

# FAQS



## HAZELWOOD POWER STATION & MINE

### PONDAGE

#### **Why was the decision made to permanently close the Pondage?**

The Hazelwood Pondage was temporarily closed in June 2018 following a report from dam experts that found the Pondage walls had deteriorated significantly with age since they were designed and constructed, using 1960s methodologies. The decision to close the Pondage was based on unacceptable risk to the public in the event of a wall breach.

The report found the walls no longer complied with the requirements of the Australian National Committee for Large Dams. These findings were subsequently confirmed through an independent third-party review. The cost of remediation of the wall defects is considered prohibitive given that the Hazelwood Cooling Pond (HCP) will be remediated post the commencement of filling the Mine void in 2021.

#### **Why can't you just repair the walls, so the community can continue to use the Pondage?**

The future of the Pondage has been the subject of extensive stakeholder engagement that identified there were three options for the future of the Pondage: to transfer ownership; close and rehabilitate the Pondage, reinstating the former Eel Hole Creek and establish wetlands; and remediating the site to agricultural land.

The current issues with the dam walls and the necessity to partially drain the HCP has required us to release the water to the environment - not into the Mine as planned.

To repair the walls of the dam to make them safe and stable is an extensive, complex engineering exercise and would cost tens of millions of dollars, plus there would be ongoing care and maintenance as well as the cost of maintaining water levels.

#### **How will the Pondage site be rehabilitated?**

We have commenced early studies into interim rehabilitation options available to stabilise the newly exposed beach areas arising from the lowering of the Pondage level. We will look at options for stabilising these areas to avoid dust, erosion and the potential for odour by mulching or grassing the areas. This will be an interim measure until final rehabilitation designs are completed, approved and works commence.

#### **Will there be any problems with dust or odours from the exposed areas around the Pondage?**

We anticipate that approximately 100 hectares of new beaching will be exposed within the footprint of the Pondage following the lowering of the water level by 2.7 metres. Interim remediation plans are being developed to address any emergent issues relating to dust, odour or vegetation.

#### **Will there be any contaminants in the exposed soil?**

ENGIE Hazelwood has completed an initial screening of the sediments within the HCP, with the results of the assessment indicating sediment quality would have limited, if any, impacts on potential beneficial uses of land or water. The HCP will be subject to further investigations as planning for rehabilitation commences this year, and a final landform is determined and design works initiated.

#### **How have you mitigated risk to marine and bird life?**

Most of the aquatic fauna within the HCP are introduced pest species that preferred warm water conditions. Since operation of the Hazelwood Power Station ceased, the temperature of the HCP has decreased significantly which has contributed to the reduction of these pest species. The design of the HCP does not allow for the passage of native fish species to occur from the west branch of Eel Hole Creek through to the east branch. Rehabilitation of the HCP will reconnect these sections of Eel Hole Creek and allow natural fish migration to occur throughout the waterway. The rehabilitation of the HCP provides the opportunity to transform the waterway into an extensive fresh water wetlands and waterway.

Bird life which may use the pond should not be affected during the rehabilitation project as they will move to other locations, such as wetlands, rivers and creeks, which are scattered throughout the Latrobe Valley. The rehabilitation of the HCP and reinstatement of Eel Hole Creek will also introduce new habitat for many different types of fauna, such as birds, fish, mammals and reptiles to inhabit, and allow for migration of existing species throughout the system.