



Fw: Morwell Mine Fire Submission

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To Hazelwood Inquiry
info/DPC@DTF
cc
bcc
Subject Morwell Mine Fire Submission

Title: Dr

First Name: Malcolm

Surname: McKelvie

Email address: [REDACTED]

Home or office phone: [REDACTED]

Content of submission (you can choose multiple): Measures taken by Hazelwood Coal Mine to prevent fire, Response to fire by Public Health Officials

Please select one of the following options: I acknowledge that my submission will be treated as a public document and may be published, quoted or summarised by the Inquiry.

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Submission-to-the-Morwell-coal-fire-inquiry.docx

Submission to the Morwell coal fire inquiry.
Dr Malcolm McKelvie
2/5/14

I am a general practitioner, working in Yarragon some 25km or so from Morwell and have worked in the Latrobe Valley or West Gippsland for the last 19 years. I have an interest in environmental issues including the health effects of environmental pollution through my involvement in teaching Environmental Medicine to medical students, my work with Doctors For the Environment and as a candidate for parliamentary elections for the Greens party. I'm making this submission to express my concern about the lack of regard for human health in this incident.

Please address these points:

1. Rehabilitation of the disused part of the mine ought to happen sooner than later to protect the health of nearby residents. Waiting for the whole mine to be closed so it can be flooded, which could be in decades to come, places profit before human health.
2. Health professionals in the area were operating initially with a paucity of information from the health department. As news reports of carbon monoxide monitoring hit the news and peoples anxiety levels increased, GPs had no information from the health dept which would have been useful as this is not an area of expertise for us. Interestingly, reports of small numbers of infectious disease cases anywhere in the state hit our screens from multiple sources very quickly. The health dept may like to increase its resources to deal with environmental or other emergency health events.
3. The risks of use of coal in the Latrobe Valley have been highlighted recently with this fire, the collapse of the Morwell river, the Yallourn mine wall collapse involving the Latrobe river and the subsidence affecting the land under the Princes Hwy. Risks already existing ought to be controlled much more than they have been to date before embarking on huge new coal allocations.

Thank you for your consideration of these points.

Malcolm McKelvie