

**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 3841Email your submission with this cover sheet to [info@hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au).

Title: MRS	First Name: JENNIFER	Surname: BAIRFOOT
Organisation represented (if applicable):		
Email address:	[REDACTED]	
Postal address:	[REDACTED] Monvel.	
Telephone: [REDACTED]	Mobile: [REDACTED]	
<input type="checkbox"/> Origin and circumstances of fire <input type="checkbox"/> Measures by Hazelwood Coal Mine to prevent fire <input type="checkbox"/> Application and administration of regulatory regimes <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)	Response to fire by: <input type="checkbox"/> Hazelwood Coal Mine <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Services <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Agencies <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Health Officials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Government Agencies	

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**OR**

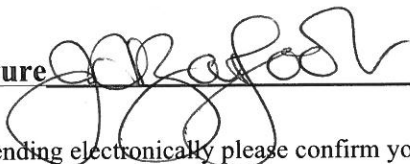
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## Acknowledgements

### I understand that:

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- Anonymous submission will not be accepted.
- The name or work or suburb of each submitter will be identified as apart of every published submission. Other contact details will be removed before publishing.
- The Inquiry will not publish submission, if it believes that the submission material is or could be defamatory, offensive, contravenes, anti-discrimination or anti-vilification legislation or is outside the scope of the Inquiry's terms of reference

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Reford', written over a horizontal line.

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

Date

### TO MEMBERS OF THE MINE INQUIRY

We are indebted to the Emergency Personnel who worked tirelessly on our behalf. To the families from all over the country who lent us their loved ones who came to assist us – we offer them our sincerest thanks.

My major comment on how the Morwell Fire was handled is aimed directly to those who supplied support to the public once the fire was deemed a health risk and the call for vulnerable people (including those with heart or lung conditions) to relocate from the south side of Morwell.

Despite having a long history of admissions with asthma and I had a number of Medical professionals who were more than happy to supply documentation to support this fact I was unable to obtain any assistance from the agencies who were advertised as supporting the public. As someone who did not have a health care card or was on a pension I was stunned at the discrimination I was given despite living 350 metres from the fire where the smoke was engulfing my home of 28 years for more than a month. Other members of the public were offered relocation assistance and a host of other benefits - I had to soldier on sleeping in the masks provided and putting up with the smoke or the expense of leaving town daily in my car equipped with my portable nebulizer.

I would like to know why my asthma was different to persons with a healthcare care or pension when people all over Morwell and surrounding areas were receiving assistance and someone so close to the fire could not.

As the clean-up has begun for others my smoke filled house has remained untouched whilst the insurance company has strung out whether they will offer any assistance. In the meantime I have had to endure a major asthma attack whilst all this deliberating has occurred. I am hopeful that some parts of the clean-up may be paid for by my insurance.

All in all the fire has been an expensive time for us. From petrol to leave the house (and associated expenses with being away), endless trips to the Laundromat - and replacement of my lounge suite and bedding (the insurance will not cover these) because these were so smoke filled they have been hindering my asthma.

My last comments relate to the stress of discrimination when seeking assistance from the agencies to be told you do not qualify because “you are not a pensioner or a healthcare card holder”. The lack of equality divided the community and made a terrible situation even more unbelievably stressful - even when you fitted the health criteria.

It is important that it is recognised that employment does not mean that we have the resources to evacuate our family home with children and pets whilst still meeting our financial commitments. The Chief Medical Officer set the criteria, which was disregarded by the Department of Human Services.

My sincerest thanks for taking the time to read my comments

Jennifer Barfoot

Morwell



## Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry

What worked well in the lead up to the fire, during the fire, and in putting the fire out ?

THE EMERGENCY PERSONNEL.

What didn't work well in the lead up to the fire, during the fire, and in putting the fire out ?

DISCRIMINATION OF PERSONS NOT ON A PENSION OR HEALTH CARE CARE - DESPITE LIVING 350 metres from the fire and being a multiple admission asthma sufferer.

What should be done differently to prevent such a fire in the future, and in response to it if it happens again ?

EQUALITY FOR THOSE EFFECTED BY THE TRAUMA.