

**HAZELWOOD 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](mailto:info@hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au).

Title: <b>MR</b>	First Name: <b>ANTHONY</b>	Surname: <b>JOHN</b>
Organisation represented (if applicable):		
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Postal address:	<b>MORWELL 3840</b>	
Telephone:	Mobile:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Origin and circumstances of fire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measures by Hazelwood Coal Mine to prevent fire <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Public Health Officials <input type="checkbox"/> Other Government Agencies	

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## Acknowledgements

### I understand that:

- I can be contacted by the Inquiry in relation to my submission.
- 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. John

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

Date 12-5-2014

①

- The reason I am placing this submission is to highlight my personal experience of trauma of the affects of the Hazelwood Coal Mine fire, leading up to, during and after the fire, with the knowledge of;
- Coal mining operations,
  - The present state of emergency services within the mine,
  - The point at which the decision for, mine fire service removal, and 'progressive' removal of water reticulation systems, was made.
  - The lack of regulation, Code of Practice by all parties pertaining to the mining operations contract.

The major reason is the lack of Safety Provisions, including Evacuation of 10,000 people, provided to the Community. This showed no Duty of Care, in any society, by the Government.

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## Terms of Reference

In relation to the Terms of Reference, in my experience enduring the Coal Mine fire, information digested and my response progressively as each day unfolded, some reference is based and/or derived from Media information.

- ①. The origin of the fire, or arsonist is unknown.
  - When, exactly was the mine first reported to have ignited and how long was the response time to notify the community.
  - With the knowledge of mine operations/mine fire service and the state of the mine contract excluding 'in house' fire service specifically trained for Open Cut Coal Mine fires, I could see clearly what was going to happen next.
  - I was constantly, for 5 days, contacting ABC Radio to keep them one ~~step~~ step ahead to enable information dissemination to be 'at it's best', correct.
- ②. There was no trained fire service to combat the Coal Mine type of fire.
  - Helicopters are inefficient with steep slopes.
  - On the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) day, there was no fire fighting resource, whatsoever, at the Coal Mine.
  - CFA and MFB had no plan to combat Coal Mine Fire.
  - No Leadership presented itself. It is felt the relevant MP was obligated to provide 'Safety Provision' for the community.

③

- The Government appeared to lack in a 'Duty of Care' with no intent to evacuate 10,000 people, nor evaluate the need for evacuation, nor reference to 'Safety Provision' for 10,000 people.
- Immediate respite for Morwell was impossible for those with no means of transport, unless they walked.
- When I rang for Morwell respite centre, I was told to go to Moe. The informing Authority was geographically unaware that the fire was between Morwell and Moe and trains and roads were closed.  
Traralgon respite centre meant a 15 km walk.
- Unreliable EPA air quality information was disseminated to the community.
- Public swing began mistrusting information. This was easily brought about by the Public feeling 'left out on limb' or 'forgotten about' which has been the feeling of Morwell residents for many years.
- ABC transmitted message from Government Health Official regarding the impact on the 'affected community' was misleading.
- Dust masks are inadequate for respiratory protection required during exposure to particulates.
- Dust masks did NOT fit any children, or babies.
- Public meetings were chaotic. There was a lack of Leadership.

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- Public meetings had no information to be able to report back.
- There was no call for a 'State of Emergency' with regard to 'Safety Provision' for the 'Affected Community'.
- What constitutes a call for a 'State of Emergency' with regard to Government 'Duty of Care' for 'Safety Provision'?
- What Regulatory Statutes refer to; 'Evacuation of 10,000 people' and to; 'Action Plan for Emergencies'?
- No Evacuation Assessment was done.
- Local services ~~with~~ worked with set parameters.
- I was present as Latrobe Valley Sub-Branch Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, at all relevant meetings in the lead-up to, and eventual sale of the Morwell Open Cut Coal Mine in conjunction with other relevant Union Officials, and Management of State Electricity Commission of Victoria responsible for the sale of the mine.
- The original 'Tender For Sale' omitted fire service and included 'progressive removal' of water reticulation infrastructure by the new company.



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- The final meeting with SECV management in relation to the Mine sale, informed all parties present 'the new company will provide fire service in the mine' and 'all water reticulation hardware will be 'progressively removed' by the company owning the mine contract'.
- All detail of Sale Tenders and Agreed Sale Contracts were set by the Kennett Government
- The omission of fire services and removal of water reticulation infrastructure was a 'directive' from the responsible Government of the day.

(6)

## Concerns:

- What constitutes a 'State of Emergency' with 'Safety Provision' for 10,000 residents. Evacuation was necessary.
- There is a requirement for 'Action Plan For Emergencies' be set by a Task Force.
- The Task Force must be Nationally Based and specific to the cause of the natural disaster.
- Such instrumentalities relating to 'Essential Services Act' must be regulatory bound providing Safety Provision under Code of Practice.
- All parties to the mine contract and licence are responsible parties in the case of this type of fire.
- Provision in the mine contract for the 'progressive removal' of water reticulation infrastructure. The hardware was not in the way of mine operations and did not need to be removed.
- Need for mine management plan
- Lack of Health Provision where every person was accounted for.