



08/05/2014 07:54 PM

To Hazelwood Inquiry
info/DPC@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Submission to Hazelwood coal
mine fire inquiry

Submission:

Dear Board of Inquiry,

I am a resident of Anglesea Victoria. As well as having an open cut coal mine and power station less than 1km from homes and the Primary School, Anglesea is surrounded by native bush and is in one of the most fire prone areas in Victoria. The fire disaster in Morwell and its aftermath, both short and long term, are a salient reminder of the risks that we in Anglesea will face each fire season which we are told, will only get longer and more dangerous as the climate continues to warm.

The Anglesea Coal mine and power station is currently owned by Alcoa to provide 40% of base load power to the Aluminium smelter at Point Henry. Alcoa has announced that it will close the smelter in August. However, instead of closing down and rehabilitating the coal mine, Alcoa has announced it plans to try and find a buyer. This will mean mine expansion in a very high fire risk area to produce electricity which is no longer required.

I am writing this submission to request that your investigation take account of Anglesea and the risks to our vulnerable community associated with the potential ongoing operation of the coal mine and power station. I respectfully submit that your investigation include the following:

1. Health effects: I am a medical practitioner and have well founded concerns regarding both the short and long term health effects of pollution from open cut coal mines and coal fired power stations and the health effects of coal fires in dangerously close proximity to human populations. The health effects of the fire need to be fully understood, and the inquiry should recommend a separate public inquiry into the long-term health effects on the affected population. This is particularly important for Anglesea given that Alcoa have announced that they plan to sell the coal mine and power station which will bring with it significant mine expansion and far greater risk.
2. Fire policy: If Alcoa is successful in selling the Anglesea coal mine and power station, what sort of fire prevention will new owners be mandated to

install and upkeep? The Anglesea mine and power station are already old and past their used by date. It is unlikely that a new owner will volunteer to spend extra money on fire protection if not mandated to do so. This will place our community at unacceptable risk. Best practice fire protection infrastructure must be mandated by government if the Anglesea mine is to continue operating.

The cost of this must be born by the buying company.

3. In personal communication with the Anglesea CFA I have been informed that

Anglesea coal mine fires are a common occurrence. The electricity from this power station is not required. The Victorian energy market is already in surplus

and once Point Henry closes, will be further in surplus by about 6%. To continue

mine operation when it is known that fires occur on a regular basis is to place

a vulnerable population at unnecessary and unacceptable risk for no benefit.

4. Quality of rehabilitation: The Anglesea mine site and power station needs to

be decommissioned and rehabilitated. The quality and safety of this rehabilitation must be closely monitored and responsibly managed with governmental supervision. The current bond is in the region of \$14.5 million.

If

this is not enough to fund an adequate and responsible rehabilitation, Alcoa

must be mandated to provide further rehabilitation funds.

5 Given that this inquiry is investigating the causes of a major public health

disaster, the inquiry's findings must be made public very shortly after the completion of your report.

I acknowledge that my submission will be treated as a public document and may

be

published, quoted or summarised by the inquiry.

Regards,

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