

HAZEL WOOD MINE FIRE INQUIRY

Submission cover sheet

Post your submission with this cover sheet to:

Submissions Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry
PO Box 3460
GIPPSLAND MC Vic 3841

Email your submission with this cover sheet to info@hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au.

| | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| Title: Mrs. | First Name: Rosemary | Surname: Wigg |
| Organisation represented (if applicable): | | |
| Email address: | [Redacted] | |
| Postal address: | [Redacted] | Morwell |
| Telephone: [Redacted] | Mobile: — | |
| Origin and circumstances of fire Measures by Hazelwood Coal Mine to prevent fire Application and administration of regulatory regimes Other (please state) Clean up | Response to fire by: Hazelwood Coal Mine Emergency Services Environmental Agencies Public Health Officials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Government Agencies | |

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Signature

Rosemary B

OR if sending electronically please confirm your acknowledgment by ticking by box

Date

7/4/2014

Rosemary Wigg

Morwell
Victoria

Dear Sirs,

I wish to make a submission to the Hazelwood Fire Enquiry, specifically regarding the so called clean-up. It was bad enough that 3\$Million was spent on relocation costs, only to have much of it it wasted on people claiming it & not actually leaving. A few simple checks & balances on the Government's part should have been all that was required. My personal feeling is that much of that money should have been allocated to the actual clean-up – to help the affected residents get back on their feet. The 2\$Million allocated was woefully inadequate – \$20Million or even up to \$50Million would have been much nearer the mark. Every household should have been given a grant to help with the cost of the clean-up – even with the basic help given to some residents, every one is out of pocket to some degree. Water costs, electricity costs, not to mention cleaning products all cost money, & no household was immune from that.

As far as the actual physical clean up is concerned, that was very poorly handled, too. The powers that be washed the roads during daylight hours – at least in my area – but not so the footpaths. In my area, I & my neighbours had to endure several hours of ear-splitting, horrendous noise from not one, but two machines which did not stop till 2 minutes to midnight directly opposite my home on Monday 14th April while they cleaned both the footpath & the actual Centrelink building. That was bad enough but they then went round the corner into Chapel Street & started up again five minutes later! No thought at all was given to the plight of the nearby residents. As Centrelink closes to the public at 4.30pm, surely a much earlier time should have been allocated to areas like that, which are opposite residential homes!

On Tuesday 15th April I & my nearby neighbours were again subjected to noisy machines, this time till just after midnight – on the bottom corner of Commercial Road Primary School. It was school holidays, so this also, could have been done at an earlier time – even during the day. When they had finished that, they moved around the corner into White Street beside the school – directly opposite several residences. It was very noisy from my place – it would have been horrendous for the White & Kerrie Street residents. Surely the clean up men could have organised it a lot more humanely – as could the powers that be that authorised them to do it in the first place.

Not to be outdone, the men were at it again on the next night, Wednesday 16th April, this time on the Town Common side of Elgin Street. Thankfully, they stopped at about 11pm – bad enough, but not as bad as midnight. Considering that there was no one in the Band Room that late - & no one in the playground after dark - this, too, could have been done at a much earlier time. Some thought needed to be given to nearby residents who live close to the commercial area. By the way, did it not occur to anyone that most, if not all, of the ash on our footpaths was already washed away by that time, especially by the copious rain of the weekend before. The black grime on all our footpaths has been there for many years. Paths were black when I moved into the area in the sixties. Even the footpaths that were redone some ten years ago are blackened, so why the urgent necessity to scrub them up to & after midnight! I ask you!

The order to send claims to the relevant insurance agents is an insult. This will force them to increase their future premiums down the track & will result in many people who would otherwise not have a bar of firms like Slater & Gordon or Maurice Blackburn opting to join a class action. I have

Insulfluff in my ceiling which cannot be cleaned & if it has to be replaced I would be out of pocket many thousands of dollars for the actual cost – either that or a hit to my insurance premium for many years to come. This is grossly unfair. The fire - & the resultant ash – were in no way any householder's fault & should not be treated as such!

By the way, I elected to do my own clean-up, so have received nothing for my efforts or my costs & am only about three quarters of the way through! That ash was all pervasive & won't go away by itself. It will soon be too cold to do the last room in the house so that will have to wait till after winter. There will be many people in the same boat, I fear. Have a heart, you Bourd of Enquiry people & spare a thought for the actual residents.

I hope you people take note of these comments & learn from them. Nothing can be done now about the horrendous noise & the resultant stress it caused, but I sincerely hope that there is much learned about actually looking after the people so badly affected by the fire & really help them to get over it – in more ways than one.

Yours sincerely

(Mrs.) Rosemary Wigg

 *Rosemary Wigg*
Resident