

Question 1 (page 48 - 49)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I will firstly ask about mine rehabilitation. I have heard a lot about how difficult it is to successfully rehabilitate mines. In fact, some say that mines really cannot be successfully rehabilitated. What are some examples in New South Wales where open cut mines have been successfully rehabilitated?

GEORGINA BEATTIE: I will have to take that on notice to give some specific examples. Obviously, mine operations go for a significant number of years and there's a lot of operations that are continuing to operate now under the current regulatory framework that have been around for some time and often seek expansions or extensions to their original consent conditions. What I would say about rehabilitation is that the framework that we have in place requires progressive rehabilitation. And there were reforms that were introduced in 2021, which really increased the requirement for that progressive rehabilitation to make sure, through the Resources Regulator, that operations are progressively rehabilitating their disturbance, as they mine, to ensure that they're meeting their final end land use, which is approved as part of their development consent.

PETER DAY: I might just provide some actual examples there—largely in the coal sector because of the historic nature of that industry. There is certainly Mangoola coalmine, for its ecological outcomes; West Cliff Colliery; Mount Owen coalmine; Baal Bone Colliery, for landform design; New Wallsend colliery, for restoring the land that was impacted by 100 years of mining; also, in terms of Westside Mine and Ulan Coal Mine, for ecological rehabilitation of part of their process with coal; and also Catherine Hill Bay, which was actually transformed into a residential subdivision.

ANSWER

Examples of mines that have been successfully rehabilitated include:

- Westside Mine, Killingworth NSW
- Mangoola Coal Mine, near Muswellbrook NSW
- Upper Hunter Grazing Trial (Yancoal, Liddell).

Question 2 (page 50)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Does Cadia have a rehabilitation plan?

PETER DAY: It does. It had to submit a new one as part of our reforms. It is classified as a large mine. Large mines in New South Wales, under our regulation, are those defined as having an EPL from the EPA.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I understand that Cadia is responsible for rehabilitating Annandale copper mine as well. Cadia committed to that four years ago—to fully rehabilitate that site within four years—and nothing has been done. Are you aware of that?

PETER DAY: I'll take that one on notice. I'm not aware of that one, no.

ANSWER

Annandale Mine, also known as the Blayney Copper Mine, is situated on the southwestern fringe of the Blayney township. Based on the department records, there are no current mining leases associated with the former mine and as such the Cadia Gold Mine has **no obligation** under the *Mining Act 1992* to rehabilitate this site.

Question 3 (page 53 – 54)

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I'm aware that Mr Donnelly also asked questions along these lines. But the responsibility, therefore, for disused mine sites—if it doesn't sit with the regulator, who within government does have responsibility for that contamination?

PETER DAY: Was your question before around the signs? I took it to be.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: That's right.

PETER DAY: Yes, but not the actual remediation of those legacy mine sites themselves?

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes. Well, it's both. Responsibility needs to fall somewhere for the Government, you would think, to put up signs notifying the community that this creek is contaminated by this disused mine site. Where does that fit?

PETER DAY: Our job generally is rehabilitation of those legacy sites. In terms of any impacts on public health, that would either be under the health department or under the EPA itself.

GEORGINA BEATTIE: To add to that, there are hundreds of historical sites. Where it's identified that there are risks to the environment or to the community from those historical sites, government would work together to look at what needs to be done to rectify that. In the case of Sunny Corner, as I mentioned, work was undertaken several years ago. We understand that there were improvements to water quality as a result of that, but further testing would be needed, which is now being undertaken, to determine the current state of that water quality. Based on the results of that water testing, government would determine the prioritisation and any further works that could be undertaken.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: It does seem to be an extraordinary kind of legacy—a toxic legacy, if you like—that does seem to fall between agencies in some ways. We've also been told by one of the community representatives with their submission—I think it was Cadia asking whether there has been any successful remediation or containment of mine tailings in any tailings storage facility in the Blayney shire. They say that that's not the case and give examples of Brown's Creek. Are you aware of this one? They said that this one was abandoned after the mine flooded. It's now a source of acid mine drainage directly into the Belubula River. There's a second one, the Junction Reefs mine. Are you aware of that one?

PETER DAY: It would be on the list of legacy mines, I'd suggest.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: It's also a failed rehabilitation after multiple attempts to control cyanide and acid mine drainage directly into the Belubula River—but it's nothing to do with you because it's legacy?

PETER DAY: In terms of MEG itself, MEG does legacy mines in terms of rehabilitation. There's a work program going forward in terms of targeting high-priority mine sites for remediation that have been identified as legacy mines.

GEORGINA BEATTIE: I would have to check whether any work has been undertaken on those sites in previous years through the Legacy Mines Program, but I don't have that information to hand.

ANSWER

The former mining operation associated with Browns Creek mine is closed, however the mining leases were acquired by Australian Native Landscapes Pty Ltd (ANL) in 2016 to allow for ongoing processing of material stockpiled during mining. The Regulator is yet to sign off that rehabilitation works have been successfully completed.

The Junction Reefs mine is a former gold mine, which has not been operating for several decades. Junctions Reef mine (also called the Sheahans Grant mine) ceased operations several decades ago, but is still covered by active mining titles, now held by OceanaGold. The bulk of rehabilitation works were undertaken between 1995 to 2001, however, the Regulator is yet to sign off that rehabilitation works have been successfully completed.

The Resources Regulator continues to actively regulate the former mine and has required the lease holder to conduct further site investigations to confirm the scope of further rehabilitation works that may be required.