

EPA Media Release



EPA ramps up air monitoring in Morwell

Thursday 20 February 2014

Air quality update: There will be periods of very poor air quality in Morwell and East Morwell today, mainly between 11am to 5pm as wind changes bring smoke from the mine fire over the township.

EPA CEO John Merritt said that as the Hazelwood mine fire is expected to continue for some weeks, EPA has stepped up its monitoring efforts in response to community concern, with an emphasis on analysis of particles, ash and carbon monoxide data.

“We have doubled monitoring efforts and we are making more information available on the web www.epa.vic.gov.au but if you don't have access to the web, information on what's in the smoke, our data and what it means to people will be available through emergency services, public health officer and EPA staff in area,” Mr Merritt said.

“EPA has listened to the community concerns. We have been installing new monitoring stations and mobile equipment and these are now ready to go, and are producing data about carbon monoxide, small air pollution particles called PM2.5 in the next few days.

“To support the six monitoring stations, we have EPA staff monitoring air with hand held devices and will have vehicle-mounted information from later today.”

EPA's mobile laboratory, 'Mo', has arrived in Morwell and is established at the Morwell Bowling Club. It's live now and data from Mo will be on the EPA web site and incorporated into EPA's air quality monitoring report to the Department of Health.

Additionally, EPA has established new PM2.5 small particle monitors in addition to dust monitors, as well as the arrival of the Tasmanian vehicle-based 'Travel Blanket' plume monitoring system, which will see us able to make much wider geographical assessments and to better understand the wider impacts.

There has been a mobile weather station established at Morwell South, and all these developments will improve our timely and broad air quality advice and forecasting to the Morwell community.

We have four carbon monoxide monitors in the Morwell South areas, and we will be pushing this information on to the web and other channels to reach the community. We will continue to monitor for this around the clock along with CFA. Hand held carbon monoxide monitoring undertaken is also being done throughout Morwell by EPA staff.

Ash samples have been sent in for analysis these are due back in the next 24 hours.

ENDS.

For media enquiries: 03 9695 2704

