



Fw: Hazelwood Mine Submission

info to: [REDACTED]
Sent by: info@hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au

13/05/2014 10:38 AM

Submission.

----- Forwarded by [REDACTED] HAZELWOODINQUIRY on 13/05/2014 10:38 AM -----



[REDACTED]
12/05/2014 01:49 PM

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

I am sending this submission for Hazelwood mine via email as the page set up will not allow me to upload my file.

Regards
Wendy Farmer

[REDACTED]
Newborough Vic 3825



Hazelwood Inquiry.docx

Wendy Farmer

> [Job Title]

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May 12, 2014

Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry

Dear Justice Teague:

I am submitting to this Inquiry as I believe that this whole behavior of our Victorian Government, Politicians & Councilor's has done an injustice to our affected communities. This coal fire has not only affected Morwell but most of the Latrobe Valley, We live in Newborough which could actually be as close as parts of Morwell from the mine (as the bird flies), smoke & ash does not stop at boundaries, at times it has been unbearable not only in my area but also the surrounding area's depending on which way the wind blows.

From the moment that this fire was out of control on the first day the people of Latrobe Valley should have been alerted to this toxic smoke & not left to breathe this smoke & toxins that were coming from the mine. On several occasions we were actually told by the Health Department that it was a high smoke day & to take shelter from it, only to be told later to open our windows to let fresh air in our homes. The problem was there wasn't any fresh air in our towns. Quite often I would wake up in the middle of the night or early morning and my home was smelling of this smoke even though my house was closed up.

My husband who works at the Hazelwood mine as a dredger was actually on night shift the day the fires became out of control at the mine, he had an emergency call around 3pm to say that there were bad fires in the mine & to come into work as soon as possible usually he would start work at 7pm. He was required to work until normal finishing hours, I understand that the staff were paid extra to do this but money is not everything & my concern is the health effect for the long hours in smoke. When Carbon Monoxide levels were first tested on the workers my husband was brought home from work with poisoning of 10, he was then advised that he could not return to work for 24 hours, in that time he developed flu like symptoms which became extreme. He then did not return to work for the rest of that roster. On his return to work he once again became ill with high Carbon Monoxide levels & this time he was taken to hospital for treatment, once again more time off work but this time he had to make a workers compensation claim which he was not happy about as he had never had a claim before & has worked for this company for about 28 years. Lucky for him he then had annual leave & long service so has not returned to the mine yet. *It really concerns me the long term health effect this may have on him.*

Since these fires have broken out I have constantly had headaches with occasionally chest pains while around Latrobe Valley. We have been able to escape for 2 weeks with these symptoms subsiding only to return when I came home. I have left town again on 24th April once again the symptoms have subsided & I am not looking forward to my return home next week with the fact that there is still smoke around.

I believe the people of the Latrobe Valley have been constantly been lied to by the Chief Health Officer Rosemary Lester. Rosemary stated on a regular basis that there was no danger from short term exposure to the public that they were aware of. The Public Health Act has been set up to protect us & states if you are unaware or the dangers of exposure that you must act & protect. I would believe saying you were unsure would mean the same thing so why did they not respond to protect affected communities? This fire was a fire waiting to happen, regardless where the origins of the fire started, I know from the workers at the mine that fire protection in the mine has become very lax, as we are aware that the area the fire out of control happened where the company did not maintain equipment to put out fires, even though this is a combustible product. GDF Suez have a responsibility to the communities around the mine to protect them from Noise, dust, smoke & any other pollution that comes from their mine which impacts of those surrounding communities as stated in the mining act. My concern here is whether we will see deaths inside or outside of the mine to either workers or the communities. I have watched my Grandfather & then my brother die a horrible death of Mesothelioma, I am afraid that this long term exposure to the chemicals our affected communities have had to tolerate will have long term health effects on ourselves & families, will we see our children & grandchildren dying of cancers at a higher rate than other communities? Thanks for giving us the opportunity to make a submission in regarding how I feel about this disaster.

Regards

Wendy Farmer

[REDACTED]

Newborough Victoria 3825

[REDACTED]