabilitation and emphasises the need to balance environmental protection, public safety, economic resilience, and social wellbeing. The decisions made today will present both intergenerational opportunities and potential risks that will shape our land, water, economy, and communities for decades, if not centuries to come.

Given the complexity of mine rehabilitation and the distinct environmental characteristics, Council will not be providing technical commentary on the DMRP at this stage. Instead, Council will reserve its position until the Environmental Effects Assessment process begins, and a Technical Reference Group is established to rigorously assess the supporting evidence.

## Summary of Recommendations:

**Recommendation 1:** Support the Use of Environmental Effects Statements (EES) in Assessing All Rehabilitation Proposals

**Recommendation 2:** Transfer Land Ownership to State and Federal Governments

**Recommendation 3:** Apply a Legacy Project or Initiative that will benefit the Latrobe City Community

**Recommendation 4:** Further Investigate the Cumulative Impacts of Water

**Recommendation 5:** Apply an Interrelationships Model between Mine Rehabilitation Plans

**Recommendation 6:** Support the Government's Proposed Recommendation for a Bulk Water Entitlement Fee.

**Recommendation 7:** Consider Council's Request to Maintain a Portion of the Mine Licence Land 3005 for a Proposed Centre of Automotive Futures (CAAF)

**Recommendation 8:** Consider Council's Request to Maintain a Portion of Land for the Inter-Township Trail Network Project.

## Submission

### **Recommendation 1: Support the Use of Environmental Effects Statements (EES) in Assessing All Rehabilitation Plans**

Council maintains that all mine rehabilitation plans must be underpinned by a formal Environmental Effects Statement (EES) in accordance with the Victorian Environmental Effects Act 1978. Given the scale, complexity, and potential long-term impacts of the rehabilitation of the Yallourn W mine site, the project clearly meets the thresholds outlined in the Ministerial Guidelines for Assessment of Environmental Effects under the Environment Effects Act 1978 (Eighth Edition, 2023) and should be referred to the Minister for Planning.

The EES process remains the most appropriate and rigorous mechanism available to assess rehabilitation proposals in detail and in a transparent manner. Council is currently participating in the EES for the rehabilitation of the Hazelwood Mine and recognises that while the EES framework is valuable, it may not be perfectly suited to the specific nature of mine rehabilitation, particularly because rehabilitation is a mandatory requirement, not an optional proposal.

Therefore, the core focus of any EES for mine rehabilitation should not be whether rehabilitation occurs, but how it can be delivered in a way that ensures the best possible environmental, cultural, and community outcomes. Council emphasises that this observation relates to the structure of the process, not the quality or integrity of the technical work or the Technical Reference Groups involved.

Considering this, Council strongly encourages Energy Australia to refer the rehabilitation of the Yallourn W site for EES assessment and to work in genuine partnership with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the EES process is adapted to reflect the unique context of mine rehabilitation.

### **Recommendation 2: Transfer Land Ownership to State and Federal Governments**

Council maintains its firm position that responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and management of former mine sites should rest with State or Federal Governments and not with the Latrobe City community. Council will not take on long-term maintenance obligations and is committed to ensuring the community is not left with the financial burden of managing these complex sites.

A coordinated approach involving State and Federal Governments is essential to determine clear, long-term management and ownership arrangements. Any future transfer of land ownership or responsibilities must be supported by a sustainable funding model that ensures ongoing costs are covered well into the future.

In addition, Council encourages opportunities to return portions of rehabilitated land to productive uses that create local employment, support community initiatives, and drive regional development.

Strategic, forward-looking planning is crucial to establish a clear pathway for ownership and funding. This is especially important given the uncertainties surrounding pit-lake stability and the long-term environmental risks

Council will continue to advocate for clear ownership, long-term funding mechanisms, and sustainable outcomes that protect the Latrobe City community.

### **Recommendation 3: Apply a Legacy Project or Initiative that will benefit the Latrobe City Community**

Council encourages Energy Australia to embed a legacy project or long-term initiative within the DMRP to ensure the mine's closure delivers economic value to the local community. Given the significant and lasting impacts of mining, a thoughtfully designed legacy project would reflect Energy

Australia's commitment to not only environmental rehabilitation, but also to social and economic regeneration ensuring the region remains strong and resilient.

Council proposes that the legacy project or initiative be co-designed in partnership with Council and the community, with a strong focus on supporting economic diversification into new industries.

The legacy project or initiative should aim to establish infrastructure or programs that align with local strengths and future-oriented industries, to reduce reliance on legacy sectors and foster a more resilient, inclusive economy. With genuine collaboration, transparency, and long-term planning, Energy Australia can help deliver a legacy that empowers the Latrobe community for generations to come.

#### **Recommendation 4: Further Investigate the Cumulative Impacts of Water**

Council continues to hold concerns about the cumulative impacts of mine rehabilitation on regional water resources. A key issue Council has identified as part of the Hazelwood EES process is the lack of sufficient detail in some of the EES reports particularly in relation to the closure of the other mines. This gap in information has made it difficult to fully assess the broader regional implications on water.

Council emphasises the need for a transparent process that considers the cumulative impact of water across the region. At present, Council is not confident that the current approach provides adequate oversight or assurance. Council would welcome additional work be undertaken in the cumulative Impact Assessments as part of all 3 mine sites EES processes.

There also appears to be a gap regarding how water will be prioritised during times of scarcity. Currently, there is no clear framework outlining how competing water needs will be assessed or which projects will be prioritised when resources are limited.

Given the scale of mine rehabilitation and growing pressure on water resources due to climate change, drought conditions and competing demands, a holistic and integrated approach is essential.

Additionally, Council questions whether allocating large volumes of water to mine rehabilitation represents the most economically and socially beneficial use of this critical and limited resource. In a region where water is already under pressure, it is essential to establish clear, transparent priorities for water use especially when demand may exceed supply.

#### **Recommendation 5: Apply an Interrelationships Model between Mine Rehabilitation Plans**

Council maintains the position that mine operators need to consider the interrelationships between mine sites, such coordination is essential to ensure effective rehabilitation across Hazelwood, Yallourn W and Loy Yang A. Integrated planning will support improved environmental and conservation outcomes, reduce overlapping impacts, and allow rehabilitation efforts to complement one another.

By fostering open dialogue and collaboration, mine operators can align their strategies to avoid conflicting approaches and achieve cohesive land uses that enhance community benefit and align with broader landscape goals.

Council continues to emphasise the importance of ensuring that post-mining land use delivers long-term economic and social value. Rehabilitated sites should transition into productive uses that contribute to the local economy and community more broadly. This is particularly important given the scale of land that will be rehabilitated across all 3 sites.

Although current DMRP regulations do not mandate this level of strategic planning, Energy Australia has an opportunity to lead by example. By adopting a holistic, landscape-scale approach to mine

rehabilitation, one that extends beyond regulatory compliance, Energy Australia can help ensure that environmental, social, and economic outcomes are maximised for the Latrobe City's future.

**Recommendation 6:** Support the Government's Proposed Recommendation for a Bulk Water Entitlement Fee

While Council continues to advocate for all alternative mine rehabilitation options to be fully explored and publicly assessed before proceeding with the proposed full lake model, Council acknowledges the possibility that the full lake approach may ultimately be pursued.

In that event, Council encourages Energy Australia to work collaboratively with the Victorian State Government and support the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's proposed recommendation to introduce a bulk water entitlement fee. This fee should reflect the full cost of water use, including:

- Environmental impacts,
- Infrastructure needs, and
- Social and economic implications for the region

Council supports a fair and transparent pricing framework and recommends that all revenue generated from bulk water entitlements, imposed on the mining providers be ring-fenced and allocated to a dedicated Latrobe City Economic Support Package. This package should support initiatives that deliver measurable benefits to the Latrobe City community particularly in the areas of supporting business capabilities, investment attraction and industry growth.

By ensuring that water, as a valuable public resource, delivers a return to the community, this approach can help strengthen the region's long-term economic resilience.

**Recommendation 7:** Consider Council's Request to Maintain a portion of the Mine Licence Land 3005 for a proposed Centre of Automotive Futures (CAAF)

Council encourages Energy Australia to consider its request to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would enable Council to develop a business case for the proposed Centre of Automotive Futures (CAAF).

This request carries no financial obligation for Energy Australia. Rather, it would provide Council with the certainty needed to undertake the necessary assessments and determine the economic justification for the project.

Council cannot proceed with the business case without a formal commitment from Energy Australia. An MoU confirming that the site could be considered for the CAAF in future land use planning is essential to move forward. Council therefore urges Energy Australia to use this opportunity to support a visionary, future-focused project that could play a key role in the region's long-term transformation.

The CAAF has long been a priority for Council due to its potential to attract new industries and create meaningful employment opportunities for the community. To progress this initiative, Council is seeking Energy Australia's support in earmarking a 410-hectare greenfield site within Mine Licence 3005 at Yallourn W a potential location for the CAAF.

Envisioned as a national hub for advanced mobility, vehicle innovation, and sustainable transport solutions, the CAAF would offer education, training, and research opportunities in STEM and advanced manufacturing. It would help build a skilled local workforce and establish career pathways for the Latrobe City community.

**Recommendation 8:** Consider Council's request to maintain a portion of land for the Inter-Township Trail Network Project

Council requests that Energy Australia enter discussions to permit early community access to a portion of the existing road network within the rehabilitation site. This site would enable the timely activation of the Morwell–Moe segment of Council's Inter-Township Trail Network project.

This section of land, which already contains an established internal road network, offers a valuable opportunity to create new community recreation spaces with minimal infrastructure investment. Integrating this area into the broader tracks and trails network would support the region's growing interest in mountain biking and outdoor activities, contributing to improved physical and mental health outcomes for the community.

In addition to health and wellbeing benefits, this project has strong potential to stimulate the local visitor economy, attract tourism, and support active transport options between key towns. By preserving this corridor and collaborating on early access, Energy Australia can contribute to a regionally significant initiative that aligns with broader community development, sustainability, and liveability objectives.

A copy of the proposed track alignment has been provided below for reference.



## Conclusion

Council thanks Energy Australia for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Declared Mine Rehabilitation Plan and respectfully requests a written response to the recommendations outlined in this submission.

Council looks forward to ongoing collaboration with Energy Australia to ensure the rehabilitation of the Yallourn W mine is undertaken in a manner that is responsible, safe, and environmentally sustainable - delivering long term benefits for the Latrobe City community.

Council remains committed to working in partnership with government, industry, and the community to ensure that mine rehabilitation efforts contribute meaningfully to environmental restoration, economic diversification, and the long-term resilience of the region.

Please feel free to contact Latrobe City Council's Manager of Business and Industry Development Shae Hansen on [Shae.Hansen@latrobe.vic.gov.au](mailto:Shae.Hansen@latrobe.vic.gov.au) or 0459 847 411, should you wish to discuss any of the content outlined in this submission in greater detail.