

2025–26 Report

Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner



The Office of the Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on whose lands the resources industry operates.

Purpose of this report

This report forms part of the Office of the Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner's corporate governance framework and fulfils the Commissioner's obligation under section 444O of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* to provide the Minister (Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation) with an annual report about the operations of the rehabilitation commissioner, within four months of the end of the financial year.

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Disclaimer

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Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner 2025–26

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1 Introduction

This is the fifth report of the Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner (the Commissioner). The report describes our engagement on mine rehabilitation, summarises our leading practice rehabilitation research and analysis, and presents the performance and trends in progressive mine rehabilitation in Queensland.

1.1. The Commissioner's role

The Commissioner is an independent person, appointed under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act) to provide advice to the Minister responsible for mine rehabilitation management practices, outcomes and policies (the Minister). The Commissioner's role covers 'resource activities' in Queensland, including mining and petroleum activities.

The Commissioner also monitors and reports on rehabilitation practices and trends, raises awareness of rehabilitation management matters, and advises and reports on rehabilitation performance. The role of the Commissioner is independent and separate from the administering authority that regulates resource activities.

The Commissioner was appointed by the Governor in Council and reports directly to the Minister. The Commissioner and staff of the Office of the Commissioner (QMRC team) are dedicated to working collaboratively with all interested parties, including Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples, the resources industry, environmental and scientific groups, communities and government. See Appendix A for details on the administration of the Commissioner's responsibilities.

Our approach

The vision of the Commissioner and QMRC team is to 'lead Queensland to achieve best practice in mined land rehabilitation'. We do this through four key strategies:

Connect

- Consult with stakeholders to raise awareness on technical, scientific and engagement matters.
- Synthesise stakeholder perspectives and best practice mine rehabilitation to optimise environmental, social and economic outcomes.

Research

- Identify rehabilitation priorities for Queensland.
- Produce advice informed by global best practice.
- Undertake research in collaboration with stakeholders.
- Identify opportunities and challenges to achieving leading practice mine rehabilitation.

Advise

- Advise the Minister on mine rehabilitation and management practices, outcomes and policies.
- Advise the Minister on public interest evaluation processes and performance.

Report

- Report annually to the Minister and Parliament on leading practice mine rehabilitation.
- Publish advice, reports and guidance.
- Report on rehabilitation performance and trends in Queensland.

2 Stakeholder engagement

The Commissioner and QMRC team consulted with a broad range of stakeholders in financial year 2025-26. We held 202 consultation meetings with First Nations organisations, academia, professional associations, peak bodies, conservation stakeholders, resource companies, local governments and government agencies. Our stakeholder engagement included visiting 22 resource sites. We wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the industry in affording access.

Stakeholders used these opportunities to express a wide range of views regarding progressive rehabilitation, closure planning and post-mining land uses. We will continue to engage with all parties to better understand aspirations and perspectives to inform our advice and publications.

2.1. Workshops

In October 2025, the QMRC team held a stakeholder forum, attended by 21 representatives of a diverse range of stakeholder groups. These included local and state government agencies, industry peak bodies, research organisations, academics, environmental groups, sectors impacted by resource activities and First Nations groups. The forum was an opportunity to reflect on the work undertaken to date and seek stakeholder views on future work priorities and how the office could improve delivery of its objectives. Feedback from the forum resulted in several improvements to the QMRC team's operating model, including a more robust project scoping process and the introduction of a six-monthly newsletter.

Also in October, the Commissioner participated in the Regional Energy Futures Forum Workshop in Mackay. The forum was part of a project managed by the Queensland Resources Council and University of Queensland, investigating potential for renewable energy deployment on mine lands. The work was supported by mining companies in the Isaac region and results are expected to be published in late 2026.

The QMRC team held two seminars on our technical paper *Leading practice guidance on erosion and landform evolution modelling to design post-mining landforms* (see Appendix B) in partnership with Dr Rob Loch and Evan Howard in October and November 2025. More than 150 attendees from across Australia and New Zealand heard from the paper's authors on the use of erosion and landform evolution modelling in designing post-mining landforms. They also learned about a checklist for use when preparing or reviewing erosion modelling studies.

In November 2025, the QMRC team hosted a forum in Mount Isa for representatives of major Queensland metals mines to discuss acid and metalliferous drainage (AMD) management. Further information on the forum and key learnings are presented in section 4.5 of this report.

The Commissioner also participated in the Central Highlands Regional Resource Use Planning (CHRRUP) AGM and Regional Futures Forum in November 2025. The forum convened leaders from Central Queensland to discuss the strategic direction of CHRRUP and the high-impact actions required for a strong regional future, in particular mining's role and opportunities for post-mining land use.

The QMRC team hosted two seminars in February 2026 on geotechnical stability of final voids as non-use management areas (NUMAs), following a technical paper published in late 2025 (see Appendix B). The seminars provided an overview of the components involved in leading practice assessments of the long-term geotechnical stability of mining voids designated as NUMAs. The seminars were hosted with two of the paper's authors, Sue

Henderson and Greg Kennedy and attended by more than 200 mine rehabilitation professionals from across Australia and as far abroad as Italy.

The QMRC team hosted two seminars in February and March 2026 on our technical paper *Creating alternate growth media to achieve successful revegetation on Queensland mines* (see Appendix B) in partnership with the paper's authors Dr Bernhard Wehr and Dr Glenn Dale. More than 130 attendees representing mining companies, regulators, consultancies and researchers from across Australia heard from the authors about the paper and its application. Feedback on the sessions was overwhelmingly positive.

2.2. Conferences

The Commissioner attended the Land Court of Queensland Annual Conference in August 2025, provided an update on QMRC projects and priorities, and presented key takeaways from our rehabilitation performance and trends analysis.

Technical advisors in the QMRC team and the Commissioner attended the Cooperative Research Centre for Transformations in Mining Economies Annual Forum in Darwin in August 2025. Our Principal Technical Advisor gave a presentation on the case study review of our mine waste cover system trials project. The QMRC team was also involved in panel discussions on residual risk and transfer of liability and assessing the demands on mine waste covers.

The QMRC team attended the Life of Mine and Mine Waste and Tailings Conference in Brisbane in November 2025. Our Lead Technical Advisor presented on developing a Queensland approach for field-scale trials of mine waste cover system designs and led a panel discussion on challenges with managing topsoil deficits in mine rehabilitation (see Appendix B). At this event, the Commissioner was interviewed by Stephen Durkin, CEO of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, for the institute's on-line experts series.

The Commissioner attended the November 2025 Hunter Coal Environment Group Conference in Singleton and gave a presentation on the role of the QMRC, its current projects and an update on progressive rehabilitation performance in Queensland's mining sector. The Commissioner included a visit to Glencore's Liddell thermal coal mine, which has been under rehabilitation since its closure in 2023.

Our Principal Stakeholder Engagement Officer presented at the Southern Queensland Land Rehabilitation Group workshop in Chinchilla in May 2026. They provided an update on QMRC projects and engaged in discussions on renewable energy deployment onto mine land and rehabilitation of petroleum and gas infrastructure.

Two members of the QMRC team attended the International Planning for Closure 2026 Conference in Santiago, Chile in June 2026. Our Lead Technical Advisor presented on the vital elements for using erosion models to design final mine landforms in Queensland. Our Manager presented on the impact of Queensland's mine rehabilitation reforms and chaired a technical session. We are grateful to Trade and Investment Queensland for facilitating meetings and site visits in Chile and Brazil. Queensland's participation and contribution as international delegates at the conference was well received.

3 Research on leading practice

This year, our research priorities were focused on final landform design, topsoil deficits, AMD drainage management and best-practice management of final void NUMAs. We also commenced work on emerging topics of interest, such as cave mining, carbon and nature repair markets, and reprocessing of mine waste. We also introduced a new type of publication: 'rehabilitation insights'. These documents are designed to present contemporary research about emerging issues in a short-form format.

The following sections provide a brief overview of our research. Links to our papers and further information on our partners and contract award dates are in Appendix B.

3.1. Rehabilitation practices

Leading practices for reviewing landform design modelling

Predictive erosion models are important tools used to test the ability of a final landform's design to resist erosion and achieve structural stability. As with all modelling, the quality of input data and construction of the model directly impact the accuracy and reliability of predictions. Last year, we engaged Landloch to prepare advice on how to assess the appropriateness of landform design modelling. The paper was finalised and published in July 2025.

Manufacturing growth media for mine revegetation

In many instances, there is insufficient topsoil for use in revegetation activities on mined land. With our partner Verterra Ecological Engineering, we developed an approach to generating alternate plant growth media. The approach focuses on two predominant post-mine land uses: cattle grazing and native ecosystems. This work commenced in 2024–25 and was completed this year. The technical paper was published on our website in December 2025.

Rehabilitation considerations for cave mines in Queensland

The need to economically extract deep, large, low-grade ore bodies has led to rapid growth in the use of cave mining around the world. We expect cave mining to increase in Queensland too. Residual environmental impacts and the nature of rehabilitation for cave mining differ in some respects from other mining techniques used in Queensland and warrant consideration. Consequently, we developed a rehabilitation insights document that discusses rehabilitation considerations specific to cave mining. This was published to our website in May 2026.

3.2. Post-mining transitions

Opportunities for accessing carbon markets on rehabilitated mined land

A primary objective of the Commissioner's work is to encourage more and better rehabilitation of mined land and maximise the post-mining land use benefits. We are exploring opportunities to use rehabilitated mined land for projects that access carbon and nature repair markets. A key consideration is the need for 'additionality', therefore miners will need to rehabilitate land to meet their legal obligations prior to accessing carbon and nature repair markets. This study is underway and is expected to be completed in 2026–27.

3.3. Mine waste management

Opportunities for environmental benefits in mine waste reprocessing

Mining produces large volumes of waste rock that must be managed long term. Such waste may contain metals or other materials of value. Extracting valuable products from previously deemed waste can have multiple benefits, including improving the environmental management of subsequent waste streams. In March 2026, we published a practice note that explores how reprocessing can not only extract greater value from mine waste and contribute to supply of in-demand minerals but deliver improved environmental management of reprocessed waste streams.

Mine waste cover system research trials

In our 2023-24 report, we introduced our three-phase project to accelerate the trialling of mine waste cover systems as a key component of managing AMD. That report described the first phase of the project, the development of three technical papers that identified leading practice for cover system design trials. In December 2025, we published an 'implications for leading practice' document in which we distil the work on field-scale mine waste cover system trials and present our view on how it may be used for leading practice rehabilitation.

This year, with our partner Affinitas Holdings, we completed the second phase of the project, which investigated the policy and regulatory settings that impact cover trials. It also examined how mines could be supported to undertake trials. This includes assisting and incentivising high calibre trials that demonstrate robust cover performance and suitability for scaling up to a full cover system.

In the third phase, the QMRC team and partners Affinitas Holdings and Ramphurst are exploring a viable governance framework for technical oversight, operator reporting and incentives to use leading practice approaches. This phase is underway and is expected to be completed in 2026–27.

3.4. Residual voids

Geotechnical stability of voids as non-use management areas

This year we completed a project with Henderson Geotech to describe leading practice principles for assessing the long-term geotechnical stability of mine void NUMAs. Guidance was developed and published as a practice note in September 2025. It summarises fundamental concepts and information essential to assess long-term geotechnical stability.

Leading practices to assess and mitigate flood risk of final mine voids

We consider it leading practice to prevent final voids interacting with flood water. Although this objective is clear, stakeholders have indicated that the approaches used to assess and manage flood risk of final voids are not. The cumulative impact of multiple flood mitigation landforms can also affect downstream and upstream floodplain dynamics. We engaged WRM Water and Environment to prepare a technical paper that describes leading practice approaches to assess and mitigate the flood risk of final voids. This work includes assessing cumulative impacts of flood mitigation structures with a focus on hydrological assessments. A draft technical report has been prepared and is under review.

3.5. Biennial reviews of technical papers

QMRC publications are reviewed every two years to ensure our work remains current and continues to reflect leading practice advice. This year, authors were contracted to undertake reviews on:

- *Native ecosystem rehabilitation in Queensland* – implications for leading practice.
- *Modelling residual voids for rehabilitation planning* – implications for leading practice.
- *Leading practice approaches to select post-mining land uses for residual mine voids* – technical paper and implications for leading practice.

Appendix B has links to these papers on our website.

3.6. Student placement

As part of our commitment to support the next generation of mine rehabilitation professionals, we continue to host post-graduate students as part of their industry placement. This year's student investigated a selection of approved progressive rehabilitation and closure plans to understand the industry's current approach to monitoring rehabilitation. This work will inform our identification of monitoring gaps and aspects of monitoring where future leading practice guidance could be developed.

4 Rehabilitation performance and trends

This section describes rehabilitation performance and trends for all mines subject to a progressive rehabilitation and closure (PRC) plan in Queensland. Appendix C explains the prioritisation and grouping of different sectors of the mining industry for the purpose of performance reporting in this document.

We used calendar year (CY) annual return data (provided by companies to the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation by 31 March each year) to analyse progressive rehabilitation and area of disturbance. Our analysis included land reported by companies in their annual return as ‘area disturbed’, ‘rehabilitation certified’ or ‘rehabilitation completed’. We excluded land reported as ‘rehabilitation commenced’ as the interpretation of this term differs widely across the industry. Our analysis relied on the accuracy of the data provided by companies in their annual returns.

In the department’s annual return form, the definition of ‘completed rehabilitation’ is different for sites with and without an approved PRC plan. Our analysis has not identified significant changes to the way most companies are completing their annual returns or significant changes to the rehabilitation performance and trends at an industry or sectoral level. As more companies transition into the PRC plan framework, we will continue to monitor the impact of the changed definition on figures reported by companies.

Challenges to measuring rehabilitation performance

As stated in previous QMRC reports, establishing definitive performance measures and sector-wide trends in mine rehabilitation is challenging. Every operation has site-specific factors affecting the type and rate of rehabilitation, such as mining method, age, site configuration and spoil disposal method. The quality and durability of rehabilitation is also influenced by external factors, such as weather, availability of topsoil and economic conditions. Technology, commodity prices and other factors heavily influence the commercial viability of extracting resources, which can change rapidly.

Shallow strip mining and open cut highwall methods remain best suited to progressive rehabilitation—land becomes available for rehabilitation as the working face of the mine moves across the landscape. By contrast, deep open cut and underground metals mines are less suited to progressive rehabilitation and present a different set of challenges for assessing performance and trends.

Industry feedback highlighted the potential shortcomings of ‘rehabilitation against disturbance’ as a performance measure, given the challenges raised by the term ‘...as land becomes available...’ in section 126D(4) of the EP Act. For example, an exhausted pit may need to remain open for years due to the sequencing of operations. However, the void may be used later for tailings disposal. In-pit disposal of waste materials is a leading practice but is not reflected in progressive rehabilitation reporting until the infill ceases and the landform is rehabilitated. New technologies, regulatory requirements and commercial and economic drivers influence rehabilitation decisions. Much fixed infrastructure is also required until the end of the mine’s operational life. As such we recognise that rehabilitation performance is not solely a function of the amount of land available for rehabilitation.

Our approach

For this report, we allocated the 205 Queensland mines subject to PRC plan requirements (at 30 June 2026) into sectoral groupings:

- metallurgical and thermal coal
- large-scale strip mining other than coal (for example, bauxite, phosphate, silica and mineral sand)
- base and precious metals
- smaller strip operations (for example, monument stone and clays).

These groupings are the same as in previous QMRC reports (see Appendix C for details and section 4.7 for the status of PRC plans at 30 June 2026).

The primary focus of this report remains large scale mining operations that are required to prepare PRC plans. Such operations have been identified as the highest priority for reporting on performance and trends in progressive rehabilitation. Other mining activities have a smaller land disturbance footprint and present a much lower potential environmental impact. As such, smaller strip operations, small mining claims, seismic lines and other exploration activities are not a priority for evaluation in this report.

While we continue to include large scale metals mines in this report, our analysis of progressive rehabilitation continues to be limited compared with large scale strip mines. This is due to the nature of metal mining operations and their limited ability to undertake progressive rehabilitation. The 29 sites described as 'other resource activities' subject to PRC plan requirements are included in the total rehabilitation analysis (Figure 2) but not presented as a separate grouping.

The sub-sections below present the areas of land 'disturbed' and 'rehabilitated' for each sectoral grouping. Our analysis is presented in a series of 'waterfall' graphs. Historical disturbance and completed rehabilitation up to the end of CY2019 was used as the starting point, calculated as the total remaining disturbance and completed rehabilitation reported by companies up to the end of CY2019. Annual data for disturbance and rehabilitation is then presented for each calendar year to the end of CY2025.

We also present the area of completed rehabilitation against the area of disturbance as a percentage. This provides a measure of rehabilitation performance for each sectoral grouping and is referred to as the 'rate of progressive rehabilitation'. It includes historical and recent disturbance and rehabilitation.

We continued to identify a small number of discrepancies in annual reporting and referred anomalies to the regulator for checking with the reporting entities. The number of mines subject to PRC plan requirements also changes year-on-year, as new mines commence and other mines fall out of the PRC plan framework. The rectification of reporting discrepancies and changes to the number of mines subject to PRC plan requirements in this report has resulted in small changes to the historical disturbance and rehabilitation figures appearing in previous reports.

4.1. Rehabilitation liability

The most recent data shows continued growth across the mining sector in outstanding rehabilitation liability. Figure 1 shows the trend of increasing estimated rehabilitation cost (ERC) for all resource activities since ERC requirements came into effect in 2019. The

calculated ERC at the end of each year is derived from the Scheme Manager's annual report of the Financial Provisioning Scheme.

Several factors explain the change in ERC:

- Area of disturbance—the area of land disturbed by mining yet to be rehabilitated has increased year-on-year (see Figure 2).
- Number and type of mine waste structures—more complex waste structures, such as metalliferous tailings storage facilities, carry a greater ERC than more benign mine-affected lands.
- Area of rehabilitated land—certified rehabilitation of mined land removes areas from the ERC calculation.
- Schedule of rates—the cost of rehabilitation is subject to market forces and inflation.
- Change in liability calculators—the sector's transition from the previous financial assurance system to one based on ERC in 2019 removed the discount system, introduced a contingency provision and updated unit costings.

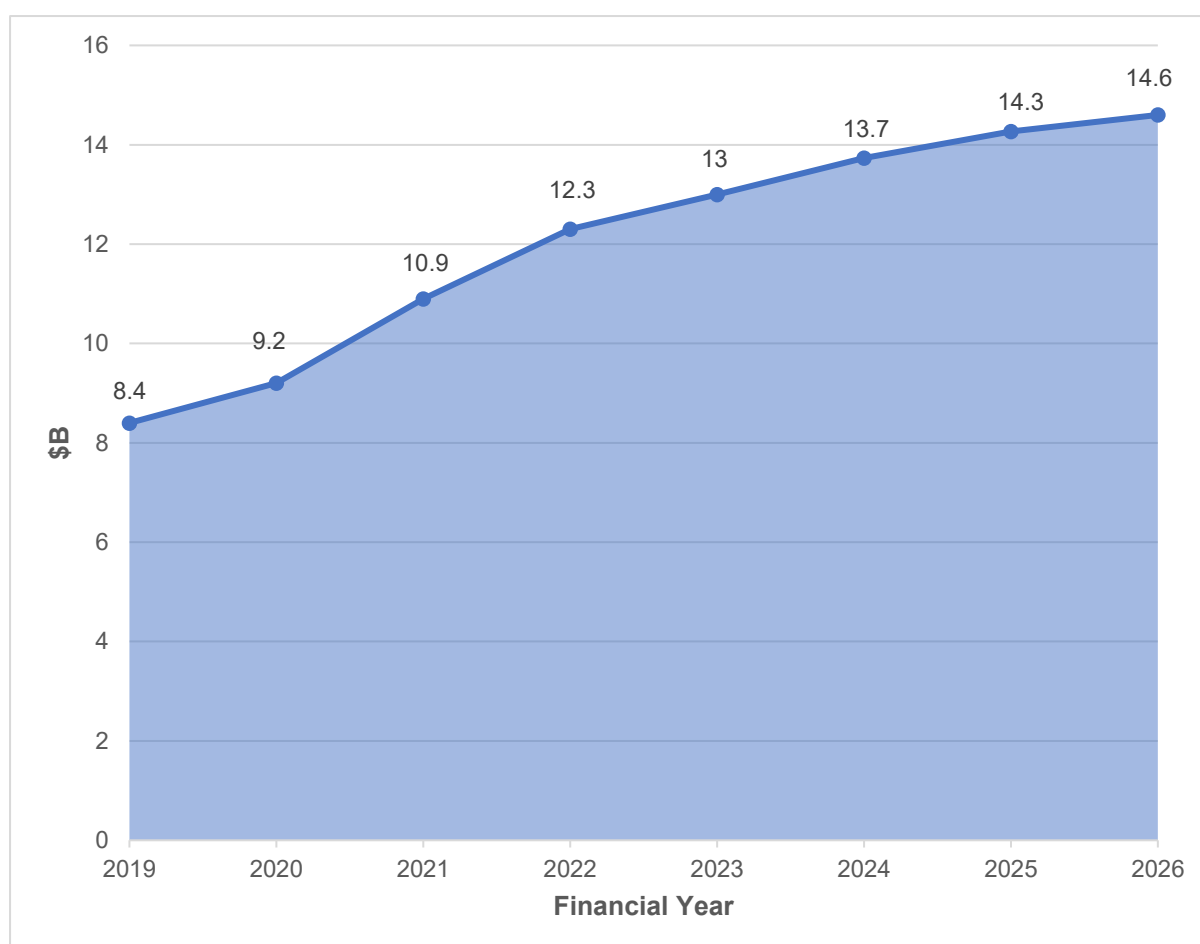


Figure 1. Industry-wide ERC liability in Queensland 2019–2026

At 30 June 2026, the 205 mines across the sector subject to PRC plan requirements had a combined ERC of \$12.7B, which accounts for approximately 87 per cent of the outstanding rehabilitation liability for the whole resources sector. Of the remaining \$1.9B of ERC for all resource activities, petroleum and gas operations have a combined ERC of \$1.8B, accounting for approximately 12 per cent of the outstanding rehabilitation liability for the

resources sector and not subject to PRC plan requirements. The remaining 1 per cent of rehabilitation liability is attributed to small scale mining activities and other mining activities not subject to the PRC plan requirements.

ERC growth is influenced by both operational expansion and changes in cost assumptions and therefore does not necessarily correlate with an increase in rehabilitation risk or a decline in rehabilitation outcomes.

4.2. Mining industry-wide

Figure 2 shows the cumulative areas of disturbance and rehabilitation for the 205 mines subject to PRC plan requirements to the end of CY2025, from data provided by companies in their annual returns.

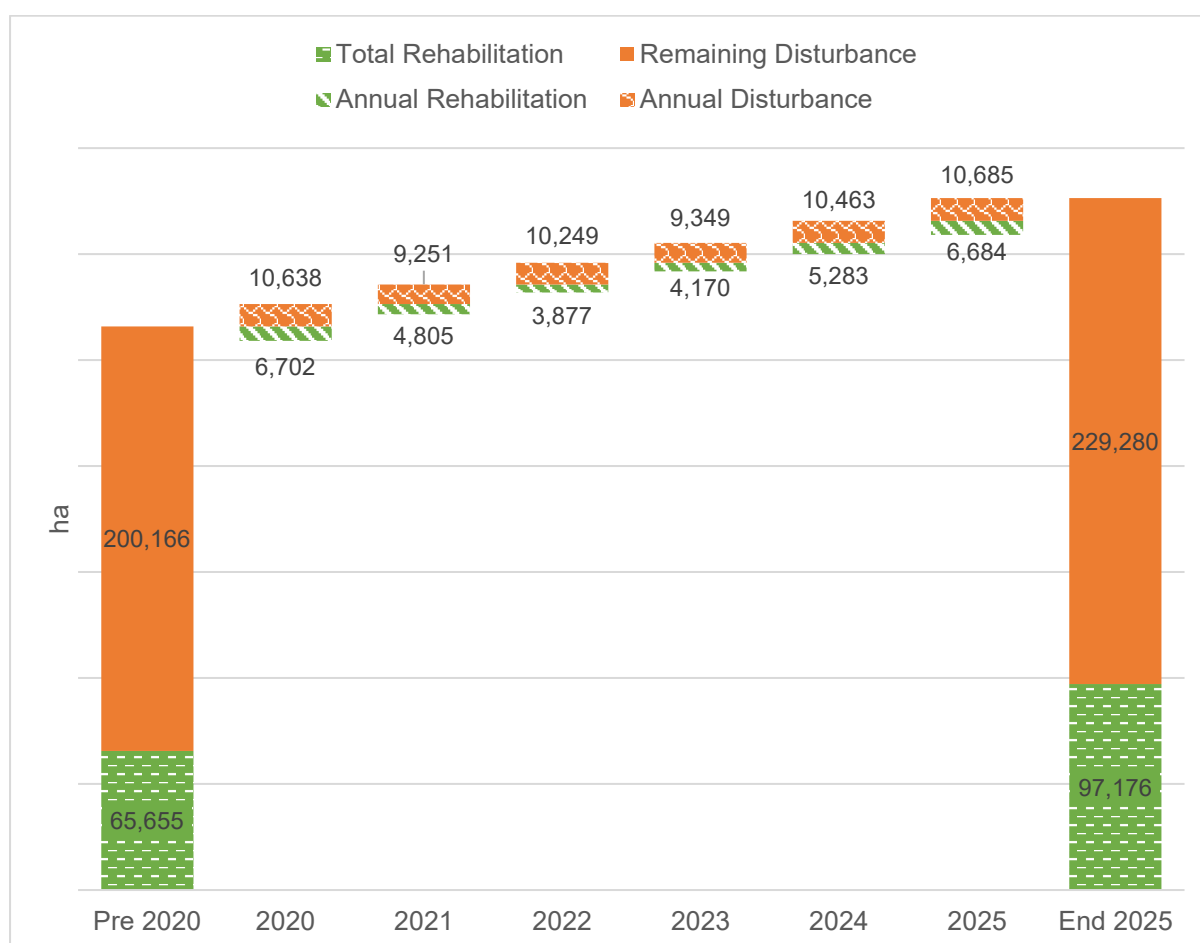


Figure 2. Progressive rehabilitation for all mines required to prepare a PRC plan to end CY2025

Figure 2 shows that, historically to the end of CY2025, the total disturbance is 326,456 hectares, with net disturbance remaining after rehabilitation of 229,280 hectares. This is a 29,114 hectare (15 per cent) increase in the net disturbance since the end of CY2019 and an increase of 4,001 hectares (2 per cent) since the end of CY2024.

Figure 2 shows that, historically to the end of CY2025, the total area of completed rehabilitation is 97,176 hectares. This is an increase of 31,521 hectares (48 per cent) since the end of CY2019 and an increase of 6,684 hectares (7 per cent) since the end of CY2024.

Comparing the area of completed rehabilitation against the area of disturbance, the rate of progressive rehabilitation (historical to end CY2025) is 30 per cent (compared to 25 per cent at the end of CY2019 and 29 per cent at the end of CY2024).

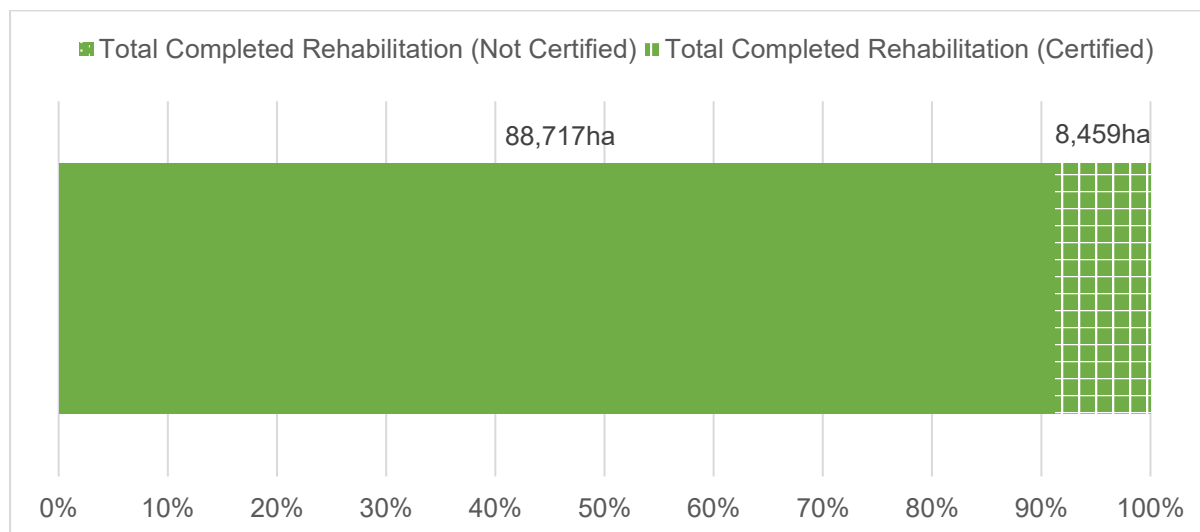


Figure 3. Completed rehabilitation for all mines required to prepare a PRC plan to end CY2025

Figure 3 shows that of the total area of completed rehabilitation at the end of CY2025, 8,459 hectares have been certified (9 per cent) and 88,717 hectares have not been certified (91 per cent). Between CY2019 and CY2025, the total area of certified rehabilitation has increased by 5,437 hectares to 8,459 hectares. A total of 2,314 hectares of completed rehabilitation were certified in CY2025, the most completed rehabilitation certified in a single calendar year.

4.3. Metallurgical and thermal coal

We analysed the 91 mines and related infrastructure that extract metallurgical and thermal coal and are subject to PRC plan requirements.

Figure 4 shows the cumulative areas of disturbance and rehabilitation to the end of CY2025, from data provided by companies in their annual returns. Open cut and underground operations are included together, as some mines have a combination of methods operating under the same environmental authority.

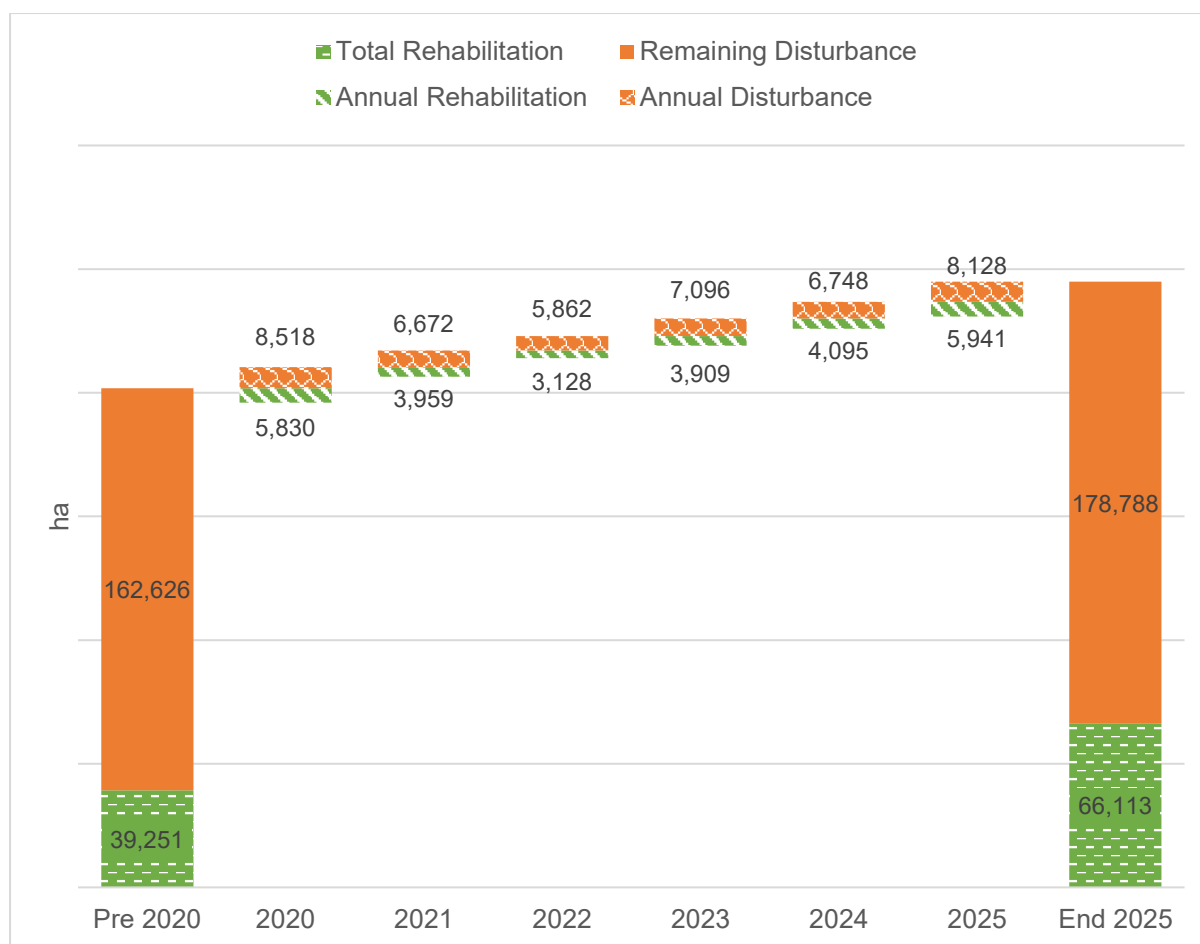


Figure 4. Progressive rehabilitation for metallurgical and thermal coal mines to end CY2025

Figure 4 shows that net disturbance remaining after rehabilitation has increased by 16,162 hectares to 178,788 hectares from CY2019 to CY2025. The rate of progressive rehabilitation (historical to end CY2025) is 27 per cent.

Figure 5 shows the improving rate of progressive rehabilitation over the past five reporting years (historical to the end of that CY) as well as the spread of progressive rehabilitation performance across metallurgical and thermal coal mining companies.

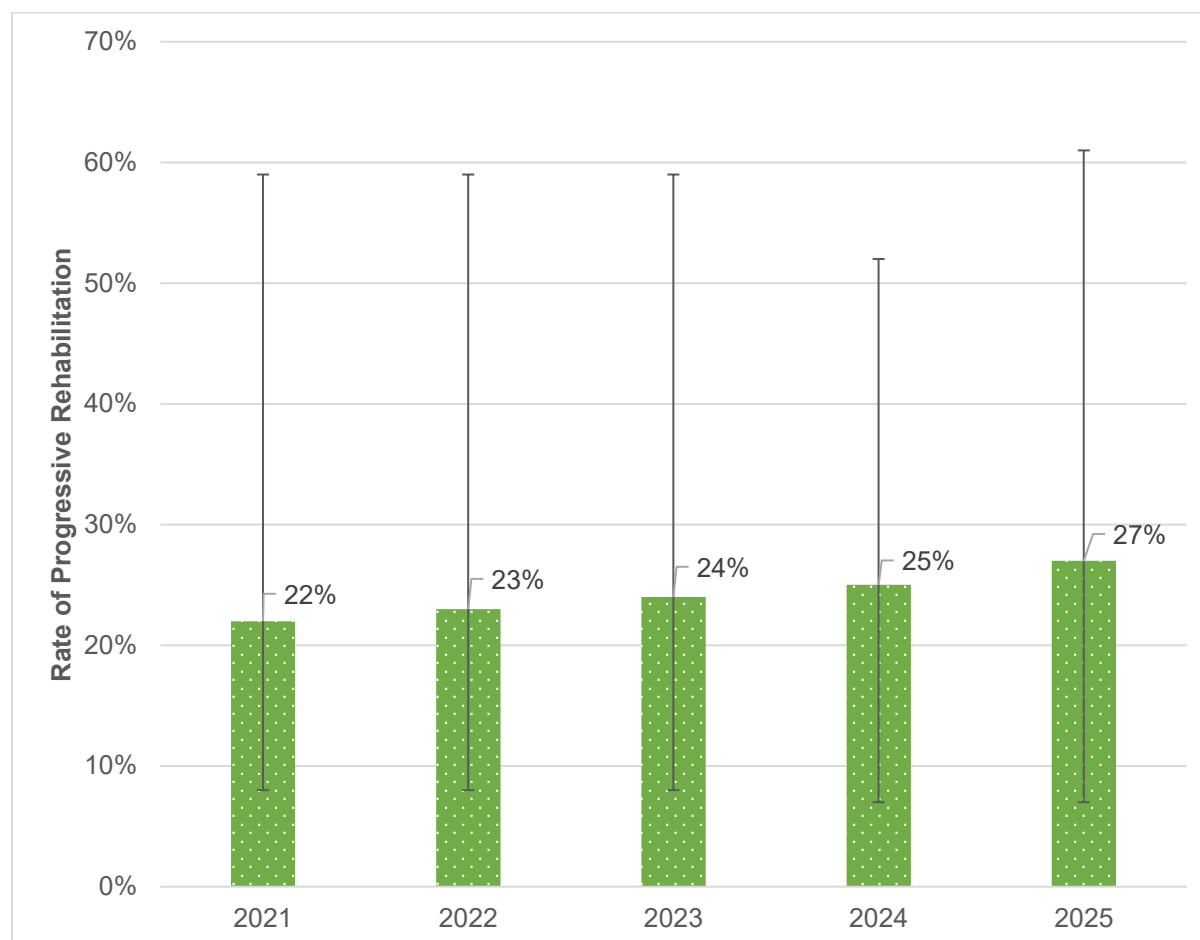


Figure 5. Changes in the rate of progressive rehabilitation for metallurgical and thermal coal mines to end CY2025

Figure 5 shows that the rate of progressive rehabilitation for metallurgical and thermal coal mines has increased from 22 per cent to 27 per cent over the period CY2021 to CY2025. Figure 5 also indicates the highest and lowest rates of progressive rehabilitation for coal companies in Queensland¹—the highest rate was 61 per cent while the lowest was 7 per cent.

The difference between the highest and lowest rates of progressive rehabilitation shown in Figure 5 reflects the large diversity in progressive rehabilitation performance of individual companies. This diversity is further demonstrated in Figure 6, which plots the amount of disturbance and completed rehabilitation to the end of CY2025 for coal companies in Queensland¹. The dashed line represents the mean rate of progressive rehabilitation for all metallurgical and thermal coal mines to the end of CY2025.

¹ The analyses presented in Figure 5 and Figure 6 are limited to metallurgical and thermal coal mining companies with mines that had undertaken disturbance and completed rehabilitation prior to CY2025 and reported additional disturbance and/or rehabilitation in CY2025. The total disturbance and completed rehabilitation figures for each company were calculated by combining the areas of disturbance and completed rehabilitation reported in the annual returns for each of their owned environmental authorities.

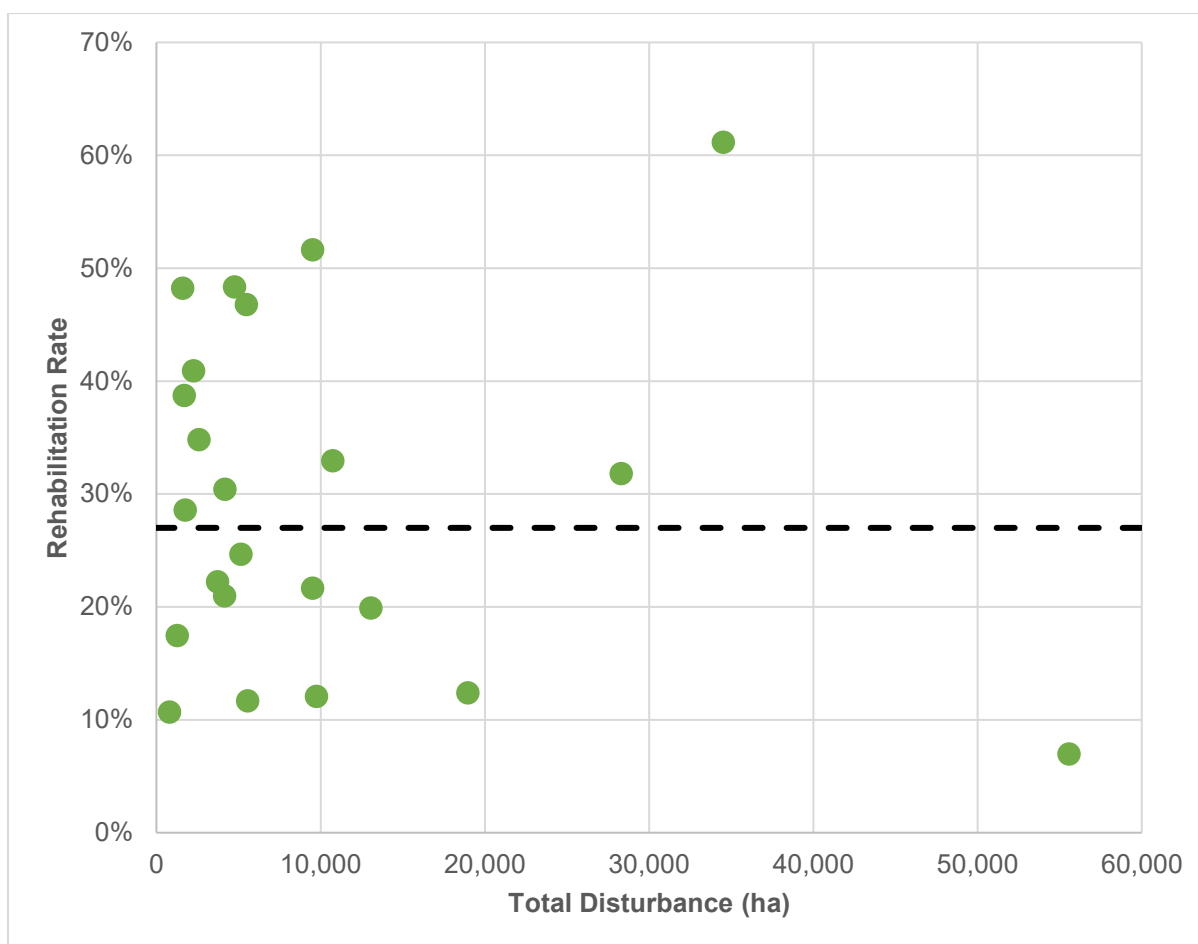


Figure 6. Scatter graph of rate of progressive rehabilitation for individual active coal companies (dots) against the total rate of progressive rehabilitation (line) in Queensland to end CY2025

Comparing metallurgical and thermal coal mine rates of progressive rehabilitation

Of the 91 mines and related infrastructure that extract metallurgical and thermal coal, 60 mines primarily extract metallurgical coal and 31 mines primarily extract thermal coal. Mines that extract both types of coal were grouped according to the predominant coal type extracted.

Figure 7 plots the amount of land reported as disturbed and rehabilitated to the end of CY2025 for the 91 mines in this cohort. The lines represent the percentage of land rehabilitated to that disturbed for the two different coal mine types.

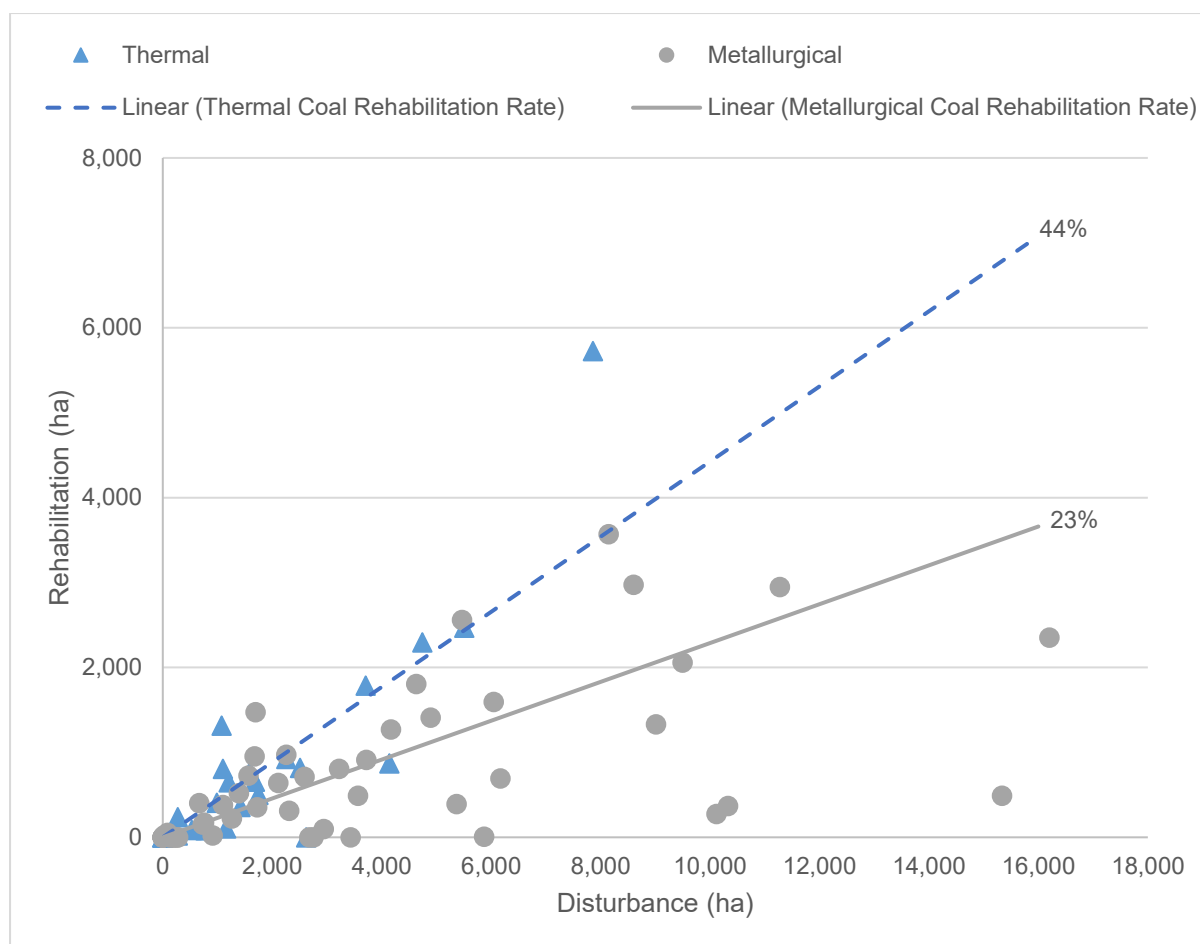


Figure 7. Scatter graph of disturbance and completed rehabilitation for metallurgical and thermal coal mines in Queensland to end CY2025

Figure 7 shows that the percentage of rehabilitated land to disturbed land for metallurgical coal mines is 23 per cent (compared with 22 per cent at the end of CY2024) and for thermal coal mines is 44 per cent (compared with 40 per cent at the end of CY2024).

For metallurgical coal mines, total reported rehabilitation (historically to the end of CY2025) is 45,220 hectares and total disturbance for the same period is 197,684 hectares.

For thermal coal mines, total reported rehabilitation (historically to the end of CY2025) is 20,893 hectares and total disturbance for the same period is 47,217 hectares.

Jurisdictional comparison

In our 2023–24 report, we introduced a comparison of rehabilitation performance and trends of the coal mining industries in Queensland and Wyoming. Although not identical, coal mining in the two states has certain similarities: both industries are multi-decadal, predominantly open-cut, large-scale operations (Queensland produced approximately 222Mt of saleable coal in 2024–25 compared to Wyoming’s 192Mt produced in CY2025²). They also face similar rehabilitation challenges. This allows for some comparison between the two jurisdictions. However, there are also substantial differences. For example, unlike Queensland, Wyoming has thicker, shallow seams that allow more coal extraction from less surface disturbance, lower strip ratios, no coal washing and less groundwater inflows. Also,

² Wyoming coal production data taken from *Quarterly Coal Report October–December 2025* (p.3) by EIA, 2026.

Wyoming has long-standing requirements for coal mine voids to be backfilled whereas Queensland has many residual voids with approval to remain in the landscape.

Rehabilitation figures reported by the Wyoming Government for 2024-25 show that the rate of progressive rehabilitation for coal mines in the state is 54 per cent. Historically, Wyoming has also approved the termination of jurisdiction on approximately 51,000 hectares of mined land—similar to the concept of ‘surrendering’ in Queensland. If the surrendered areas are included, Wyoming’s progressive rehabilitation rate is higher than the 54 per cent reported.

Figure 8 shows the year-on-year changes to the rate of progressive rehabilitation for metallurgical and thermal coal mines in Queensland and Wyoming.

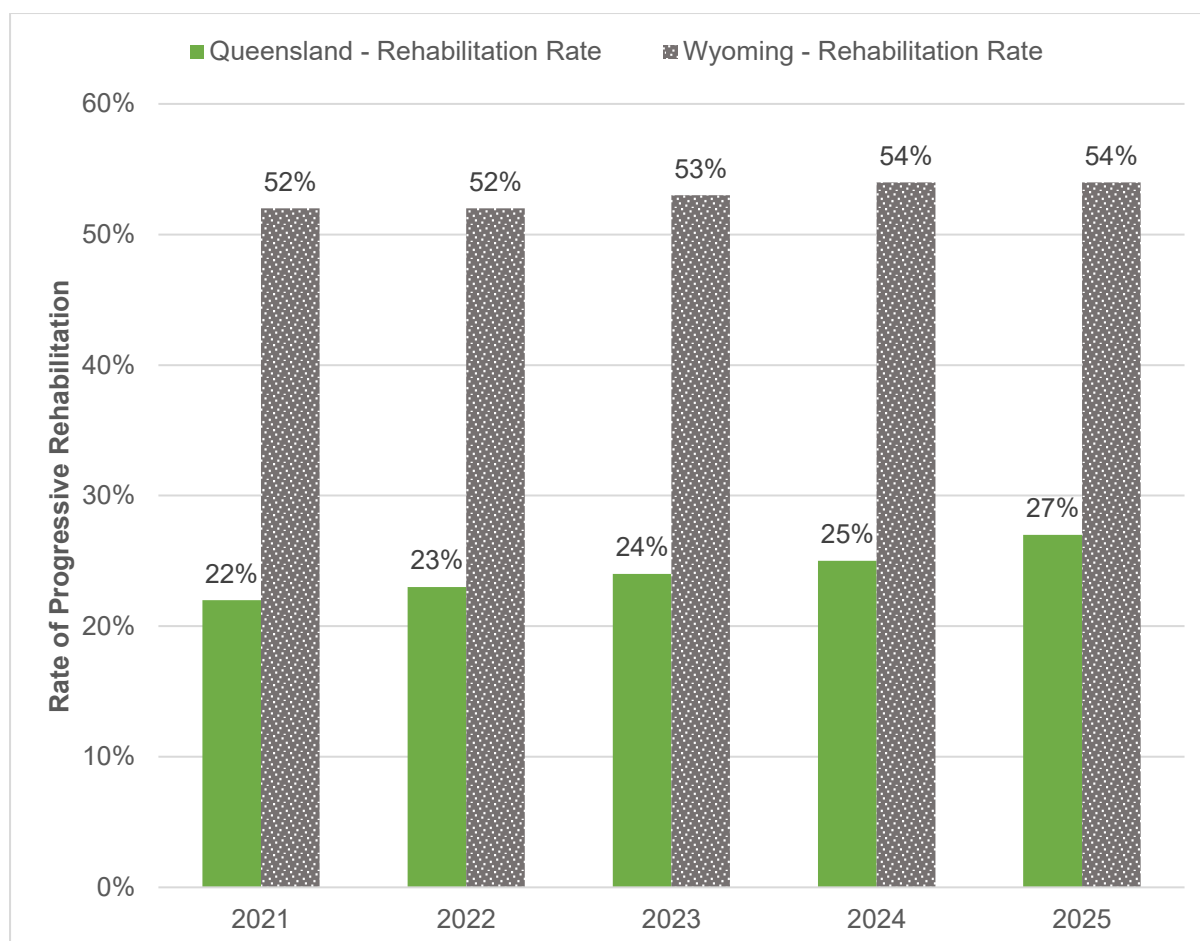


Figure 8. Rates of progressive rehabilitation³ for coal mines in Queensland and Wyoming

Figure 8 shows that, like Queensland, there has been a gradual increase in the rate of progressive rehabilitation for coal mines in Wyoming over the past five reporting periods.

Several Queensland mining companies already undertake progressive rehabilitation at rates comparable to Wyoming. However, as can be seen in Figure 6, there are companies with progressive rehabilitation rates as low as 7 per cent. As more PRC plans are approved, the rates of progressive rehabilitation will be ‘locked in’ to scheduled commitments. We will continue to work with stakeholders to incorporate comparisons with other relevant national and international jurisdictions in future reports.

³ Wyoming rehabilitation data taken from *Annual Evaluation Report for the Regulatory Program Administered by the Department of Environmental Quality – Land Quality Division of Wyoming for evaluation year 2025* (p.13), by OSMRE, 2025.

4.4. Large-scale strip mining (other than coal)

We analysed 19 mines extracting bauxite, phosphate, silica and mineral sands. Figure 9 shows the cumulative areas of disturbance and rehabilitation to the end of CY2025, from data provided by companies in their annual returns.

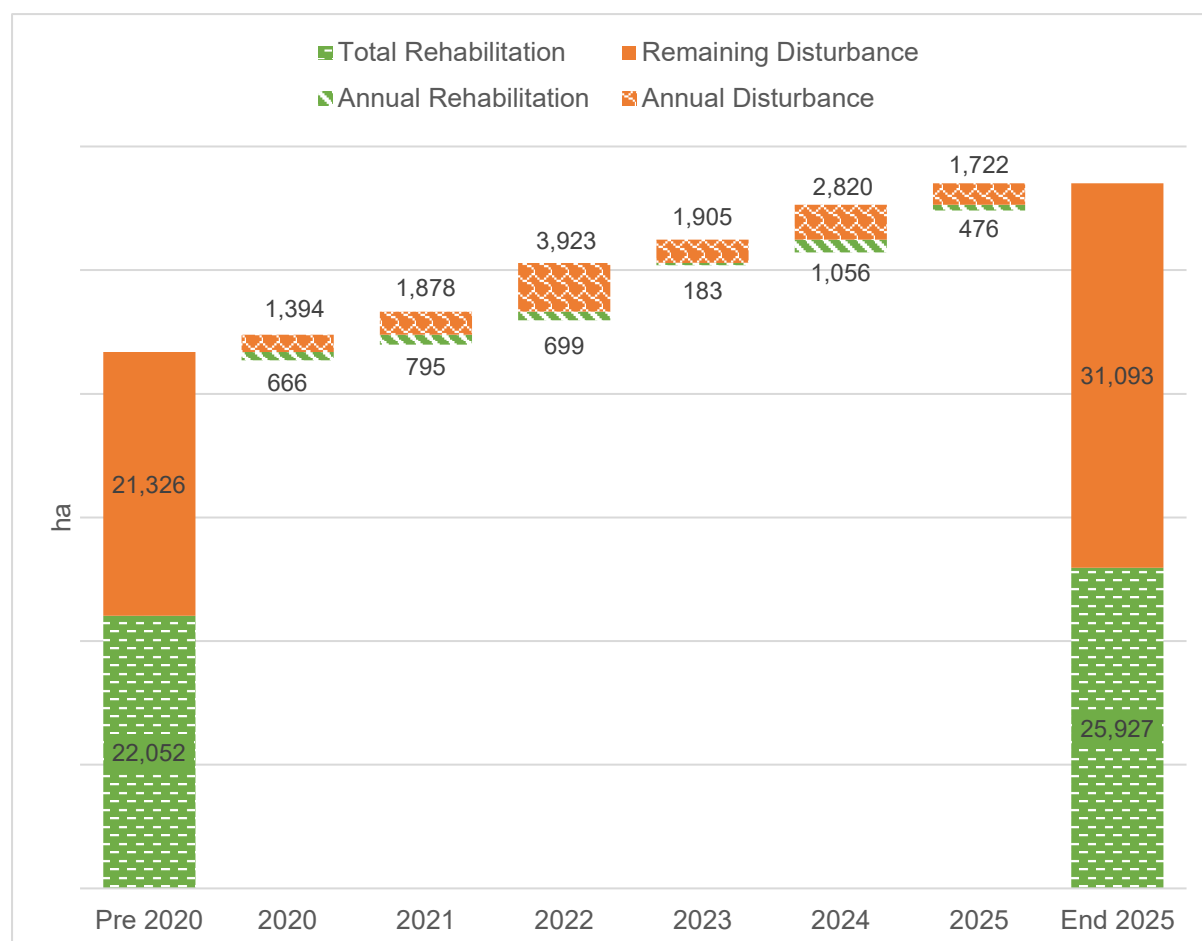


Figure 9. Progressive rehabilitation for strip mining (other than coal) to end CY2025

Figure 9 shows that net disturbance remaining after rehabilitation has increased by 9,767 hectares to 31,093 hectares between CY2019 and CY2025. The 46 per cent increase in net disturbance since the end of CY2019 can be mainly attributed to the expansion of the bauxite industry in western Cape York Peninsula. The rate of progressive rehabilitation (historical to end CY2025) is 45 per cent which has decreased from 46 per cent reported at the end of CY2024.

4.5. Base and precious metals

We analysed 66 mines extracting base and precious metals. Figure 10 shows the cumulative areas of disturbance and rehabilitation to the end of CY2025, from data provided by companies in their annual returns.

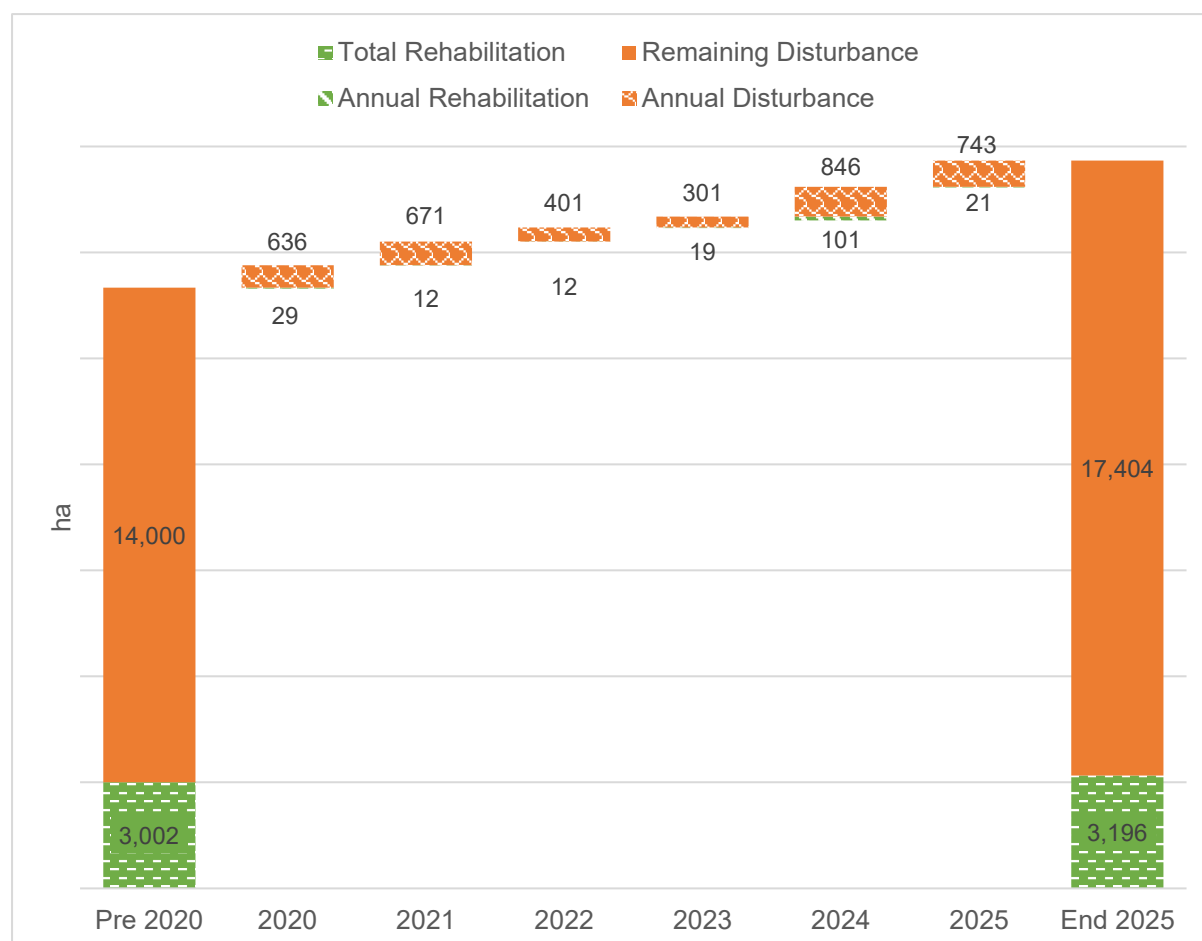


Figure 10. Progressive rehabilitation for base and precious metals mines to end CY2025

Figure 10 shows that the net disturbance remaining after rehabilitation increased by 3,404 hectares to 17,404 hectares between CY2019 and CY2025. The rate of progressive rehabilitation (historical to the end of CY2025) is 16 per cent which is unchanged from the rate reported at the end of CY2024.

Metals mines forum

We have previously reported on the challenges associated with meaningful reporting on progressive rehabilitation trends for metals mines. Metals mines typically operate within a fixed disturbance footprint and much of the disturbed land is not available for progressive rehabilitation until the end of operations. As such, our previous reports have focused on a key aspect of rehabilitation at base and precious metals operations—the mitigation and management of AMD.

In our 2024–25 report, we presented the key takeaways from our technical papers on field-scale mine waste cover system trials. These included common technical and practice issues that limit the success of field-scale trials and common failures for mine waste cover systems.

They also included our five-step leading practice approach for undertaking pragmatic, cost-effective, field-scale mine waste cover system trials in Queensland.

In November 2025, we built on our AMD management work by convening a forum in Mount Isa with 30 representatives from 12 of Queensland's major metals mines. These mines account for more than 50 per cent of the remaining disturbance area and more than 60 per cent of total rehabilitation liability for the metals mines sector. The aim of the forum was to share knowledge and experience on AMD management and mine waste cover systems, as well as to discuss the establishment of an ongoing community of practice for Queensland's metals mines.

Several key themes emerged from the presentations and discussions:

- Preventing AMD is more environmentally and economically valuable compared with remediating mine waste structures with AMD issues.
- Starting mine waste cover system trials early in a mine's life is beneficial and allows companies to obtain long-term data on performance of cover systems.
- Effective AMD management requires continual learning and maintenance of the knowledge base on site, especially as personnel change.
- Establishing effective data management tools is important to support long-term field scale mine waste cover system trials.
- AMD management requires integration of strategies across all the teams responsible for mine planning, execution, operation, closure and rehabilitation.

Although it was acknowledged that AMD and other environmental management strategies differ from site to site, the forum's attendees also stressed the importance of sharing knowledge and experience at a sector wide level. The Commissioner and QMRC team will continue to support similar initiatives that enable knowledge sharing across the industry.

4.6. Other mining activities

A total of 29 of the 205 mines subject to PRC plan requirements fall into the 'other resource activities' grouping. They mine commodities such as bentonite, limestone, sandstone and clays. Mines in this group have not been assessed for progressive rehabilitation trends or performance, other than as part of the whole-of-industry analysis depicted in Figure 2. As previously stated, the primary focus of this report is large-scale mining operations, which have been identified as the highest priority for more and better rehabilitation.

Throughout 2025–26, we undertook site visits and discussed rehabilitation with key operators of sites in the 'other resource activities' grouping to understand their unique rehabilitation challenges and opportunities.

4.7. Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plans

Of the 205 mines required to produce a PRC plan at 30 June 2026, 194 were existing mines transitioning into the PRC plan framework. It remains difficult to assess the impact of the framework on progressive rehabilitation at an industry level as 68 of the 205 mines do not yet have an approved PRC plan. As more PRC plans are submitted and approved over coming years, a better understanding of the industry's rehabilitation progress and life-of-mine profile will emerge. Figure 11 shows the PRC plan status of the 205 mines required to produce a PRC plan.

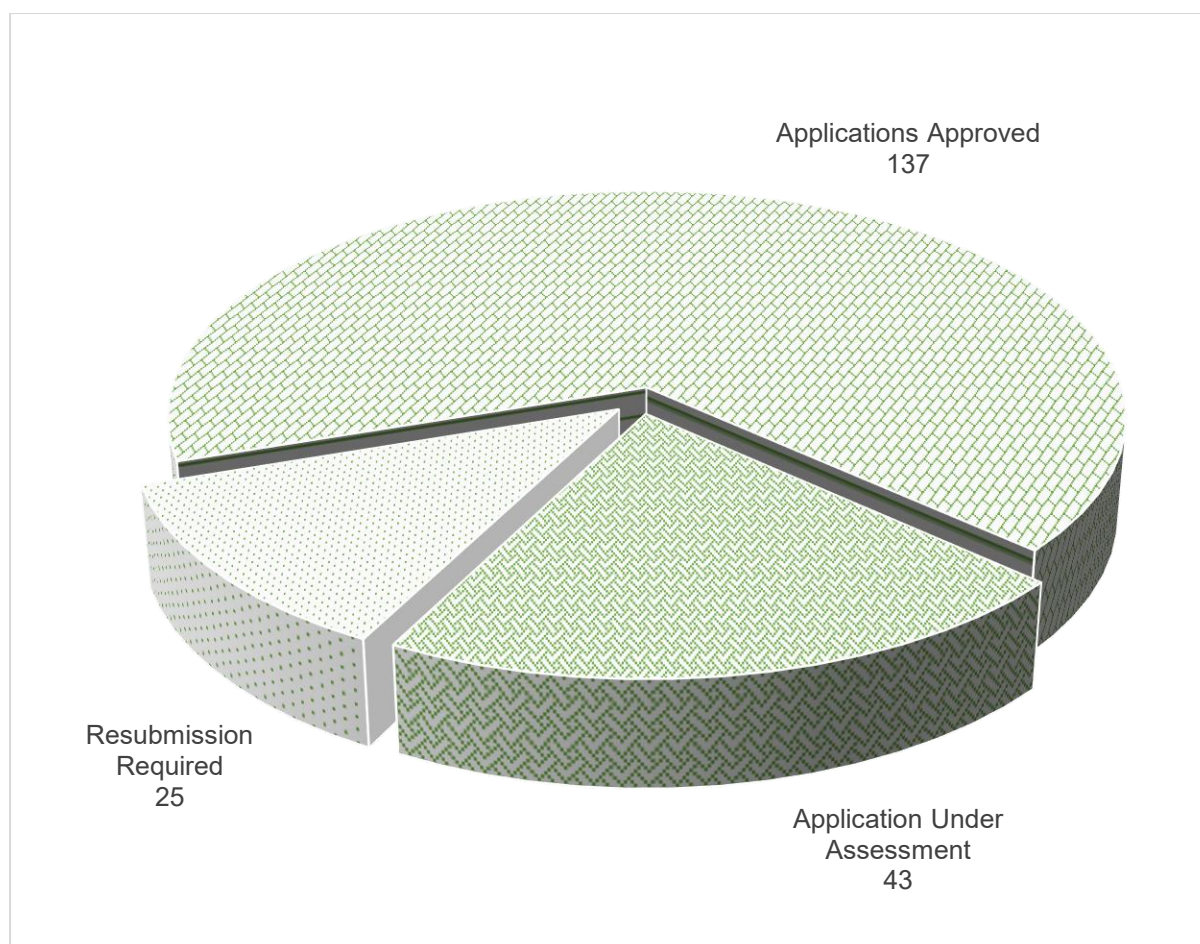


Figure 11. Status of PRC plan delivery as at 30 June 2026

4.8. Public interest evaluations

The Commissioner is required (under s444I of the EP Act) to provide the Minister with advice on public interest evaluation processes and performance. To date, no public interest evaluations have been submitted to the administering authority.

The requirement for a proponent to prepare a public interest evaluation has been removed from the legislation by the *Environmental Protection (Efficiency and Streamlining) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2026*. As such, the Commissioner is no longer required to provide advice on public interest evaluation processes and performance, therefore this section will be removed from future reports.

4.9. Petroleum

While progressive rehabilitation of large-scale mining operations remains the focus of the QMRC team, we have continued examining key rehabilitation issues associated with the petroleum (oil and gas) sector. During 2025-26, we continued to investigate and engage in discussions with stakeholders about onshore gas well decommissioning and the importance of adequate provisioning for the task. This included engaging with other jurisdictions across Australia to understand the similarities and differences in decommissioning and financial assurance requirements for onshore gas wells.

5 Looking forward

Following the success of the 2025 annual stakeholder forum, the QMRC team is planning to deliver another forum in 2026. The forum will further inform our forward work program to ensure our priorities reflect industry needs and emerging issues. We will continue to develop and publish leading practice advice that supports innovation to improve mine rehabilitation outcomes across the sector.

To understand the value and practicality of our work, we will continue to engage with stakeholders and publish work that compares Queensland's rehabilitation record with relevant national and international examples. As forecast in 2025, we hope to include a comparative analysis of progressive rehabilitation in the New South Wales coal mining sector, pending roll-out of the NSW environmental data sharing portal (SEED).

Our initial AMD management project focuses on one specific aspect—trialling cover system designs. To broaden our advice, we have commenced a second project, Geoenvironmental Block Models to Prevent AMD. This project will describe the application of block models to better manage acid-producing waste. It will provide leading practice advice on how to construct a geoenvironmental block model and apply the model to develop material handling protocols and material balances. The project will showcase how AMD mitigation and management practices can be integrated into mine planning and operations. RGS Environmental has been engaged and we will continue to work with them to develop a technical paper for publication.

Our cover system trials incentivisation and flood management projects will continue into 2026-27. Additional projects will complement the current practice notes on best practice management of residual voids, including NUMAs. We will also continue to actively seek partnerships to explore key research questions, especially those involving the deployment of innovative post-mining land uses.

In early CY2027, we plan to publish a one-off report titled *The State of Mine Rehabilitation in Queensland*. The report will highlight case studies of leading practice mine rehabilitation in Queensland.

6 Appendix A – Administration

6.1. Corporate support

The Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation continues to provide corporate support to the QMRC team.

6.2. Human rights

The Commissioner and the QMRC team carry out their role with appropriate consideration of human rights under the *Human Rights Act 2019*, including recognising the unique interests of First Nations peoples. As per section 6 of the EP Act, we consult with, and have regard to, the views and interests of First Nations peoples under tradition and custom.

6.3. Integrity Act 2009

The Commissioner is undertaking a higher degree by research program at the University of Queensland. Dr Vigya Sharma, Sustainable Minerals Institute, University of Queensland, is the degree supervisor. The Commissioner is also involved with the Cooperative Research Centre for Transformations in Mining Economies through those studies. This statement has been included in accordance with section 40F(1) of the *Integrity Act 2009* and a conflict-of-interest management plan prepared by the deputy Crown Solicitor.

6.4. Directions from the Minister

No directions have been provided by the Minister in this financial year. The Commissioner continues to discuss and report on the QMRC work program to the Minister through quarterly reporting and meetings.

7 Appendix B – Key QMRC research topics

Research Topic	Contract Award Date	Partner	Status
Rehabilitation Practices			
Leading practice guidance on erosion and landform evolution modelling to design post-mining landforms	7 August 2024	Landloch Pty Ltd	Delivered Technical paper – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/401671/erosion-lem-design-post-mining-landforms.pdf Seminar recording – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/research/rehabilitation-practices/design
Creating alternate growth media to achieve successful revegetation on Queensland mines	19 March 2025	Verterra Ecological Engineering Pty Ltd	Delivered Technical paper – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/412721/creating-alternate-growth-media-successful-revegetation-qld-mines.pdf Seminar recording – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/research/rehabilitation-practices/addressing-topsoil-deficits
Rehabilitation considerations for cave mines in Queensland	Internal	QMRC team with input from Andre van As (University of Qld), Geoff Deans (Modifying Factors) and Geoff Dunstan (Caveman Consulting)	Delivered Rehabilitation insights – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0033/426984/rehabilitation-considerations-cave-mining.pdf
Post-mining transitions			
Carbon and nature repair markets	Internal	QMRC team	Commenced
Native ecosystem rehabilitation in Queensland	Internal	QMRC team	Delivered Implications for leading practice (biennial review) –

Research Topic	Contract Award Date	Partner	Status
			https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/323052/implications-leading-practice-native-ecosystem-rehabilitation-in-qld.pdf
Mine waste management			
Field-scale trials of cover system designs	Internal	QMRC team	Delivered Implications for leading practice – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/412016/implications-leading-practice-mine-waste-cover-system-trials.pdf Conference paper - https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0021/410736/mine-waste-cover-trials-lom-conference-2025.pdf
Exploring frameworks to accelerate rehabilitation of mine waste landforms	29 September 2024	Affinitas Holdings Pty Ltd	Delivered
Developing a governance framework for technical oversight of cover system trials	29 October 2025	Affinitas Holdings Pty Ltd	Commenced
Developing a governance framework for technical oversight of cover system trials	4 November 2025	Ramphurst Pty Ltd	Commenced
Geoenvironmental block models to prevent AMD	14 May 2026	RGS Environmental Consultants Pty Ltd	Commenced
Opportunities for environmental benefits from	Internal	QMRC team with input from Jonathan Lorraine	Delivered Practice note –

Research Topic	Contract Award Date	Partner	Status
mine waste reprocessing		(Neuchâtel Partners) and Gavin Mudd (Anstey-Mudd Environment & Community Consulting)	https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0028/422839/environmental-benefits-mine-waste-reprocessing.pdf
Residual voids			
Geotechnical management of non-use management areas	3 March 2025	Henderson Geotech Pty Ltd	Delivered. Practice note – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0036/407979/practice-note-geotechnical-stability-numa-voids.pdf Seminar recording – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/research/residual-voids/best-practice-mgmt-numa
Identifying residual void post-mining land uses	Internal	QMRC team with input from lead technical author	Leading practice approaches to select post-mining land uses for residual mine voids (Technical paper, biennial review) – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/315849/leading-practice-approaches-select-pmlu-residual-mine-voids.pdf Identifying a post-mining land use for residual mine voids (Implications for leading practice, biennial review) – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0030/318558/implications-leading-practice-identifying-residual-void-pmlu.pdf
Leading practices to assess and mitigate flood risk of final mine voids	24 February 2026	WRM Water and Environment Pty Ltd	Commenced
Modelling residual mine voids for	Internal	QMRC team	Delivered Implications for leading practice – https://www.qmrc.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0026/319049/implications-

Research Topic	Contract Award Date	Partner	Status
rehabilitation planning			leading-practice-modelling-residual-mine-voids-for-rehabilitation-planning.pdf
Student report			
Investigating monitoring programs presented in PRC plans to identify industry practice	3 December 2025	Higher Degree Research Student (Industry Placement), Queensland University of Technology	Completed

8 Appendix C – Sectoral mine groupings

Groupings / number of mines	Description	Example commodity
Metallurgical and thermal coal (91 mines)	Major coal operations that predominantly mine in a horizontal direction (i.e. shallow deposit or pre-strip operations) such that land can be progressively rehabilitated. Underground coal mines are included as several mines use both open cut and underground workings.	Hard coking coal, pulverised coal for injection and thermal coal.
Other large-scale strip mining (19 mines)	Major operations that predominantly mine in a horizontal direction (i.e. shallow deposit or pre-strip operations) such that land can be progressively rehabilitated.	Bauxite, phosphate, silica and mineral sands.
Base and precious metals (66 mines)	Major operations that predominantly mine in a vertical direction such that land cannot be progressively rehabilitated as readily.	Copper, gold, lead, silver and zinc.
Other resource activities (29 mines)	Medium/major operations that do not fit into the groupings above. Typically, these operations are bespoke and may progress horizontally, vertically or both.	Clay, bentonite, limestone and sandstone.
Note: We grouped operations with multiple commodities or mining styles to best reflect their context (for example, coal infrastructure leases were allocated to the 'metallurgical and thermal coal' group).		

9 Appendix D – Glossary

AMD	Acid and metalliferous drainage
Commissioner	Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner
CY	Calendar year
DETSI	Department of the Environment, Tourism Science and Innovation
Dist.	Disturbance
EP Act	<i>The Environmental Protection Act 1994</i>
ERC	Estimated rehabilitation cost
Minister	Minister for the Environment and Tourism and Minister for Science and Innovation
PMLU	Post-mining land use
PRC plan	Progressive Rehabilitation and Closure Plan
Resources sector	Mining, petroleum and gas activities (excludes quarries)
QMRC	Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner
QMRC Team	The Commissioner and staff of the Office of the Commissioner
Rehab.	Rehabilitation
WRM	WRM Water and Environment Pty Ltd

10 References

EIA. (2026). Quarterly Coal Report October–December 2025. U.S. Energy Information Administration. <https://www.eia.gov/coal/production/quarterly/archive/012125q4.pdf>

OSMRE. (2025). Annual Evaluation Report for the Regulatory Program Administered by the Department of Environmental Quality – Land Quality Division of Wyoming for evaluation year 2025. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.