

## WEEK TWO OPENING REMARKS FROM PROFESSOR CATFORD

2 June 2014

Good morning. We begin today, the second week of the hearings of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry. The first week focused on the origins and responses to the fire in the mine and we also considered the health aspects of the firefighters.

Justice Bernard Teague, Ms Sonia Petering and I are pleased that the proceedings in the first week were conducted efficiently, effectively and respectfully given the complexity of the issues covered, the very extensive sets of information and the interests of the respective parties. We thank you for your cooperation and look to the good start continuing.

This week we move from the open cut mine to the community of Morwell and surrounding districts. We will consider the environmental, health and social impacts and the responses to these, including efforts to engage with the community, provide information and offer assistance during and after the fire.

We have learned from the extensive community consultation and stakeholder meetings in April and May and from submissions from the general public that the environmental, health and social impacts were severe and lasted many weeks and, for some people, continue to do so. Many concerns were raised about the timeliness and appropriateness of the responses from relevant agencies, the co-ordination between them and the form that the communications took.

We intend to understand these issues more clearly with an open mind through the statements of key individuals from the principal organisations, from members of the public and from experts that the Inquiry has engaged. The overriding purpose will be to learn from the events that occurred and look forward in terms of developing better policies, procedures, programs, as well as building stronger capacities and capabilities.

Our future's orientation to our discussions is vital if we are to manage similar or related events more effectively. Chairman.