



AVONBANK PROJECT

NEWSLETTER

LONGERENONG COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP – STUDENT SITE VISIT

ISSUE 6 – MARCH 2021

PROJECT UPDATE

Rehabilitation of the Avonbank Test Pit is nearing completion, with a local earthworks team continuing to complete on site works, safely and on schedule.

Soil, geotechnical, groundwater, and air quality specific studies remain underway on site as part of the overall test pit program. WIM Resource Pty Ltd (WIM) expects that the site will be available for seeding for the upcoming farming season.

The feasibility studies of the project continue to progress well, with major studies on going, including power and water supply, and detailed engineering studies. Currently WIM is on track to deliver its final feasibility by the end of 2021.

WIM continues the delivery of several environmental and socio-economic studies, as part of the project Environment Effects Statement (EES) process.

WIM is pleased to announce that it has formed a three-year Student Research Partnership with Longerenong Agricultural College. Students from the College will plan and conduct research on the test pit site, with the aim of understanding the impact of mining and rehabilitation on the soil and crop growth. This year a group of students have elected to study the test pit.

The WIM Resource team will continue to work to progress the Avonbank Project through the EES and Feasibility process during 2021, and look forward to advancing the project so that Wimmera Southern Mallee and the State of Victoria can realise the major economic contribution of the project.



Michael Winternitz
Projects Director

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TEST PIT REHABILITATION UPDATE

Fig 1. Stage 1 – cover tailings with overburden



Figure 2: Test pit – tailings being capped by overburden



Figure 3: Test pit after stage 1 – overburden capping



WIM commenced rehabilitation of the Avonbank test pit in late January 2021. This process is aimed at returning the entire site back to cropping land and includes three major stages:

- ◆ Stage 1 – cover tailings with overburden
- ◆ Stage 2 – subsoil and topsoil replacement
- ◆ Stage 3 – seed a crop

The non-valuable sand minerals from the pilot processing trials were returned to the test pit void and are referred to as 'tailings'.

Progress so far has seen:

- ◆ the successful capping of the tailings with overburden to approximately 1.1m from the natural surface (see Figure 2 left)
- ◆ removal of overburden off the laydown areas and roads
- ◆ removing all pipelines from the site
- ◆ overburden has been replaced (see Figure 3 left).
- ◆ subsoil has been replaced
- ◆ topsoil placement is progressing (see Figure 4 below)

Results are very promising so far – the Avonbank tailings have dried well, and were safe and stable for machinery to enter the pit (Figure 1 left).

Figure 4: Stage 2 – replacement of subsoil on site



RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP WITH LONGERENONG AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

WIM and Longerenong Agricultural College have formed a three-year Student Research Partnership.

Longerenong College provide course work opportunities via the Advanced Diploma of Agribusiness Management. This year a group of students have elected to choose the Avonbank Test Pit for the 'Conduct a Research Trial' subject unit (students pictured top right).

College students will plan and conduct a research trial on the Avonbank Test Pit Site, with the aim of understanding the impact of mining & rehabilitation on the soil and crop growth.

The partnership aims to establish a collaboration that will improve WIM's understanding of the impact of mining and the completed rehabilitation on key soil attributes.

WIM CEO Eddy Wu recently attended the College Innovation Centre, and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with College Principal and General Manager John Goldsmith and students (centre right).

The College students visited the test pit site during the rehabilitation of the site and inspected the stockpiles (bottom right).

WIM is pleased to partner with Longerenong College to collaborate on the bigger issue of making sure that broadacre farming and mineral sands mining can work together into the future.

"WIM looks forward to this exciting partnership with the Longerenong College and collaborating with the next generation of farmers, and indeed a very well-respected College."

"Mineral Sands and farming are fundamental to the economy and this partnership recognises WIM's commitment to rehabilitation of mined land".

Michael Winternitz, Projects Director



Figure 5: Avonbank Project EES process progress



EES SUMMARY

The EES Process

The Environment Effects Study (EES) Scoping Requirements require WIM to investigate potential environmental and social impacts of the proposed Avonbank Project, and if required, develop measures to mitigate these impacts. See [Avonbank Mineral Sands \(planning.vic.gov.au\)](http://planning.vic.gov.au) or the Avonbank December 2020 newsletter available on our [website](#).

Stakeholder engagement is a critical component of the EES process. Active engagement throughout the EES process provides opportunities for stakeholders to fully understand the project and its potential impacts, and to provide input into project design and measures developed to avoid or minimise negative impacts and maximise benefits.

Update on the EES

Documentation of existing 'baseline' environmental, social, and economic conditions for the project area and its surrounds has been completed. Baseline definition is important to enable assessment of potential impacts – both negative and positive – of development of the Avonbank Project on the existing conditions, and has now been completed for most aspects of the project. Summaries of the findings of this work are available under the Avonbank EES page on our [website](#).

Impact assessment studies are underway. To date, assessment reports submitted to regulators for review include:

- ◆ Surface water
- ◆ Indigenous and historical heritage
- ◆ Economic and employment impacts

Other impact assessments currently well advanced include:

- ◆ Road transport
- ◆ Social impacts
- ◆ Air quality
- ◆ Noise
- ◆ Groundwater
- ◆ Radiation
- ◆ Land use

Summaries of the findings from these will be progressively made available as the work is finalised.

EES Schedule for 2021

WIM is to complete the EES process by the end of 2021, at which time the EES will be exhibited for an expected 30-40 business days for review and comment by all stakeholders. Following that, a government run planning panel enquiry is likely to be held, with findings reported to the Minister for Planning for consideration on whether the project be allowed to proceed to final approvals and licencing stage.

WIM will provide regular updates on the EES through newsletters and on the web. The EES process and the stage to which the Avonbank Project EES has progressed is shown diagrammatically in Figure 5 left.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

WIM continues to ensure the local community and all other stakeholders are updated, despite limitations related to COVID-19. The aim of this process is to ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to express their views on the project and to suggest modifications to aspects of the project that would potentially improve outcomes.

WIM reviews opportunities to achieve stakeholder engagement in accordance with the EES Assessment's Scoping Requirements and Consultation Plan while observing COVID-19 restrictions.

Other Activities

Other activities have included:

- ◆ Community Reference Group (CRG) meetings continued via video conferencing
- ◆ The Horsham office is open on an irregular basis at present, if the flag is out then it will be manned. Normal COVID-19 rules apply
- ◆ Advertising in the local free paper and distribution of the last newsletter to various locations in the district

It is planned to open the office on a more regular basis from Quarter 2 however if you wish to make an appointment please ring the free call number 1800 959 298.

Fact Sheets & FAQs

Fact sheets have been produced and are available on the WIM website under the Avonbank EES Summary Document tab or a hard copy is available from the office. Topics include Existing Condition Studies for Air Quality, Surface, and Ground Water, general information on the EES process, and employment opportunities when the project starts. During 2021 additional fact sheets will be produced covering the impact assessment results for the various studies currently underway.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have also been produced and are available as per Fact Sheets. Topics covered include Mining, Processing, Radiation, Rehabilitation, and Land Access for Mining and Exploration.

Upcoming Activities

During the next three months WIM has planned the following activities:

- ◆ An information stand at Horsham Plaza on 23rd April 2021
- ◆ WIM will be holding a webinar session to introduce the WIM team, the Avonbank Project, and the Approvals process on 14th April 2021. The webinar is planned to be recorded for those unable to attend so it may be viewed on the website at a later date
- ◆ WIM will also plan the next community pop-in sessions (COVID-19 permitting)
- ◆ Provide more regular office hours for visitors
- ◆ Prepare a grievance procedure and placed it on the WIM website

WIM invites you to contact us with any questions or comments on any aspect of our project as we continue to progress through the approvals and development phases of the project.



Pop-in Sessions

Community information pop-in sessions were held at Murtoa Neighbourhood House in Murtoa, Horsham Golf Club, and Doon Community Hall on the 3rd, 4th and 5th February.

It is anticipated these sessions will be held again in May or June of this year. The dates will be advertised in local media, on WIM's website, and flyers distributed located around the district.

JOB OPENING

WIM Resource will soon be advertising for a **Stakeholder Liaison Officer**.

Watch local newspapers and our website for more details and how to apply.



CONTACT US

Need to get in touch with us? WIM can be contacted in the following ways:

- ◆ Web: www.wimresource.com.au
- ◆ Email: admin@wimresource.com.au
- ◆ Free call: 1800 959 298
- ◆ WIM office: 62 Darlot St, Horsham



NEXT COMMUNITY POP-IN SESSION

23rd April 2021, 9:30 am – 2:30 pm
Horsham Plaza

A community pop-in information session will be held at the Horsham Plaza on the 23rd April from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm.

Please come and see us to discuss the Avonbank Project, and pick up our Fact Sheets, FAQs, and project description.

Plans and schematics of the mine and mining process will also be on display for your information.



WIM INTRODUCTORY WEBINAR

Wednesday, 14th April 2021, 7:00 pm

There will be a webinar session on Wednesday, 14th April at 7:00 pm to introduce WIM, the Avonbank Project, and the EES process.

Registration details will be announced after Easter on WIM's website and in the local press. The session will be recorded for people who are unable to attend and made available on the WIM website.