

REHABILITATION INFORMATION RELEASE

DATE: 15 MAY 2020

Westside open cut mine returns to bushland

Overview

The NSW Resources Regulator is a stand-alone regulator within Regional NSW and is responsible for compliance and enforcement activities across the mining and exploration industry. The Regulator undertakes risk-based compliance and enforcement activities in relation to obligations under the *Mining Act 1992*. This includes:

- conducting assessments and compliance activities to ensure the rehabilitation of mines is undertaken in accordance with the conditions of mining leases and the requirements of the *Mining Act 1992*
- ensuring that rehabilitation security deposits, held by the department, cover the full costs in undertaking rehabilitation in the event of default by the mining company.

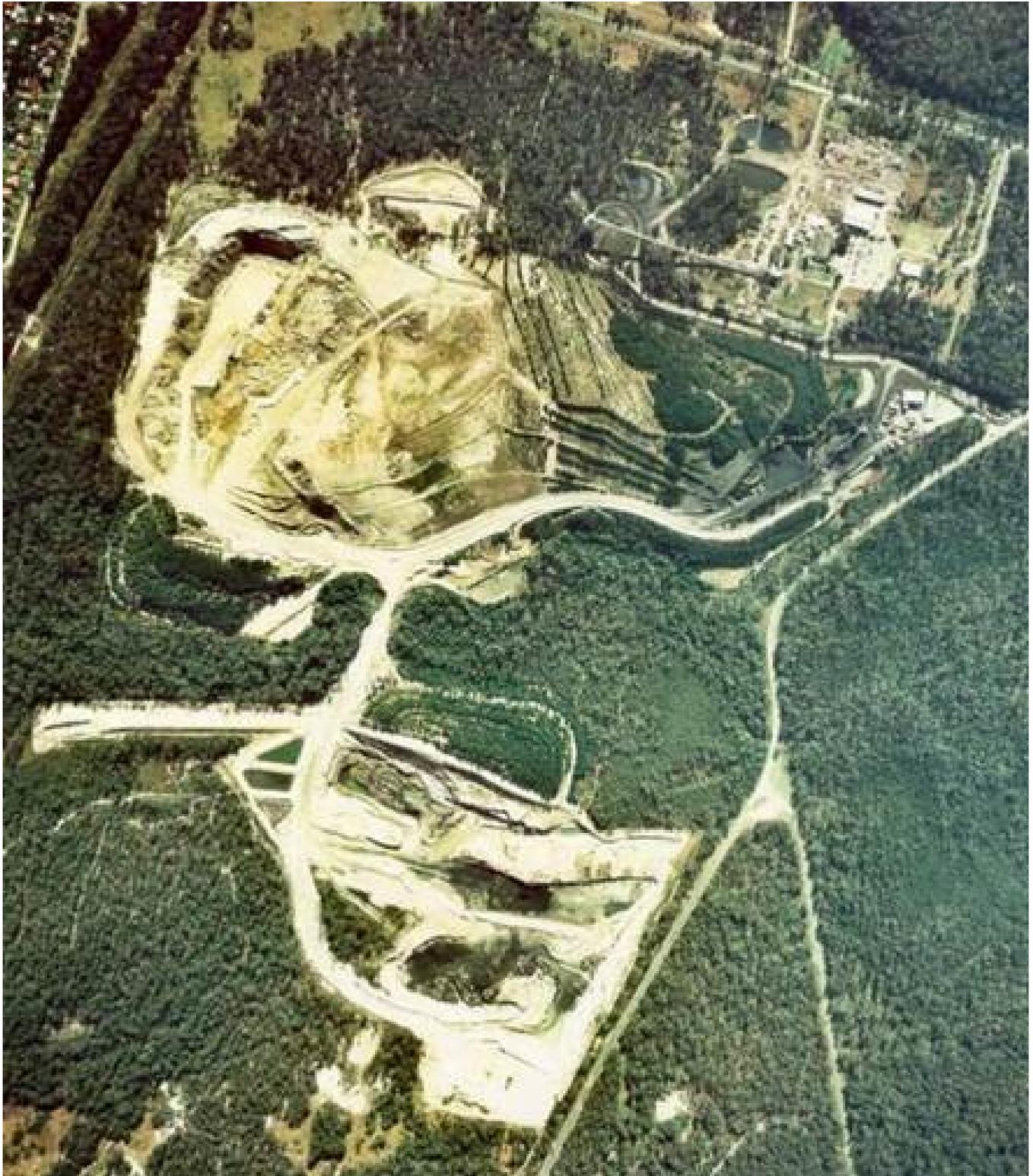
This information release provides guidance about the successful completion of rehabilitation on part of Westside Mine at Wakefield, NSW.

The mine

Development consent (DA 90/0242) was granted to Westside Mine in 1990 for open cut mining in the northern and southern portions of the mine lease area, with mining starting in 1992. Mining was by truck and shovel method, with sequential mining of narrow strips followed by backfilling of mined strips and rehabilitation on a continuous basis.

Mining operations ended in 2012, and the site has been undergoing progressive rehabilitation since that time.

Figure 1 Aerial photo of Westside Mine during operations (source: Glencore)



The domain associated with the former mining operations and where rehabilitation has been completed comprises about 38 hectares of the north pit area at the former Westside Mine. It comprises 'Domain 2 – North Rehab Area' in the approved [Mining operations plan: closure of the OCAL complex](#). In 1998, operations ceased within Domain 2.

Figure 2 Westside Mine and Domain 2 (source: Glencore)



Required rehabilitation outcomes

The Westside Mine is predominantly surrounded by native vegetation, characterised by a relatively large expanse of remnant forest that forms a corridor with the Heaton and Awaba State Forests.

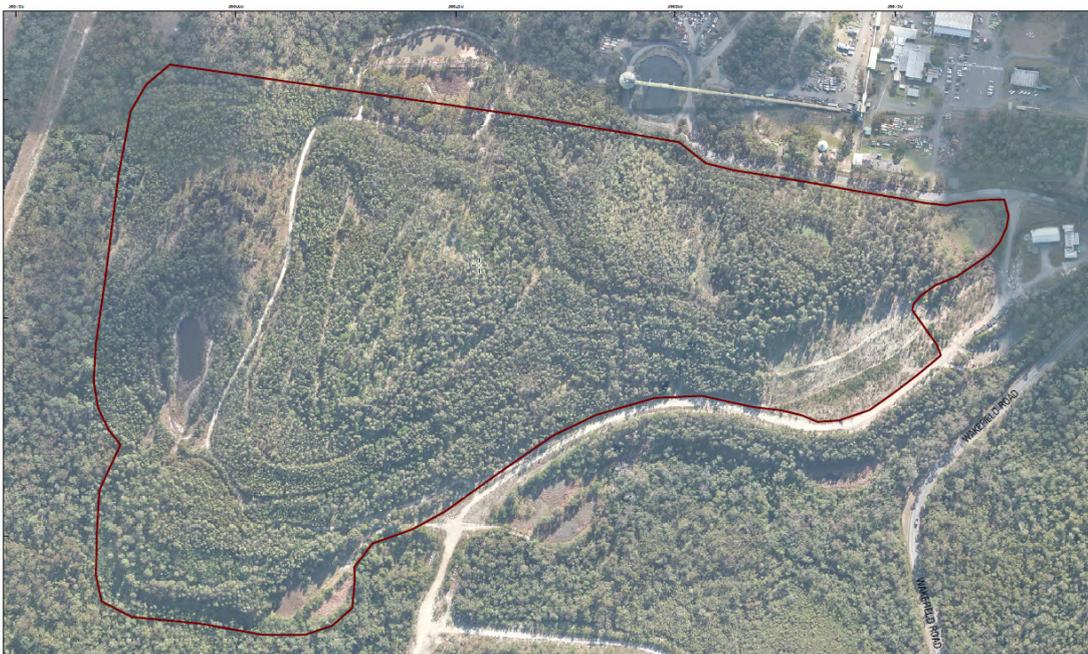
Rehabilitation progress

The progress of rehabilitation has been in accordance with the measures outlined in the approved MOP. Since the completion of mining, Domain 2 has been reshaped and seeded, including the mining void in the western part of the domain.

The rehabilitation is between 16 to 26 years old and has been the subject of ongoing monitoring and maintenance in accordance with the requirements of the approved MOP. This has included annual reporting to the Regulator and site inspections to assess the progress of rehabilitation performance. General observations have included:

- the final landform is safe, stable, non-polluting and complements adjacent landforms
- the ecosystem is sustainable and requires minimal maintenance consistent with the approved final land use
- the species present were generally those found locally
- evidence of natural regeneration and recruitment from native trees and vegetation established as part of the rehabilitation
- no significant weed infestations, with levels similar to those surrounding untouched bushland areas
- evidence of functioning soil nutrient/biological processes through the development of soil profiles.

Figure 3: Domain 2 in 2016



Rehabilitation completion

The title holder lodged an application with the Regulator in November 2019 (using Form ESF2 Rehabilitation Completion and/or Review of Rehabilitation Cost Estimate) to obtain formal sign off on completed rehabilitation works within Domain 2.

A detailed assessment was completed by the Regulator, which determined that rehabilitation obligations had been fulfilled to a satisfactory extent, in accordance with the approved rehabilitation objectives and completion criteria included in the MOP.

Messages

The partial completion of rehabilitation at the former Westside Mine, and subsequent sign-off from the Regulator, demonstrates that there is a strong regulatory framework in relation to mine rehabilitation and that beneficial post-mining land uses can be established after the closure of a mine.

The Regulator requires leaseholders to comply with their rehabilitation obligations under the *Mining Act 1992*. This includes:

- undertaking rehabilitation progressively in a timely manner
- developing and implementing rehabilitation techniques, in consideration of detailed risk assessments and sound scientific principles, to overcome barriers/constraints to achieving successful rehabilitation
- undertaking monitoring to assess whether rehabilitation is trending towards meeting the approved rehabilitation objectives and completion criteria in a timely manner
- developing and implementing a maintenance program for rehabilitation areas to rectify potential issues identified from the monitoring program
- maintaining records of the methods used to establish rehabilitation, as well as monitoring data, to demonstrate success and facilitate continual improvement
- submitting a security bond that is held by the government to cover the full cost of rehabilitation should a company default on its obligations.

Further information

- [Exploration and mining rehabilitation fact sheet](#)
- [Form ESF2: Rehabilitation completion](#)
- [NSW Resources Regulator mining operations plan guidelines](#)
- [Rehabilitation compliance and reporting reforms](#)
- [Australian Government, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science 2016: Leading Practice Sustainable Development Program in the Mining Industry – Mine Rehabilitation](#)
- [Australian Government, Department of Industry, Innovation and Science 2016: Leading Practice Sustainable Development Program for the Mining Industry – Risk Management](#)

About this information release

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing. However, because advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the NSW Resources Regulator or the user's independent advisor.

Visit www.resourcesregulator.nsw.gov.au to:

- learn more about your rehabilitation obligations
- view our publications on other causal investigations

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