



**Fw: Morwell Mine Fire Submission**

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13/05/2014 09:48 AM

**Submission**

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**Hazelwood Inquiry info/DPC@DTF**  
11/05/2014 01:45 PM

To Hazelwood Inquiry  
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Subject Morwell Mine Fire Submission

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Content of submission (you can choose multiple): Origin and circumstances of fire, Measures taken by Hazelwood Coal Mine to prevent fire, Response to fire by Hazelwood Coal Mine, Response to fire by Emergency Services, Response to fire by Public Health Officials, Response to fire by Other Government Agencies

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## 1. Origin and circumstances of fire.

Firebugs have found to be responsible for many recent fires. Prosecution of individuals is not as easy as issuing a speeding fine, whilst a speeding motorist is guilty of exceeding a set of numbers, a firebug wreaks havoc and death.

The laws regarding individuals with known mental illnesses must be changed to protect the community. This will cause outrage amongst civil libertarians, and so perhaps another Hobson Park hospital, 51 years later, but the need is still the same.

## 2. Measures taken by Hazelwood Coal Mine to prevent fire.

Just talk to any ex-SEC employee and they will tell you about our government run power infrastructure. The preparedness of the SEC is well documented in a widely distributed You Tube video dating back to the 1982.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLEEfMq-cVw>

The presentation was intended for all SEC employees and the subject is how to interact with the SEC fire service. The general opinion of the SEC is that they were well prepared for fire, and the current owners of the Morwell mine are not well prepared for fire.

2.1 The commission should ask this question, was GDF Suez up to the task of managing the mine?

2.2 If not GDF Suez, who is responsible for mine maintenance?

Further recommendations

2.3 Overseeing rehabilitation of disused batters.

2.4 Industry standard for mine fire service.

### 3. Response to fire by Hazelwood Coal Mine.

I would expect a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) would be the first document Hazelwood Coal Mine would release to the public.

MSDS documents are available in all workplaces where a substance is potentially harmful to the workforce.

GDF Suez would have an Industrial Hygienist who could provide such information.

3.1 Was data held by GDF Suez regarding the make up of the toxins in the air during the mine fire made available to the public health officials?

3.2 Normal operational emissions must have some harmful effects on the community, (given that accelerated emissions certainly did) does the commission intend to make this data available to the public on an ongoing basis?

### 4. Response to fire by Emergency Services

The ability of the Emergency services to react is guided in part by the cooperation of the mine manager.

4.1 GDF Suez is the mine manager, so what was the level of cooperation and communication between these parties?

4.2 I understand CFA, (MFB?), SES, and GDF Suez fire services where collectively fighting the fire. Was this a successful collaboration, or as I have heard was there disunity amongst the decision makers?

4.3 How can we improve public/private disaster outcomes, when Public Private Partnerships are increasing in numbers?

## 5. Response by Public Health Officials

Just as well it was not a Nuclear Power Station!

Planning for worst case scenarios is important where large infrastructure projects involving volatile materials exist.

Just like Altona's fuel refineries near Melbourne, Latrobe Valley has some very volatile infrastructure.

The decision not evacuate indicates the Public Health Officials had not factored in such a disaster.

Morwell should have been evacuated, closed down and treated like the toxic waste land it was.

5.1. We must learn from this and fund better disaster planning.

## 6. Response to fire by Other Government Agencies

Regarding speeding fines, it was a Wednesday during the fire period I did notice a speed camera car parked just west of the wetlands bridges catching all the Melbourne bound traffic that was forced to reduce their speed to 80km/h as they inhaled the toxic smoke. It was there all day from early morning to late at night. Then as soon as the limit returned to normal, there was the camera, knowing full well motorists would increase their road speed to above the limit to escape the smoke.

6.1 These fines should not be enforced, this is unfair to capitalise on motorists' misery for an easy buck. Refund the money.

Summary.

I drive a Route Service Bus, and during this period passed through Morwell on Route 1 at least twice a day.

The fumes from the fire made me quite unwell on several occasions. Sore eyes, sore throat, feeling nauseas.

The same odour was in Moe, Traralgon, and on the Wednesday mentioned earlier made it all the way to Blores Hill Mountain Bike Park (next to Glenmaggie Weir).

That I travelled 80 kilometres to escape the fire fumes so I could exercise without causing damage to my bronchial tubes, (as recommend by Dr Lester) only to have it follow me, was very distressing.

I do wonder what harm wood and briquette fires have on the general community, the smell of a household heater brings back memories of the mine fire, not a pleasant thought.

Please be sure to complete your recommendations before November.

Regards,

Rodney Lloyd.