



Hazelwood Inquiry info/DPC@DTF

14/04/2014 01:54 PM

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

1 attachment



20140414-submission-M.Gunter.pdf

Title: Mr

First Name: Michael

Surname: Gunter

Email address: [REDACTED]

Home or office phone: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Content of submission (you can choose multiple): Measures taken by Hazelwood Coal Mine to prevent fire, Application and administration of regulatory regimes, Response to fire by Hazelwood Coal Mine, Other (please state)

If Other please state here: A plea for the Inquiry to estimate the tonnages of FOSSIL CO2 emitted by this event, to widely publicise the amount, to assess the climate change impact, and to recommend that it be included in the power station's 445 million tonne CO2 "quota".

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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North Melbourne
Victoria 3051
14th April 2014

Justice Bernard Teague
Chairman, Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry
PO Box 3460
GIPPSLAND MC VIC 3841
(submitted by online form only)

Dear Justice Teague,

Thank you for the opportunity to make this brief submission to your inquiry.

There are only two matters I wish to address:

During my power line research at the State Archive (PROV) I became aware of a SECV training video, made in 1982, which describes in detail how to prevent big fires developing within an open cut lignite mine. The ID for this U-matic video cassette is *VPRS 5061/P0002/83 "Document No 002216 Fire Fighting In The Open Cut. Master"*. In 2012 I arranged for it to be transferred to DVD, which I then "ripped" to other DVDs, and then gave the master DVD to staff at the State Archive, North Melbourne. Today I am posting an accurately labelled exact copy of this DVD to your inquiry's post box. I commend it to the Inquiry as a very useful and highly relevant historical yardstick, by which to measure the fire prevention measures in place in 2014 under **GDF Suez** ownership. If it would assist your inquiry, and if your resources do not stretch that far, I could make a full transcript of this DVD within 24 hours of receiving a request.

Given yet another dire warning about runaway climate change (*5th Assessment Report, IPCC, Berlin*), and given this mine's recent history of signing a written agreement¹ with the State Government in 2005 to cap cumulative future emissions to 445 million tonnes CO₂, I strongly urge the Inquiry to (i) get expert estimates of the tonnage of lignite burned by the mine fire; (ii) to convert this amount to CO₂-equivalent tonnage of emissions, then (iii) add it to the cumulative emissions issuing constantly from the power station's eight chimney stacks, so that it will be incorporated in the total permissible emissions under the 2005 deed of agreement. Whoever in government assesses mining extraction tonnages for royalty purposes should quite easily be able to calculate the volume of coal lost. The Inquiry should require that this figure be produced to the inquiry, by sworn affidavit or witness statement, and then made public, even if legal fine print within the deed of agreement specifically excludes open cut CO₂-equivalent emissions (CO₂ and methane) from contributing to the 445 MT emissions cap.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Gunter

¹ [Hazelwood extension gets the 'green' light](http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2005/09/06/1125772522506.html) The Age, 7th September 2005 - <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2005/09/06/1125772522506.html>

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THE AGE

Hazelwood extension gets the 'green' light

By Melissa Fyfe and Farrah Tomazin

September 7, 2005



Smokestack industry: the Hazelwood power plant, which was originally slated to be decommissioned this year, has been given the go-ahead to continue until 2030.

Photo: John Woudstra

AUSTRALIA'S dirtiest power station will operate until 2030 after the State Government yesterday approved the expansion of the Hazelwood electricity generator.

But Premier Steve Bracks said the Government had struck a deal with the owners of the Latrobe Valley power station that would result in it being shut down if it exceeded a pollution cap.

Based on current levels, the cap □ 445 million tonnes of carbon dioxide pollution □ means the plant can continue supplying electricity for another 25 years.

The decision was immediately branded as "gutless" by environment groups. But Mr Bracks hailed the cap as an Australian first and an environmental win.

Under the cap, Hazelwood will have to reduce emissions by 34 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, or two years' worth.

Yesterday's decision means the \$400 million Hazelwood expansion will go ahead. The Government gave Hazelwood an extra 43 million tonnes of coal as well as approving the mining of 436 million tonnes of coal within the company's licence. This will require realigning the Strzelecki Highway, some of the Morwell River and moving 16 homes.

Before privatisation, the former State Electricity Commission of Victoria had planned to retire the 40-year-old plant this year.

Mr Bracks, who yesterday ruled out nuclear power as an option for Victoria, said the decision "struck the right balance between our environmental priorities and the need for a secure and affordable energy supply".

"On an economic-base case, we are right. On the environmental case, we are right," Mr Bracks said.

But Environment Victoria, the Australian Conservation Foundation, and Greenpeace were outraged by the move and vowed to fight it through the courts if necessary. Their main disappointment was that Hazelwood won extra coal.

The green groups were suspicious of the cap, saying it was not enforceable. They also were unhappy that the company that owns Hazelwood can pollute over the cap if it invests in renewable energy.

Environment Victoria's executive director, Marcus Godinho, said: "This is a gutless, tragic decision by Steve Bracks. Hazelwood was the Premier's No. 1 environmental test. He has now failed."

The decision has been a challenge for the Government, which has been negotiating a deed with Hazelwood's owner, International Power, for two years.

City of Latrobe councillor Bob Smith said the Government's decision was a boost to the valley's confidences, even though 16 families would have to move to make way for the mine's expansion. "Unfortunately, when you have a development there's always someone disadvantaged. But they have known about it for years and had a chance to make plans."

Opposition Leader Robert Doyle said the decision was "sensible". However, his deputy, Environment spokesman Phil Honeywood, raised concerns about the new deed.

"This is yet another example of the Bracks Government using fine words to dress up an environmental issue that contains nothing but non-enforceable voluntary requirements," he said.

Victorian Employers Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Neil Coulson said it was a win for business. Australian Industry Group Victorian director Tim Piper said the decision, reached "a satisfactory middle ground for industry and the environment."

THE POWER STATION DEED AND THE DEAL

- **State signs deed with International Power, Hazelwood's owner.**
- Power station to close if it emits more than 445 million tonnes of CO2 over its life.
- By current emissions, plant to close in 2030; must save 34m tonnes CO2 emissions before then.
- Company given access to coal that requires moving a highway, a river and 16 homes.
- Government gives company extra 43m tonnes of coal. Hazelwood to surrender 168m tonnes of coal that is uneconomic to mine.
- Company must demonstrate cleaner coal technologies and meet emission "milestones".
- Station still to face measures to offset pollution if states set up national carbon market.
- Company can gain credits for renewable energy and can then pollute over its cap.

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