

Community Information Newsletter Number 6 Latrobe Valley Open Cut Mine Fires

February 2014

HAZELWOOD OPEN CUT MINE FIRE

Firefighters, mine staff and incident management team personnel continue to work around the clock on the Hazelwood Cut Mine Fire.

Observational reports from the ground and aircraft has indicated that significant progress has been made. Firefighters continue to work for the containment and suppression, including the management of smoke, by utilising knowledge from local, state and national personnel from all emergency agencies.

Two compressed air foam units from ACT Fire & Rescue have arrived to join the Tasmanian Fire Service unit in battling the Hazelwood open cut mine fire.

The Compressed Air Foam Systems (CAFS), foam contains less water than other foam solutions and is used to smother the fire and reduce smoke.

EMERGENCY RELIEF INFORMATION

COMMUNITY RESPITE CENTRE

The Victorian Department of Human Services has opened a community respite centre at -

Moe Town Hall,

Albert Street, Moe

9:00am to 7:00pm every day

Residents can seek temporary respite from the smoky conditions in the cool air conditioned space.

Representatives from a number of organisations and current information on the fire situation – including health and environmental fact sheets will be present.

The centre's opening times may vary, depending on the demand. Residents are urged to contact the Department of Human Services Traralgon office (during business hours) for the most current information on **(03) 5177 2500**.

HEALTH ASSESSMENT CENTRE

A Community Health Assessment Centre is open –

Ambulance Victoria Gippsland

Regional office,

2 Saskia Way, Morwell

(adjacent to the Mid-Valley Shopping Centre)

8.00am to 8.00pm every day

This centre is staffed by two nurses and two paramedics and will offer basic primary health assessments such as Blood pressure, heart rate, temperature; and basic respiratory checks.

Should anyone need medical care, they will be referred to their own doctor or to Latrobe Regional Hospital.

People visiting the centre will also be provided with current health and other community information about the health impacts of the mine fire.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION POINT

A static information point (bus) will be outside of Coles, Morwell on Elgin Street, between Tarwin St and Chapel St, 2:30pm-6:00pm every day

A number of information points have also been established, for times and locations of these daily information points please contact the **Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL) on 1800 240 667** or **Latrobe City Council on 1300 376 700**.

AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH

The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) is issuing smoke alerts for the Latrobe Valley and other areas of Gippsland. Air quality is being monitored by EPA, emergency services and Hazmat technicians. Both fine particles and carbon monoxide are being measured as indicators of the impacts of smoke on local air quality. Data is being collected at Morwell East and is now being updated hourly on their website.

www.epa.vic.gov.au

Local air quality is currently being affected by smoke and ash from burning brown coal. The primary health concerns are respiratory irritation, skin contact or irritation to the eyes.

It is very important that people with pre-existing health conditions take their medication, follow their treatment plan, and seek immediate medical advice if symptoms occur.

The levels of smoke in and around the Valley are highly variable, depending on the weather conditions.



STAY INFORMED

For information on fires in Victoria and general fire safety advice, please contact the **Victorian Bushfire Information Line (VBIL)** on freecall **1800 240 667**. Callers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech/communication impairment can call VBIL via the National relay Service on **1800 555 677**.

Check for the latest warnings and advice messages at either www.depi.vic.gov.au/fires or www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Facebook ([facebook.com/cfavic](https://www.facebook.com/cfavic))

Twitter ([Twitter @ CFA_Updates](https://twitter.com/CFA_Updates))

Local ABC radio **100.7 FM**

Sky News TV

LIVESTOCK

If you have any concerns about the health of your livestock, consult a vet or the Department of Environment and Primary Industries Customer Service Centre on **136 186**.

PRIVATE WATER TANKS

General advice from the Department of Health is that if your tank water supply tastes, looks or smells unusual do not use it for drinking, bathing or for pets.

Contact your local council Environmental Health Officer or the Department of Health for additional advice.

ROADS

While the recent fire has caused damage to vegetation, signs and safety barriers along the Princes Freeway at Morwell, VicRoads advise there has been no damage to the surface of the road.

Works to remove vegetation and repair signs and safety barriers will continue in the coming weeks.

While these works are being undertaken, some lane closures and reduced speed limits will be required for the safety of drivers and workers.

Information on updated road closures is available via **131170** or the VicRoads website: <http://traffic.vicroads.vic.gov.au/>

SUPPORT

Nurse-on-Call on **1300 60 60 24**

This is a phone service that allows you to discuss any health related issue with a registered nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for the cost of a local call from anywhere in Victoria.

The Department of Human Services offer a range of support services including personal, emotional, psychological and financial help. For information go to <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au>

EPA Victoria

Information on the impacts of smoke on local air quality contact EPA Victoria on **1300 372 842** (24 hours) or visit: www.epa.vic.gov.au

Asthma Foundation

For further information about asthma go to the Asthma Foundation of Victoria website at: www.asthma.org.au or call **1800 278 462**.

Local Government

Latrobe City Council can be contacted on **1300 367 700** or go to: <http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Home>

INFORMATION SESSIONS AT MORWELL NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE

To the residents of Morwell:



We will be holding weekly information sessions regarding the fire situation and the health implications here on Tuesdays 10am – 11am.

Attending to answer any of your questions will be members from the CFA Community Engagement team and a health professional.

Dates:

Tuesday 25 th February	10am – 11am
Tuesday 4 th March	10am – 11am
Tuesday 11 th March	10am – 11am
Tuesday 18 th March	10am – 11am
Tuesday 25 th March	10am – 11am

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available.

We will continue to update as we have information.

For further information regarding these sessions please feel free to contact the House on **5134 5488**

7 DAY FORECAST

Weather for Morwell.

Taken from www.weather.com.au

Date	Max	Wind
Tues 25 Feb	32	5km/h WSW
Wed 26 Feb	25	6km/h WSW
Thu 27 Feb	20	8km/h SSE
Fri 28 Feb	22	13km/h E
Sat 1 Mar	24	12km/h ESE
Sun 2 Mar	25	13km/h E
Mon 3 Mar	30	2km/h SSW

