



MEETING 2

MINERAL SANDS AGRICULTURAL LAND RESTORATION WORKING GROUP

The Restoration Working Group met on 15 July 2026 to continue its work supporting the development of best-practice guidance for the restoration of agricultural land following mineral sands mining in north-west Victoria. The independent group brings together expertise from agriculture, natural resource management, local government, research institutions, industry and government. The group's role is to provide advice to Resources Victoria on agricultural land restoration outcomes and future rehabilitation guidance.

The meeting focused on lessons from past rehabilitation experiences in the Wimmera region, Victoria's rehabilitation planning framework, and the role of evidence, monitoring and stakeholder engagement in supporting confidence in agricultural land restoration outcomes. Presentations were provided by the Wimmera Catchment Management Authority and Resources Victoria's Regulatory Operations.

KEY THEMES

Evidence-based restoration outcomes

The Group also heard from Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Chief Executive Officer David Brennan, who shared perspectives drawn from his experience across regulation, land management and community engagement.

The Working Group discussed the importance of robust evidence, monitoring, and stakeholder engagement for informing agricultural land restoration outcomes and building community confidence.

Members considered the role of baseline data, long-term monitoring, field trials and emerging technologies in supporting transparent assessment of restoration outcomes and informed decision-making by regulators, landholders and communities.

Agricultural productivity and soil health

Agricultural productivity and land capability remained a central focus of the Group's discussions.

Members examined approaches to assessing rehabilitation outcomes, including soil health, land capability, agricultural productivity and long-term farm business viability. The use of measurable indicators, benchmarking and control sites were identified as an important component of evaluating restoration outcomes over time.

Rehabilitation planning and accountability

Resources Victoria's Regulatory Operations provided an overview of Victoria's rehabilitation planning framework and regulatory requirements across the mining lifecycle.

Discussion highlighted the importance of:

- early rehabilitation planning
- clear and measurable rehabilitation objectives
- robust baseline and benchmarking data
- consideration of landholder, community and Traditional Owner perspectives
- continuous improvement through the incorporation of new evidence and learnings.

Members also explored how monitoring programs, field trials and closure criteria can help demonstrate and evaluate restoration outcomes.

Community confidence and engagement

The Group recognised the importance of understanding community expectations regarding future land use, agricultural productivity and rehabilitation outcomes.

Members discussed the role of transparency, ongoing engagement and accessible information in supporting informed community understanding of rehabilitation processes and outcomes.

Looking ahead

The Working Group will continue drawing on the expertise of landholders, researchers, regulators, community representatives and industry to inform recommendations for future agricultural land restoration guidance.

Future meetings will continue to examine practical rehabilitation experience, emerging research and lessons from restoration programs in Australia and internationally to inform future guidance.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Restoration Working Group is scheduled for 19 August 2026.