

Inquiry into the Closure of the Hazelwood and Yallourn Power Stations

Mr Greg Hansford

Organisation Name:
Your position or role:

YOUR SUBMISSION

Submission:

1) impact of the closure of the Hazelwood Power Station on the economy and jobs of the Latrobe Valley, and the success or otherwise of economic recovery efforts to date.

The Hazelwood Power station was more labor intensive than the newer power stations e.g Loy Yang. When I worked there it employed over 1000 people - 500 of these were in my section alone (Mechanical Maintenance).

With its closure these jobs have been irretrievably lost. Some personnel saw it as a good time to retire and did so. Others were able to get similar positions at either Yallourn W or Loy Yang. Still others got out and took their package money and moved to a different area e.g interstate.

A quick look around Morwell gives an idea of the effects of this - there are many empty shops, four of the local banks have closed their branches (Commonwealth, Bendigo, ANZ and most recently Members Australia). Housing values in the Morwell area have declined also.

2) expected economic impacts of the proposed closure of Yallourn Power Station in 2028 and options the State Government can pursue to offset the loss of more than 1,000 direct jobs from the plant, as well as associated contractors;

The closure of Yallourn W will impact the economies of nearby towns of Newborough and Moe and to a lesser extent Morwell and Traralgon. Personnel displaced from W station will have less choice if they wish to continue in the power industry than was available to the Hazelwood personnel, with Loy Yang their main avenue for employment. Those who can't pick up work locally will be forced to move elsewhere. I am unsure of the age grouping of the W Station - I suspect their will be less older personnel for whom retirement will be an option as there was at Hazelwood.

3. success or otherwise of the Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) to help the region transition, in light of the decline of funding made available to the LVA over successive State Budgets

I feel that while the LVA was a worthwhile means of transitioning the region, the funding they received was to a greater extent not used effectively as it could have been in actually creating ongoing jobs. It was good at short term job creation, but was ineffective in creating long term jobs. Consider that if \$2 million of their funds had been injected into the Walhalla Goldfields railway, for instance, to rebuild their line back to Erica, there would have been an immediate short term benefit as well as opening up many associated employment opportunities, not only in Walhalla, but in Erica as well. Railways are maintenance heavy and the present WGR volunteer workforce is ageing, necessitating the need for full time dedicated paid employees to carry out this function e.g station personnel, track maintenance gangs, engineering input etc. The WGR has the capacity to pay these workers on an ongoing basis, but lacks the start up capital to build the line back to Erica - the intermittent Covid 19 openings and closings has had a dramatic affect on its revenues.

FILE ATTACHMENTS

File1:
File2:
File3:

Signature:
G. Hansford