

STATE SITUATION REPORT

1800hrs, 12/03/2014

INCIDENT / EMERGENCY NAME:	<i>Gippsland Fires – Hazelwood mine fire and East Gippsland fires</i>		
SITUATION REPORT NUMBER:	# 17	INCIDENT LEVEL:	2

SITUATION SUMMARY:

Situation Summary	<p>This report is focussed on the Hazelwood open cut mine fire in the Latrobe Valley and the bushfires in East Gippsland.</p> <p>The Hazelwood open cut mine fire was declared CONTROLLED on Monday 10 March. Remaining hot spots are being monitored and extinguished. The smoke from the fire remains and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is continuing to monitor the air quality in the Morwell area. The Chief Health Officer has maintained the current health advice for people 'at risk' to consider relocating from the affected area. This advice will remain in place as EPA continues to monitor air quality data for improvements.</p> <p>The East Gippsland, Goongerah-Deddick Trail fire was declared CONTAINED on Monday 10 March.</p> <p>On Tuesday 11 March a band of lightning ignited around 30 small fires across the state, particularly in the South West and East Gippsland districts. Crews are successfully putting these out and it is likely the remaining 14 fires not-yet-under control will be contained soon.</p> <p>On Tuesday 11 March, the Premier and Deputy Premier announced the establishment of an independent Inquiry into the Hazelwood mine fire, to be headed by Justice Bernard Teague, AO.</p>
Known impacts	Smoke from the Hazelwood mine fire continues to impact on Morwell and other communities in the area.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

Health	<p>On Tuesday 11 March 2014, 44 clients attended the Community Health Assessment Centre. As at COB Tuesday 11 March 2014, there have been 1,930 clients attend since the opening on 21 February 2014.</p> <p>Work continues on the trigger for issuing advice to the community on when it is safe to return to Morwell, south of Commercial Rd. The basis for a recommendation by the Chief Health Officer (CHO) to lift the temporary relocation advice, for reasons of health protection, includes the analysis of data and criteria provided by the EPA, BoM and information from the State Controller as to the fire suppression status. Once all the criteria have been met, the CHO will issue an advisory that the conditions are now safe for sensitive groups to return. This will also be subject to ongoing monitoring and review while fire continues to persist.</p> <p>A community fact sheet for health advice regarding the clean-up of properties has been approved and will be available on the health website: www.health.vic.gov.au/hazelwood.</p> <p>General practices have reported increased presentations of patients with respiratory conditions however the load is being managed. General practices have requested to be advised well in advance of the closure of the Community Health Assessment Centre and some are concerned about the anticipated impact on the sector when relocated residents return to Morwell. DH has addressed these concerns by providing advice back to general practices on these issues along with the clean-up advice they can distribute to patients. DH continues to provide the health sector with current health advice and information.</p> <p>Overall presentations to Latrobe Regional Hospital are above average although it is not confirmed if these are attributable to the effects of smoke.</p> <p>The Nurse on Call (NoC) service has noted a small increase in demand and continues to be actively promoted within the community.</p> <p>Two DH staff are deployed to the Gippsland region to work in the Regional Health IMT.</p> <p><u>Ambulance Victoria</u> Following a meeting today between DH and AV the administration procedures at the Community Health Assessment Centre have been refined. Presentations continue at a steady rate and outcomes of the assessments are being reported and analysed. Resources are being maintained in Gippsland for the next few days, and are constantly being re-assessed.</p>
Human Services Command	<p><u>Emergency management workforce</u> DHS staff continue to be deployed to Gippsland to assist with regional emergency management operations in response to the incident in Morwell. DHS staffing numbers for Wednesday, 12 March 2014 were 81 in the Gippsland region and eight at the State level.</p> <p><u>Clients and services</u> Impacts on DHS funded services and DHS clients are being monitored and regular contact is being maintained as required.</p> <p><u>High level summary report</u> The DHS hotline (1800 006 468) continues to take calls from the public seeking respite or relocation assistance.</p>

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

	<p>The following table contains a list of today's respite and relocation figures for the event:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Past 24hr activity up until 16:30 today</th> <th>Total event activity</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Respite Calls</td> <td>463</td> <td>6,740</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Relocation Calls</td> <td>84</td> <td>1,437</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Appointments Made</td> <td>572</td> <td>5,071</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Appointments Attended</td> <td>304</td> <td>3,211</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Respite Payments</td> <td>264</td> <td>2,883</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Relocation payments (first)</td> <td>12</td> <td>656</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Second relocation payment</td> <td>113</td> <td>176</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Payments Rejected</td> <td>1</td> <td>26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Accommodation arranged by DHS</td> <td>-</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>DHS has a fraud management process in place to assist in the prevention of funds being obtained inappropriately. Six referrals regarding possible inappropriate access to payments have been referred to Victoria Police for investigation. No referrals were made today.</p>		Past 24hr activity up until 16:30 today	Total event activity	Respite Calls	463	6,740	Relocation Calls	84	1,437	Appointments Made	572	5,071	Appointments Attended	304	3,211	Respite Payments	264	2,883	Relocation payments (first)	12	656	Second relocation payment	113	176	Payments Rejected	1	26	Accommodation arranged by DHS	-	4
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Relief (including relief partner agencies)	<p><u>Respite and Relocation Assistance Centre</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Respite and Relocation Assistance Centre operated at the Greek Hall at 46 Elgin Street Morwell <p><u>Moe Respite Centre</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 people attended today, 12 March 2014 (as at 15:30) Current staff resources include DHS, Council, Red Cross and personal support <p><u>Latrobe City Information and Recovery Centre, 22 Hazelwood Rd, Morwell</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 people attended today, 12 March 2014 (as at 15:30) No health checks were requested <p><u>Outreach</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Victorian Council of Churches continues to support outreach activities. Support to Latrobe City council has been provided with the visitation of 4,333 homes Red Cross Register.Find.Reunite - 5,046 registrations of Morwell residents to date Red Cross staff are also present at the DHS respite and relocation centre to provide Register.Find.Reunite services Telephone outreach commenced on Saturday 8 March 2014 with more than 800 individuals on the call list. As at 17:45 10 March, more than 60% of this call list have received a welfare check phone call. These calls have been made to those over 70 years who registered with Register.Find.Reunite as well as those deemed vulnerable for other reasons (e.g. health conditions). The majority of reported comments from recipients were positive. 																														
Recovery	<p>Recovery planning for the Morwell incident and other fires in the Gippsland region is well underway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes and Recovery Plan, Sub-committee Terms of Reference template and sub-plan templates sent to the Hazelwood Mine Fire Recovery Committee. Clean Up Sub-committee met today. Communications and Community Engagement Sub-committee to be held tomorrow at 11:00. Social and Community Sub-committee meeting to be held tomorrow at 14:30. 																														
Communications / Public Information	<p>Key communication activities today include: updating content and relocation fact sheet on Emergency Relief and Recovery Victoria website; reviewing script for the Victorian Emergency Recovery Information Line; preparing communications log for Hazelwood incident; and handling queries about social media services proposal from supplier.</p>																														
Business Continuity	<p>Nil significant for this report.</p>																														

ISSUES:

Issue	The Morwell community is experiencing levels of stress in relation to the ongoing environmental conditions.
Action Taken	DHS continues to provide respite and relocation payments and has implemented a range of community supports. Active planning is underway to transition to recovery.

OPERATIONAL STATISTICS:

RELIEF/ RECOVERY/RESPITE CENTRES

LGA	Location	Type of Centre	Hours/Attendees as at 15.30
Latrobe City	Moe Town Hall, Albert St, Moe	Community Respite Centre	9am – 6pm 9 people attended
Latrobe City	Community Information and Recovery Centre 22 Hazelwood Rd, Morwell	Community Information and Recovery Centre	9am – 6pm 19 people attended
Latrobe City	The Greek Hall 46 Elgin Street, Morwell	Respite and Relocation Assistance	Appointments
Latrobe City	Ambulance Victoria Gippsland Regional Office, 2 Saskia Way, Morwell	Community Health Assessment Centre	8am – 8pm

**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT**
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (FOR THE EAST GIPPSLAND FEBRUARY FIRE EVENT)

Region and LGA	Number Emergency Grants	Total
Gippsland – East Gippsland*	45	\$30,500

Region and LGA	Number Re-establishment Grants	Total
Gippsland – East Gippsland*	0	0

*Note: Payment summaries for both Latrobe & Wellington Shires are no longer included as the focus of the Situation report is now on the East Gippsland fires only, as well as the Hazelwood mine fire. Variations from previous Situation Reports are due to excluding Latrobe & Wellington Shires payments.

GRAND TOTAL **\$30,500**

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR HAZELWOOD MINE FIRE – Latrobe City (as at 1630 hrs)

	Payments made today (as at 1630hrs)	Total Cumulative Payments	Cumulative Total
Personal Hardship Respite Payments	264	2,883	\$1,441,500
Personal Hardship Voluntary Relocation Payments (first payment)	12	656	\$629,000
Personal Hardship Voluntary Relocation Payments – second payment	113	176	\$172,000
TOTAL	389	3,715	\$2,242,500

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Location & LGA	DHS in attendance (Y/N)	Date	Time
Nil			

Next Sit Rep: The next situation report will be issued on Thursday, 13 March 2014 at 1800hrs

Endorsed by:

Alan Hall, State Recovery Coordinator

Alison McMillan, State Health Coordinator