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Transcript

Station: **ABC NEWS 24** Date: **09/02/2014**
 Program: **ABC NEWS - 20:00 (WEEKEND)** Time: **08:16 PM**
 Compere: Summary ID: **L00057356714**

Item: **INTERVIEW WITH GDF SUEZ SPOKESMAN TREVOR ROWE. ROWE SAYS THERE HAVE BEEN SOME CONCERNS ABOUT FIRES NEAR THE HAZELWOOD MINE. HE SAYS THE POWER SUPPLY WAS INTERRUPTED BECAUSE OF FIRE ELSEWHERE IN THE AREA. HE SAYS THERE HAS BEEN SOME REPORTS THE HAZELWOOD POWER STATION HAS BEEN THREATENED BY A FIRE. HE SAYS THE STATION SUPPLIES ROUGHLY 20% TO 25% OF VICTORIA'S POWER AND THEY'VE BEEN COPING WELL. HOST ASKS IF THE FIRE WERE TO GET INTO THE COAL SEAMS, WHAT WOULD BE THE LONG TERM EFFECTS. ROWE SAYS THE FIRES WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MANAGE BECAUSE THE COAL SEAMS ARE THICK BUT THIS PARTICULAR FIRE IS AWAY FROM THE OPERATING AREA, SO THEY'RE NOT CONCERNED.**

INTERVIEWEES: TREVOR ROWE, SPOKESMAN, GDF SUEZ

Audience:	Male 16+ 3000	Female 16+ 4000	All people 7000
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COMPERE: But, for now, let's go to one of the areas of infrastructure that could've been potentially affected by these fires.

Trevor Rowe is a spokesman for GD Suez, which owns a brown coal-fire powered station at Hazelwood. He says there have been some concerns about fires affecting a nearby mine as well. Well, for an update on this situation Trevor Rowe joins me on the phone. Trevor, thanks very much for taking our call. Just how great has the fire threat been to this vital infrastructure?

TREVOR ROWE: Well, good evening Scott. Obviously, there's fires been concerning people in the Morwell area all afternoon.



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And earlier this afternoon the fires did spread into northern batters of the Hazelwood mine. Fortunately, it's an old worked out area of the mine and it's some distance from our normal coal winning operation so they haven't been affected.

The CFA and our own Hazelwood people are continuing to work on the fire and along those batters. And power supply was interrupted for a while because of fires elsewhere in the area, but that's now been restored so that's good news for us. We had some reduced generation in the power station for a period, but we expect that to be resumed fairly quickly.

There's been some reports that the Hazelwood Power Station has been threatened by the fires: that's not the case. It's a fair distance from the power station. Our concern earlier in the afternoon, and remains, is that there's a fire outside the mining area in the Driffield area, as you would've been reporting earlier, and that's to our coal mining operating area.

It hasn't come into that area at this stage, but both the CFA and our people are keeping a close eye on that particular fire.

COMPERE:

Has it, or is it likely to cause any on-flow disruption surety of supply of coal to fire and generate electricity at the power station?

TREVOR ROWE:

Highly unlikely, Scott. As I said, the fire is in an area - an old worked out area of the mine, which is a



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considerable distance from our current mining operation.

COMPERE:

Trevor, just how much demand has been on what you supply, what is generated at the power station given this has been one long, hot summer in southern Australia, in Victoria with the successive belts of heatwaves ripping across the state. How much demand has that put on the station and how much does this only add to that pressure on this piece of infrastructure?

TREVOR ROWE:

You're absolutely right, Scott. It's been a very high demand period; certainly the last month or so. In Hazelwood the supply is roughly 20, 25 per cent of Victoria's power and it's been able to manage that very well. Fortunately, today, you know Sunday being a day when demand drops off somewhat, so we're certainly coping okay.

COMPERE:

Trevor, as you mentioned, even though it's in a worked out area of the mine where the fire came close to, if a fire were to get in to a mine, into coal seams, I guess, for a layman like me, what's the threat? What's the long-term, or, indeed, the medium-term issue with that?

TREVOR ROWE:

Look, our experience in years gone by, Scott, is that they are very difficult fires to manage, because the coal seam is very thick and the fire tends to burn inwards; rather than just across. So it takes some considerable time to extinguish. But, as I said, this area is well away from our



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operating area so we don't have that concern.

COMPERE:

Trevor Rowe from GDF Suez there. Thanks very much for taking our call and may the fires stay away.

TREVOR ROWE:

Thanks Scott.

* * END * *

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