



06/05/2014 08:34 AM

To Hazelwood Inquiry  
info/DPC@DTF

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Subject Submission to Hazelwood coal  
mine fire inquiry

Submission:

Dear Board of Inquiry,

I am writing this submission to request that your investigation shines a light on issues that (while directly relevant to the Hazelwood fire) are also of broader importance to open cut coal mine safety, particularly where those mines abut communities.

My specific concern is the township of Anglesea, which is surrounded by native bush and is one of the most fire prone communities in the State. Unfortunately Anglesea is also abutted by a large open cut brown coal mine that is in close proximity to homes and the local primary school. The potential for disaster is obvious; however it is far from clear how the mine operator and the township of Anglesea would cope were a Hazelwood like emergency to occur.

In my respectful submission it would be appropriate for the Inquiry to recommend that an independent audit of open cut coal mines be performed through the Auditor General's Office (or another suitable independent agency) to ensure that all open cut coal mines in the State have adequate systems in place to prevent the occurrence of fire in the first place and to quickly and safely extinguish any fire that may take hold before it causes the appalling suffering that we recently witnessed in the Latrobe Valley. Moreover the systems should extend to the implementation of systems that properly protect the local community from the injurious effects of toxic smoke before the fire is extinguished.

While I appreciate the fact that the Inquiry primary concerns the Hazelwood fire, in my respectful submission issues that arise out of the Hazelwood fire and which are plainly of broader application to other open cut coal mines in the State can and should be addressed in the Inquiry's findings.

If I can assist the Inquiry by providing further amplification or clarification of this submission I would be happy to do so.

I acknowledge that my submission will be treated as a public document and may be published, quoted or summarised by the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Laird

First name: Andrew

Surname: Laird

Email address: [REDACTED]

Street address: [REDACTED]

Town/suburb: Melbourne

Postcode: 3000