



Mining Rehabilitation Fund

Yearly Report 2017



Highlights of 2016-17

The 2016–17 financial year marks the fourth full year of operation for the Mining Rehabilitation Fund (MRF), following an initial voluntary year where payments into the fund were accepted from 1 July 2013.

Compliance with reporting requirements continues to be nearly universal and the total contributions received over the 2016–17 financial year brought the balance of the fund to approximately \$92.4 million, including \$3.6 million in interest earned since 1 July 2014.

The reported disturbance data is building a valuable information data set regarding mining activity in Western Australia. The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) publishes this data annually on its website.

The Abandoned Mines Program (AMP), established in 2015, is funded by the MRF. In the 2016–17 financial year DMIRS continued to ensure that safety and environmental risks were addressed at the abandoned Ellendale Diamond Mine Site. Works have also been completed at the first two pilot projects, Black Diamond in Collie and Pro-Force in Coolgardie.

Overall, 2016–17 was an outstanding year for the Abandoned Mines Program, implementing best practice partnership processes, stakeholder identification and community engagement practices, completing two pilot projects and undertaking critical works at the recently abandoned Ellendale site.

Background

The introduction of the MRF in 2013 has ensured that the community of Western Australia will not pay for the rehabilitation of mining operations that may become abandoned. In addition, interest earned on the fund can be used to rehabilitate historical abandoned mine sites in Western Australia. The State has never before had a dedicated and perpetual fund for the rehabilitation and management of historical abandoned mine sites.

Under the *Mining Rehabilitation Fund Act 2012* (MRF Act), holders of mining tenements granted under the *Mining Act 1978* (Mining Act) contribute to a pooled fund by payment of an annual levy. This is calculated according to the environmental disturbance on tenements. The money in this fund can be used to rehabilitate abandoned mines after all efforts to recover funds from the tenement holder/operator have been exhausted.

The previous system of applying Unconditional Performance Bonds (UPBs) against tenements as security for compliance with environmental obligations has largely been replaced by the MRF. Bonds may still be imposed or retained in cases where DMIRS considers there to be a high risk that a tenement holder's rehabilitation liability could revert to the State.

Since the introduction of the fund, more than \$1 billion in UPBs has been returned to the mining sector, allowing companies to invest in progressive rehabilitation and other project developments.

The MRF's innovative approach to managing rehabilitation liability has attracted interest from many jurisdictions both within Australia and internationally.

There has been continued interest in the MRF and the Abandoned Mines Program from industry groups and other jurisdictions. DMIRS has provided presentations about these programs to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Eurasia Competitiveness Program Conference in Kazakhstan via video link; the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies Mining and the Environment Conference 2017, the Derelict Mines Summit in New South Wales late in 2016; and the South Australian 2017 Inter-Governmental Forum on Financial Assurance Models in the Mineral Resources Sector.

As the MRF is a special purpose account under the *Financial Management Act 2006* (FM Act), funds must be spent in accordance with the purposes stated in the MRF Act. Under the provisions of the FM Act, the Director General of DMIRS is accountable for the management of the MRF.

DMIRS reports on the management of the fund through the department's Annual Report. In addition, the projected revenue and expenditure for the MRF is considered by the State Government and approved through the State Budget each year.

This report presents the activities and achievements of the MRF in 2016–17, as well as providing an indication of plans for future years.

Activities of the Mining Rehabilitation Advisory Panel

The Mining Rehabilitation Advisory Panel (MRAP) was established in 2013. Its primary purpose is to provide advice to the Director General of DMIRS on matters pertaining to the fund and associated Abandoned Mines Program. The inaugural panel was appointed in December 2013 and served until December 2015.

The current members of MRAP (Figure 1) appointed for a three-year term from March 2016, are Michael Slight (Chairperson), Phil Scott (Deputy Chairperson), Sally Audeyev, Michelle Rhodes and Donald Burnside.



Figure 1. The current members of the Mining Rehabilitation Advisory Panel.
Back row (L-R): Don Burnside, Michael Slight, Phil Scott
Front row (L-R): Michelle Rhodes, Sally Audeyev

Michael Slight is a mining engineer with more than 35 years of operational experience in all phases of mining from feasibility, construction and development, production and expansion through to mine closure.

Phil Scott is an environmental professional with 30 years of experience in corporate, resource and environmental management across a broad range of industries.

Sally Audeyev is a leading environmental lawyer specialising in environmental, indigenous, planning and mining related legislation.

Michelle Rhodes is a director of a leading environmental consultancy company and has 21 years of experience in the environmental sector and stakeholder engagement.

Donald Burnside is a professional consultant with 40 years of experience in agriculture and natural resource management.

The MRAP meets at minimum quarterly to discuss and provide independent expert advice on a range of matters related to both implementing and managing the MRF; plus work activities associated with the Abandoned Mines Program. During 2016-17, MRAP provided the following key activities:

- Endorsed the Abandoned Mines Program's request to the former Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee (EERC) for increased funding for the Black Diamond Pilot Site Project to enable revegetation works to be undertaken.
- Endorsed the development and implementation of the department's new Stakeholder Identification and Rating Tool.
- Endorsed the implementation of the Black Diamond Pilot Site Revegetation Strategy.
- Provided valuable advice and feedback to the policy development and work program for the coming years, including endorsing the final version of the Partnership Guideline.

MRF Lodgement and Reporting

All persons and companies that hold tenements under the Mining Act are required to submit disturbance and rehabilitation data each year for the purposes of calculating the MRF levy. The reporting period (or 'levy period') is aligned with the normal July-June financial reporting period.

The level of compliance with reporting obligations under the MRF Act remained high in 2016–17 with 99.1 per cent of all required tenement reports being provided by the due date, 30 June 2017 (Figure 2). While slightly lower than the 99.5 per cent received in 2015–16, the actual number of reports received was higher.

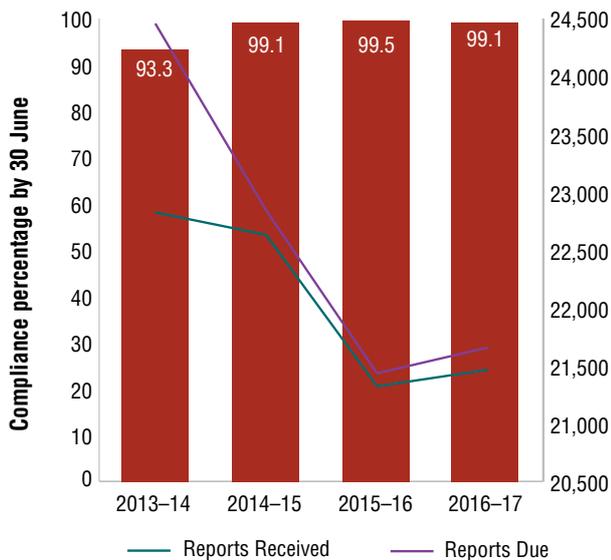


Figure 2: Percentage of tenement reporting obligations met by 30 June for each levy period

Projected Levy for the 2016-17 Period

Levy payments totalling \$28,913,725.20 have been assessed for the 2016-17 period (2015-16 comparative: \$27,967,341.26) based on information provided up to the date of this report.

Disturbance data can actually be formally reassessed up to two years from the date of the original assessment. As a result, the final total of levy payments due for a period may vary if the disturbance data is subsequently reassessed (Figure 3).

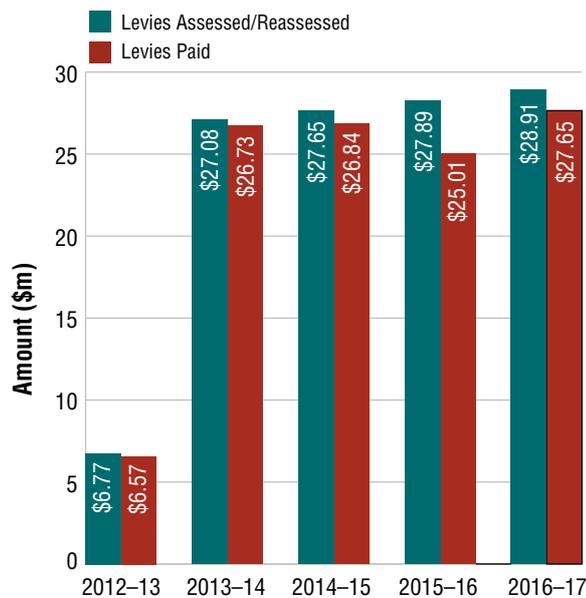


Figure 3: Levies assessed and paid up to and including 15 September 2017

Enforcement

As a result of tenement holders failing to comply with reporting obligations under the MRF Act for the preceding period, DMIRS served 189 infringement notices in July 2017. As in previous years, the majority of the affected tenement holders completed their reporting obligations after these infringement notices were served. By 15 September 2017, DMIRS had withdrawn 174 infringement notices issued in relation to 2016-17 obligations. Infringement notices are enforced through the State's Fines Enforcement Registry. Revenue from infringement notices is transferred to the State Government's Consolidated Revenue Fund and not retained by the MRF.

Figure 4 demonstrates that the overall number of infringement notices issued and withdrawn has decreased significantly since the first year of the MRF in 2013-14.

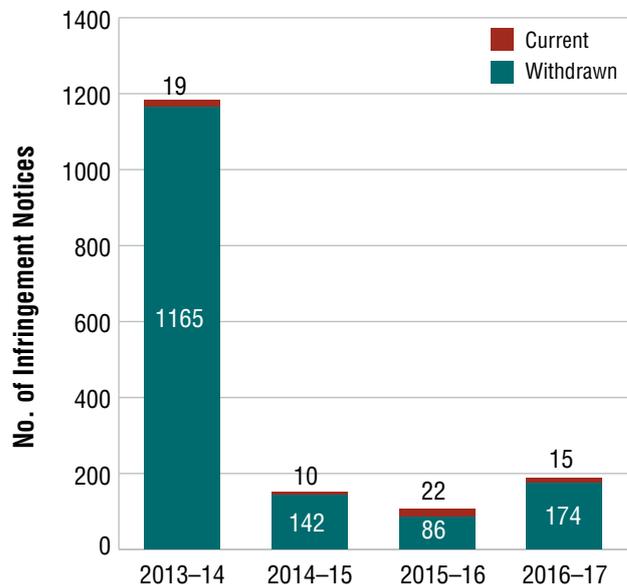


Figure 4: Infringement Notices issued for failure to provide Mining Rehabilitation Fund assessment information.

Annual MRF Auditing

Desktop auditing of MRF reports has continued to be undertaken to help ensure that the self-assessed data provided by tenement holders is accurate and reliable. This also helps to identify any issues with the reporting categories. Annually over 4000 tenements are programmed to be audited.

The most frequently misreported disturbance types included tracks/roads, waste rock dumps and mining voids as well as cleared areas such as sand, river-bed and gravel mining.

MRF reports are selected for auditing from the pool of reports lodged in the preceding period. The reports to be audited are identified with selection based on risk, as well as random selection from the pool. During the 2016-2017 period, 44 per cent of audited reports were identified by risk-based selection and 56 per cent by random selection.

During the period, a total of 178 MRF reports, representing 4071 tenements were audited. Of these, 95 tenements were issued with an MRF Direction requesting records and/or further information from the proponent. The vast majority of assessment information submitted for tenements were accurate with 3976 having no discrepancy, a further 12 tenements clarified the discrepancy identified on their tenement and 83 tenements required their assessment information to be amended.

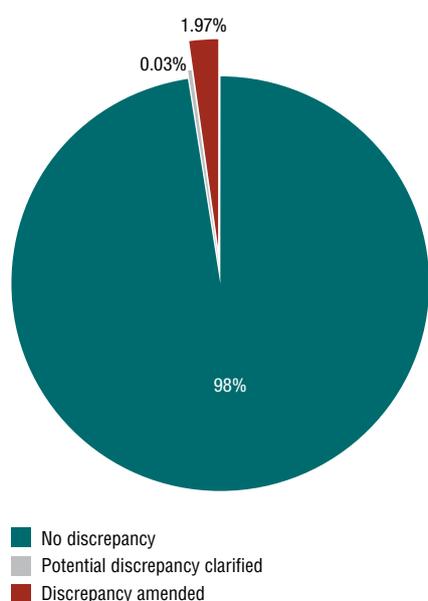


Figure 5. Summary of the audit findings for 4071 tenements audited in 2016-17

Annual MRF data

The MRF annual disturbance and rehabilitation data collection is considered the most comprehensive publicly available dataset of mine-site activities in Australia. It is published annually on the department's website.

The disturbance and rehabilitation data submitted is across 32 types of disturbance; however relating only to Mining Act tenements. A summary of this year's data reported for each tenement type is provided in Table 1.

Importantly, the data shows that, year on year, the area of Land Under Rehabilitation (on which rehabilitation of mining disturbances is under way) has continued to increase. Although the increase (in hectares) was small in 2016, the proportion of land under rehabilitation has remained fairly constant (at approx. 23%), despite a notable increase in mining and exploration-related activity in 2017 (Figure 6).

While conclusions should be drawn from this data only with caution, the trend cited above may be due to tenement holders maintaining a high rate of progressive rehabilitation, given that the MRF unit rate for rehabilitated areas is significantly less than for disturbed areas and results in a lower levy obligation.

Table 1: MRF summary of data reported for the period of 2016-17

	Disturbed Land (ha)							Land Under Rehabilitation (ha)						
	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Change 2014-15 (%)	Change 2015-16 (%)	Change 2016-17 (%)	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Change 2014-15 (%)	Change 2015-16 (%)	Change 2016-17 (%)
Exploration Licences	9,114	8,415	7,252	9,509	-7.7%	-13.8%	31.1%	100	87	36	38	-13.2%	-58.5%	6.5%
General Purpose Leases	2,899	3,096	3,083	3,200	6.8%	-0.4%	3.8%	679	709	771	789	4.4%	8.7%	2.3%
Miscellaneous Licences	10,570	11,426	11,091	12,145	8.1%	-2.9%	9.5%	589	708	921	1,041	20.2%	30.1%	13.0%
Mining Leases	85,815	87,457	87,981	92,952	1.9%	0.6%	5.6%	31,141	32,334	32,152	34,559	3.8%	-0.6%	7.5%
Prospecting Licences	782	754	431	558	-3.6%	-42.9%	29.7%	88	84	59	64	-4.6%	-29.6%	7.8%
Retention Licences	2	5	355	373	136.5%	7713.4%	5.3%	0	0	0	0			
Total	109,182	111,152	110,192	118,737	1.8%	-0.9%	7.8%	32,598	33,922	33,939	36,491	4.1%	0.1%	7.5%
Percentage of Total Area of Disturbance	77.0%	76.6%	76.5%	76.5%				23.0%	23.4%	23.5%	23.5%			

Source: Data extracted from the Environmental Assessment and Regulatory System 2, valid as at 11 August 2017. Data rounded to the nearest hectare.

Note: 'Land Under Rehabilitation' does not include all rehabilitation work being undertaken, as it excludes rehabilitation of exploration or prospecting activities conducted under Programmes of Work. For those activities, rehabilitation data is not separately reported and any rehabilitated areas remain a part of 'Disturbed Land' until all approved work (and required rehabilitation) has been completed. Those areas of 'Land Under Rehabilitation' that have been reported on Exploration Licences and Prospecting Licences are likely to relate to other (peripheral) disturbances reported on those tenements. 'Land Under Rehabilitation' also does not include 'Rehabilitated Land' that is considered to have been completed in accordance with closure obligations.

Note: "Change" identifies the percentage difference from the preceding year.

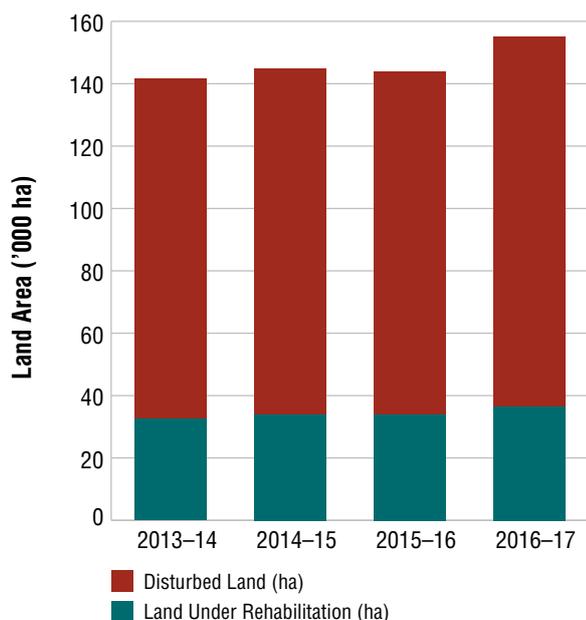


Figure 6. Total 'Disturbed Land' and 'Land Under Rehabilitation' as of 15 September 2017

Unconditional Performance Bonds

Unconditional Performance Bonds (UPBs) were introduced into WA in the 1980s for the purpose of ensuring the State was not exposed to unacceptable costs in the event that operators failed to meet the environmental obligations attached to their tenements.

These UPBs could be called upon by DMIRS in circumstances where a tenement holder failed to comply with its tenement conditions and the money was required by the State to fund rehabilitation works on that tenement.

With the introduction of the MRF, tenement holders entering the fund were able to request the retirement of their UPBs, once the disturbance data was reported and the relevant MRF levy paid. UPBs were reviewed against the criteria contained in the published guidance on the administration of mining securities. This, as expected, resulted in the majority of UPBs being retired; freeing up significant capital for tenement holders and at the same time generating funds to manage abandoned mine sites.

Since 2013, UPBs totalling \$1,049,146,275 have passed the MRF eligibility criteria for retirement and been returned to the mining sector (Table 2).

For companies participating in the MRF, the number and value of UPBs still held by DMIRS has reduced to \$31,607,100 by the end of the 2016-17 period. A further \$106,772,632 was held for entities not subject to the MRF (e.g. operating under State Agreements) (Figure 7).

Table 2. UPBs retired as at 30 June 2017

	Value of bonds (\$)	Numbers of bonds
Exploration Licences	\$33,192,200	864
General Purpose Leases	\$43,212,750	306
Miscellaneous Licences	\$48,113,325	590
Mining Leases	\$924,592,000	2,814
Prospecting Licences	\$250,000	22
Retention Licences	\$55,000	2
Total	\$1,049,415,275	4,598

Source: DMIRS Mineral Titles –Online as at 2 August 2017

The obligation to meet tenement conditions, including completion of rehabilitation work, does not cease when a tenement has expired, has been surrendered or has been forfeited. For this reason, the value of UPBs held by DMIRS includes 56 UPBs (totalling \$1,808,500) that are still held for tenements that are no longer current and have yet to meet their rehabilitation obligations to DMIRS's satisfaction.

Following the introduction of the *Mining Rehabilitation Fund Act 2012*, UPBs are now based solely on an assessment of the risk of rehabilitation liability reverting to the State. The application of UPBs occurs under the *Mining Act 1978* and is not connected with the functions of MRF. Currently, 77% of UPBs are held for entities that are not subject to the MRF. As such UPB statistics will no longer form part of future MRF reporting.

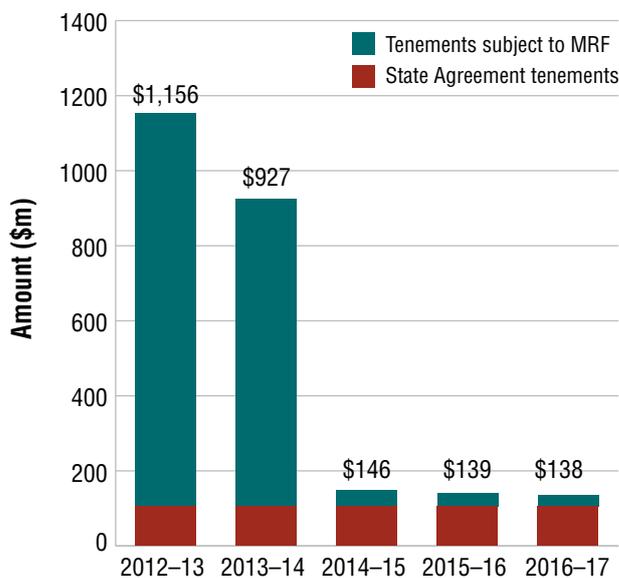


Figure 7: Value of Unconditional Performance Bonds held

Table 3: MRF Financial Summary

	2015–16 Actual	2016–17 Budget	2016–17 Actual	2017–18 Estimated
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Opening Balance	35,141	61,570	63,377	92,400
Add receipts				
Contribution from Industry	27,098	27,000	28,348	27,000
Interest Received	1,175	1,510	1,654	3,100
Other	800	800	16	
	29,073	29,310	30,018	30,100
Less payments				
Salaries			163	126
Operational Expenditure	837	2000	832	687
Other				1,187
Balance at the end of the period	63,377	88,880	92,400	120,500

Source: DMP Annual Report 2016–17 and DMIRS Financial Accounting Branch

Financial Summary

Each year, DMIRS reports the performance of the MRF in its Annual Report, which is available on DMIRS website. A summary of this information is provided in Table 3.

As at 30 June 2017, money in the fund totalled approximately \$92.4 million, including \$3.6 million in interest earned since 1 July 2014.

In accordance with the MRF Act, the interest generated on the fund can be accessed for salaries and operational expenditure to manage the fund and the Abandoned Mines Program and pilot projects (see Table 4).

DMIRS administers the MRF as a special purpose account under Section 18 of the *Financial Management Act 2006* in accordance with Section 10 of the *Mining Rehabilitation Fund Act 2012*.

Abandoned Mines Program

The implementation of the Mining Rehabilitation Fund (MRF) in 2013 has enabled Western Australia's Abandoned Mines Program (AMP) to become a reality. The DMIRS program provides a framework for identifying and prioritising the management and rehabilitation of abandoned mines across Western Australia.

Funds from the MRF are able to be used to rehabilitate abandoned mine sites when all other avenues to ensure rehabilitation have been exhausted. Interest generated from the MRF can be used to rehabilitate legacy abandoned mine sites across Western Australia.

Currently there are five projects in the AMP. The Ellendale Diamond Mine was abandoned in 2015 and was the first site where works were undertaken using the funds from the principal of the MRF. Ellendale continues to be managed in care and maintenance whilst DMIRS is undertaking an Expression of Interest (EOI) process to have mining recommence at the site.

There are four historical abandoned mine sites identified as pilot sites for rehabilitation funded from the interest generated on the MRF: Black Diamond Pit Lake, Pro-Force Plant Site, Bulong Nickel Tailings Storage Facility and the Elverdton Dumps.

Two of the pilot Sites, Black Diamond and Pro-Force, were successfully completed during the 2016–17 financial year. Please refer to Table 4 below for costs. Planning has commenced on the last two pilot projects – Bulong and Elverdton. Project plans will be developed and finalised for consultation with stakeholders in 2017–18.

The AMP is guided by the Abandoned Mines Policy, which sets out the framework for the risk based prioritisation, management and/or rehabilitation of abandoned sites, and is strongly focused on stakeholder engagement and end land-use.

DMIRS has developed a Partnership Guideline that outlines the AMP's approach to partnered collaboration with other government bodies, community groups and businesses in the management and/or rehabilitation of abandoned mine sites in accordance with the Abandoned Mines Policy. The draft guideline was released for external consultation late in 2016 and a final version was released in January 2017.

DMIRS has partnered with the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute (WABSI) to undertake research into the potential biodiversity values and risks associated with abandoned mine shafts in Western Australia. The objective of this partnership is to develop a methodology to identify and survey biodiversity values. WABSI consists of ten leading research organisations and will assist DMIRS in enhancing the knowledge, needs and priorities associated with numerous and varied mine features.

The AMP will continue to focus on building partnerships to enable DMIRS to achieve its desired outcomes. This has been successfully achieved with Black Diamond and Pro-Force pilot projects through building relationships with the local community, local government, other government departments and private organisations to achieve project objectives.

Ellendale Diamond Mine

Ellendale is located approximately 100km northwest of Fitzroy Crossing and 120km east of Derby in the West Kimberley region of Western Australia.

The Ellendale mine was operated on mining tenements granted under the Mining Act 1978 (Mining Act); these tenements are Mining Lease 04/372, with road access to the mine via Miscellaneous Licences 04/26 and 04/48. The mining tenements were held by Kimberley Diamond Company NL (KDC).

Site Auction

Although much of Ellendale's plant and equipment was sold during the liquidator's auction in September 2015, items still remain on the site.

It was recognised that selling deteriorating plant from the site could reduce site-remediation costs for subsequent tenement holders and decrease the likelihood of unauthorised visitors attempting to access the site. Accordingly, auctions of processing equipment were held in June and November 2016. Conveyors, stands, a screen, a twin hopper system, a waste oil tank, bore pipework and scrap metal were sold in 2016.

Proceeds from auction sales go towards covering the cost of holding auctions and managing the removal of purchased items. Further auctions will be held where interest has been expressed in equipment that remains on site.

Table 4: Breakdown of sources and applications of funds for Abandoned Mine projects 2016–17

Project	Levies Collected \$'000	Expenditure from MRF Principal	Expenditure from MRF Interest	Total Expenditure to 30 June 2017 \$'000
		\$'000	\$'000	
		Project Costs	Project Costs	
Ellendale Diamond Mine	819	84	0	84
Black Diamond Pit Lake	0	0	137	137
Pro-Force Plant Site	0	0	7	7
Total	819	84	144	228

Source: DMIRS, Financial Accounting Branch. Data as at 30 June 2017

Restricted access

Given Ellendale's remote location, DMIRS is working closely with key stakeholders to ensure access to the site is properly managed and monitored. In addition to signage and padlocked access points, DMIRS has installed secured cameras at various locations across the Ellendale mine site.

Tailings Storage Facility erosion remediation works

One of the largest mine features at Ellendale is the 2.5 square kilometre tailings storage facility (TSF). Given, the nature of the Kimberley's wet season and the construction material of the facility's walls (red pindan soils or tailings), the TSF requires regular monitoring and maintenance.

An assessment undertaken in Q3 2016 identified that significant piping or tunneling was occurring along the berm where the pindan wall met with the toe of the tailings wall. The tunneling observed had the potential to impact the overall structural integrity of the TSF.

The remediation work was undertaken in December 2016 by a Kimberley based civil earthmoving company, which involved strengthening the pindan walls with rock from a nearby quarry and installing baffles to reduce the size of water catchment areas across the top of the TSF, to avoid large pools of water forming.

The remediation works were completed prior to the start of the wet season and involved the construction of 45 rock beds and 19 catchment baffles.

Just before Christmas 2016, Cyclone Yvonne passed through the Kimberley region, depositing almost 250mm of rainfall at Fitzroy Crossing within 48 hours. Minor additional remediation works were undertaken on the TSF in January 2017 to rectify washout areas caused by the cyclone.

The department will take all reasonable steps to ensure the remaining assets of Ellendale are managed to allow and encourage the re-commencement of mining. As the main TSF at Ellendale is still an asset for the site, further monitoring of the facility will be undertaken prior to the 2017–2018 wet season.

The Mining Rehabilitation Fund and Ellendale

The introduction of the MRF has ensured that the community of Western Australia will not pay for the rehabilitation activities at Ellendale, or any other mining operation that may become abandoned in the future.

For example, DMIRS was able to quickly access MRF funds to address significant safety and environmental concerns in a timely way at the Ellendale site.

Ellendale will not be fully rehabilitated or closed by DMIRS through the MRF process, as it remains a viable resource project.

The future of Ellendale

Ellendale is well known internationally as a source of high quality yellow diamonds.

The tenements associated with Ellendale contain a substantial diamond potential.

In January 2016, the then Minister for Mines and Petroleum refused an exploration licence application over the footprint of the Ellendale mining lease and declared the mining lease area exempt from mining applications.

This will enable the Minister for Mines and Petroleum to call for expressions of interest to recommence mining at Ellendale.

It is expected that expressions of interest will be sought in late 2017.

Black Diamond Pit Lake (Pilot Site)

The historical abandoned mine site known as Black Diamond is located within the Allanson town site boundary in the Shire of Collie, approximately five kilometres west of Collie in the South West of Western Australia.

Black Diamond was mined for coal between the late 1940s and early 1950s by Amalgamated Collieries Pty Ltd. The discontinuation of mining resulted in the pit filling with water creating a pit lake. Soon after, Black Diamond became a popular unmanaged recreation area, leading to safety concerns being raised by the local community.

To address these concerns, the site was selected by DMIRS to be rehabilitated as a pilot project through the Abandoned Mines Program, utilising funds from the MRF.

Remediation works

In October 2016, after six months of extensive consultation, works to batter the southern pit wall were successfully completed in accordance with the engineering design plan.

Revegetation of Black Diamond

Following the approval of the project's revegetation strategy by relevant stakeholders, the AMP team sought interest from local contractors and suppliers to help revegetate the Black Diamond project area.

Support for the revegetation program was also obtained from local mining company Griffin Coal, who generously provided seed and technical expertise.

DMIRS also partnered with Dura Veg and WA Hydromulch, to apply a flexible growth medium to the remediated areas. The cover that was applied is expected to reduce soil erosion and provide favourable conditions to promote the germination of seed.

DMIRS also worked closely with the Allanson Primary School to carry out a seedling planting day designed to further encourage the local communities' connection to the site.

The revegetation works undertaken involved the distribution of approximately 4kg of native seed, the planting of 5000 sedges, 600 shrubs and trees, the control of weeds and the spreading of cover that promoted regrowth and reduced erosion.

Conclusion

DMIRS coordinated the successful remediation of the Black Diamond site through extensive community consultation, effective site assessments, partnerships and undertaking high quality rehabilitation.

The reshaping of the southern pit wall has been completed in accordance with the engineering plan and within budget.

Additional site management of heavily eroded areas on the western end of the pit lake has also been completed.

The Black Diamond abandoned mine project is complete, with the southern wall now considered safe, stable and non-polluting.

Pro-Force Plant Site (Pilot Site)

The historical Pro-Force abandoned mine site is located approximately two kilometres south-east of the Coolgardie in Western Australia.

Pro-Force was a former gold processing site previously operated by Pro-Force Mining Contractors Pty Ltd from 1996 to 2004 and is adjacent to the Gorge, a public use area and water reserve. Access to the Gorge is unrestricted, with the community and tourists accessing the site from the Coolgardie-Esperance Highway.

The derelict processing plant and other site features had been in situ for more than a decade and were an ongoing public safety concern for the Shire of Coolgardie and the local community. In response to the community's safety concerns about the abandoned site, Pro-Force was selected by DMIRS to be rehabilitated as a pilot project.

Removal of old mining infrastructure

To address the public safety concerns at Pro-Force, DMIRS held an auction of the processing infrastructure in November 2015. Items auctioned included hoppers, a processing tank, walkways, stairs and earthmoving equipment. The infrastructure was successfully sold and removed from the site in early 2016. The equipment has since continued to be utilised for mine processing at another facility in the goldfields.

This event marked the first time that DMIRS had been involved in auctioning off equipment from an abandoned mine site.

Stakeholder engagement

After the successful completion of the auction, DMIRS began planning for the next stages of the project. In February 2016 a stakeholder identification workshop was undertaken in Coolgardie by DMIRS to identify potential stakeholders with an interest in the site. Following the workshop a stakeholder identification plan was prepared and communication with key project stakeholders, the Shire of Coolgardie and underlying tenements holders, commenced.

The overall rehabilitation approach was released in an information brochure in May 2016, titled "Improving Community Safety at the Pro-Force Plant Site" which outlined the following three project stages:

1. Site assessment and stakeholder engagement.
2. Site rehabilitation works.
3. Additional works and consultation.

Stage 1 of the project involved undertaking a detailed site assessment to identify the type and degree of safety and environmental issues at the site. This stage also involved consultation to identify the key concerns for the site. A Community Workshop, held by DMIRS in August 2016 at the Coolgardie Recreation Centre, gave members of the local community an opportunity to provide input into the rehabilitation plans.

Safety, availability of land for future mining and land use/culture were all important aspects for the project that were identified through the workshop.

Clean-up works

Following six months of extensive consultation, DMIRS released two Expressions of Interest in October 2016 for works to clean up rubbish located at the site, one for scrap materials and one for large tyres. The purpose of these Expressions of Interest was to provide local contractors an opportunity to register interest in the works.

Works to clean-up the site were carried out in December 2016. These works were successful in removing 25 heavy machinery tyres, 21 car/truck tyres and almost 10 tonnes of miscellaneous scrap materials from the Pro-Force site.

Additional earthworks were also undertaken by contractors to improve site aesthetics and environmental conditions.

The scale and nature of the remediation works at Pro-Force were constrained given that the works were undertaken within a prospecting licence area. As such, work on the tenement was limited to removing the abandoned processing infrastructure and miscellaneous rubbish from the site.

Revegetation of the Pro-Force area

Consultation with key stakeholders and the community continued in 2017 to determine whether additional rehabilitation works should be undertaken.

As mentioned above, given the project area coincides with a prospecting tenement, reshaping or revegetating the former site area was not considered.

Although there were no opportunities to undertake revegetation within the Pro-Force area itself, following consultation with the Shire of Coolgardie, amenity planting at the nearby Gorge recreation area was proposed.

DMIRS, in consultation with the Shire of Coolgardie, purchased 100 saplings to plant at the Gorge recreation area. DMIRS also provided the Shire of Coolgardie with funding to deliver and maintain the proposed amenity planting, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

Bulong Nickel Tailing Storage Facility (Pilot Site)

The Bulong Nickel mining operation is located approximately 40 kilometres east of Kalgoorlie on a former mining lease.

Mining operations commenced on the former tenement in the 1990s with the construction of a TSF and evaporation ponds.

The operating company went into receivership and effectively abandoned the site in 2005. Concerns have been raised regarding a range of issues associated with pollution of the surrounding environment by seepage and dust from the TSF.

Accordingly, the site was selected as a pilot for the Abandoned Mines Program. In 2014–2015, UPBs totalling \$1,708,000 were called-up to enable rehabilitation activities to be undertaken, before accessing funds from the MRF.

Initial planning for rehabilitation at the Bulong site is expected to commence in 2017–18.

Elverdton Dumps (Pilot Site)

The Elverdton Dumps are located approximately 11 kilometres south-east of Ravensthorpe. Mining operations commenced in the area in 1901 and continued periodically until 1992 when the operating company forfeited the mining lease, leaving behind a large quantity of uncontained tailings on site.

The uncontained tailings have been eroding downstream, into the Steere River, since the 1990s and have long concerned the local community.

Initial planning for rehabilitation at the Elverdton site is expected to commence in 2017–18.

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