

Spring 2024

# Alcoa Anglesea Update



## Formal application made to Southern Rural Water

As indicated in our last update, in late July Alcoa submitted a formal groundwater licence amendment application with Southern Rural Water, requesting approval to pump groundwater from the Upper Eastern View Formation (UEVF) to fill the mine pit in seven to ten years.

The amended application seeks 1.5 gigalitres per year for up to 10 years, a volume that represents less than 0.1 per cent of the aquifer's total groundwater content and 60 per cent less than the company's historical extraction rate.

If approved, the licence will enable Alcoa to accelerate return of the former mine and power station site to the community, while providing long-term environmental benefits sooner, in contrast to a natural fill approach, which would take approximately 50 years.

The decision was made following consideration of feedback received during three well-attended community open house sessions and is backed by more than three years' worth of technical work.

This rigorous process included analysis of hydrogeological models, actual historical data, independent technical studies, groundwater pumping tests, as well as the development of a groundwater model (in conjunction with Barwon Water) - all of which have indicated the proposed extraction would have no adverse impact on groundwater dependent ecosystems, including the Anglesea River.

Alcoa's Anglesea Site Asset Manager Warren Sharp said the company have a regulatory obligation to deliver the final Anglesea Mine Rehabilitation and Closure Plan.

"The application forms part of our ongoing efforts to finalise an approved mine water filling strategy to fill the mine pit in a timely manner, and subsequently accelerate the return of the site to the community," Mr Sharp said.

"An approved mine water filling strategy is the key outstanding deliverable of our Anglesea Mine Rehabilitation and Closure Plan, which was developed in consultation with the community following the permanent shutdown of operations in 2015.

"Other deliverables of the plan, completed in 2020, include major earthworks and revegetation activities which have achieved a safe and stable landform.

**"Consistent with this, our priority is ensuring all rehabilitation work is responsible and delivers the best outcome for the environment, community and economy."**

### Why water?

Over the journey, Alcoa has investigated a wide range of options to support filling the pit in a timely manner, including restoration of Salt Creek, recycled water, seawater and desalination.

Investigations into a natural fill have also been undertaken, with modelling indicating it would take approximately 50 years to fill, during which time community access to the area would remain restricted.

In contrast, Alcoa's preferred option would see the mine pit full over seven to 10 years, enabling earlier community access to the rehabilitated landscape, potential to support long-term management options for the Anglesea River and stabilisation of the aquifer systems locally intersected by the mine pit.

Filling former mine pits with water to provide environmental and social benefits has become common global practice, including throughout Australia.

Creating a water body would benefit the environment, the regional economy and the community through the future land use of the rehabilitated landscape, act as a critical fire break to minimise fire risk to the Anglesea township and assist with geotechnical stability through the weight of water at the base of the mine.

### Next steps

To mitigate any risk to the environment, and as part of their application, Alcoa have proposed an adaptive management approach which includes:

- Documented water management and monitoring plans
- Ongoing, comprehensive monitoring of all available bores across all aquifers
- Multiple bores (~30) in various aquifers selected as dedicated monitoring and/or trigger bores
- Nominated trigger bores with defined water level and/or water quality triggers and contingency actions (including cessation of extraction) in the event of a trigger exceedance
- Ongoing sharing of monitoring results with the community and relevant stakeholders

The application is subject to assessment and approval by Southern Rural Water, who are expected to run their own community engagement activities in due course.

### Stay informed

Visit [www.alcoa.com/australia/en/anglesea](http://www.alcoa.com/australia/en/anglesea) to learn more about the work being undertaken at Alcoa Anglesea and to read the community engagement report summarising the feedback received throughout the May open house sessions.

Email [angleseaps@alcoa.com](mailto:angleseaps@alcoa.com) to contact a member of the team.



Scan the QR code to sign up to Alcoa's email mailing list.