

EPA Media Release



High level smoke advisory – Latrobe Valley

1745 Friday 28 February 2014

EPA Victoria has issued a high level smoke alert for the Latrobe Valley tonight (Friday) and tomorrow morning (Saturday) as a result of the Hazelwood open cut mine fire.

A high level alert means that it is likely residents will see ongoing smoke impacts overnight and into the morning with visibility less than 10 kilometres due to high particle concentrations in the air.

The Victorian Chief Health Officer Dr Rosemary Lester advises that excessive smoke levels can not only aggravate existing heart or lung conditions, but may also cause members of the community to experience irritated eyes, coughing or wheezing.

“Everyone should avoid prolonged or heavy physical activity and keep informed about fire activity in their immediate area,” Dr Lester said.

“Anyone with a heart or lung condition should take their medication as prescribed by their doctor.

“People with asthma should follow their asthma management plan.

“Anyone with concerns about their health should seek medical advice or call NURSE-ON-CALL on 1300 60 60 24.”

For more information on the Hazelwood open cut mine fire:

- **Smoke and health:** www.health.vic.gov.au
- **Health and medical advice:** NURSE-ON-CALL 1300 60 60 24
- **Air quality:** www.epa.vic.gov.au or 1300 372 842 (1300 EPAVIC)
- **Fire warnings and advice:** www.emergency.vic.gov.au
- **Hazelwood fire information:** cfa.vic.gov.au

Media inquiries: Air quality 03 9695 2704, health 03 9096 8803

*EPA Victoria is responsible for monitoring and testing air quality across the state. The data is provided to the Department of Health to assess human health impacts due to changes in air quality. In response to the Hazelwood mine fire, EPA has doubled air quality monitoring in the Latrobe Valley region and sent in scientific experts to closely monitor the air quality data.

EPA is issuing air quality updates twice daily which include advice for the local community in line with the current air quality. The updates are available online at www.epa.vic.gov.au via EPA's Pollution Hotline 1300 EPA VIC (**1300 327 842**), or in person by speaking to an EPA ground staff member or public health officer in the Morwell area or at the Community Respite Centre.

For daily air quality forecasts:

- Visit www.epa.vic.gov.au
- Call: 1300 372 842

