

**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT**

STATE SITUATION REPORT

1800 hrs, 26/02/2014

INCIDENT / EMERGENCY NAME:	<i>Latrobe Valley/Hazardous Material and Other Incidents</i>		
SITUATION REPORT NUMBER:	# 3	INCIDENT LEVEL:	2

SITUATION SUMMARY:

Situation Summary	<p>The Latrobe Valley/Hazardous Material incident remains a key priority. Firefighters are using a combination of water and foam to suppress the fire and good progress is being made. The fire is complex however and is expected to continue to burn for at least another two weeks. The fire is impacting on the community of Morwell with smoke and ash. The predicted air quality over the coming 2-3 days is expected to be very poor.</p> <p>A number of other bushfires are not yet under control in East Gippsland (Goongerah-Deddick Trail, Club Terrace Cluster, Timbarra – Gil Groggin). Fire activity has subsided and there is currently no threat to community.</p> <p>The Premier and Secretary of the Department of Human Services (DHS) visited Morwell and met with emergency management stakeholders today.</p> <p>Recovery planning is now well underway in the Grampians, Hume, Loddon-Mallee and North and West Metropolitan regions for fires that occurred in January and February 2014.</p>
Known impacts	<p>The smoke issues associated with the Hazelwood Mine fire continue to affect the Morwell community.</p> <p>Forty-nine (49) houses have been confirmed destroyed since Sunday 9 February 2014 resulting from fire. Around 12,000 sheep and 400 cattle have been lost across the state.</p>

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

Health Command/Coordination	<p>Ambulance Victoria (AV) continues to support the Latrobe Valley community and the Emergency Service Organisations combating the fire emergencies in Gippsland.</p> <p>There have been 443 presentations to the Community Health Assessment Centre since opening, 83 of these have been referred to other health services. As at 1200hrs today, 41 clients have attended the centre.</p> <p>Latrobe Regional Hospital and Department of Health staff are in close liaison with the City of Latrobe, Aged and Disability services and other key Home and Community Care (HACC) services to understand the issues being experienced by HACC clients. Actions taken to support their clients include active monitoring of clients, distribution of information sheets and the distribution of masks via the meals on wheels program.</p> <p>The majority of General Practices are recording either no change or very moderate increases in respiratory presentations however practices are coping.</p> <p>The Nurse on Call (NoC) service is being actively promoted within the community, through health centres, General Practitioners and at the Community Health Assessment Centre. A small increase in demand has been noted.</p>
Health Protection	<p>The Department of Health continues to monitor the results of the air quality reporting undertaken by the EPA. Community health advice continues to be revised and disseminated to inform the community and stakeholders. All official information can be accessed via: www.health.vic.gov.au/hazelwood</p> <p>Protocols for response have been developed to guide the assessment and decision making for elevated Carbon Monoxide (CO) and particles in the environment.</p> <p>In February 2014, there has been a significant increase in the number of people using the Department of Health website (www.health.vic.gov.au) for information relating to bushfires and smoke. Online enquiries in February for all smoke related health information have increased by 876% from last year (7781 page views compared to 797).</p> <p>The Chief Health Officer (CHO) attended a media conference with the Fire Services Commissioner at the Traralgon ICC today discussing health messages for the public, the smoke and ash level monitoring conducted by the EPA and evacuation considerations. A daily media conference will continue to be held at the Traralgon ICC for the remainder of the week.</p>
Human Services Command	<p>DHS resources continue to be deployed to the Gippsland region to assist regional DHS emergency management operations in Morwell.</p> <p>DHS continue to monitor their clients (either directly or through relevant agencies) in the program areas of Disability, Child Protection, Youth Justice and Public Housing. Funded services and clients are being provided with information on the current situation from the Morwell office.</p> <p>Additional resources are being deployed to increase the number of appointments available for Personal Hardship Respite Payments.</p>
Relief (inc Red Cross)	<p>The Community Respite Centre in Moe remains open. Approximately 114 people have accessed the facility for</p>

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	<p>relief and information (6 today). Services on offer include psychosocial support (from Red Cross and Victorian Council of Churches), fire information (from CFA and Victoria Police), health information (from Ambulance Victoria and EPA), child friendly spaces, food and fluids (tea, coffee and snacks). Arrangements are in place for the next seven days. Latrobe council are now providing a bus service to the respite centre, subject to demand.</p> <p>As at 1700hrs today the call centre managing appointments for Personal Hardship Respite Payments had received 364 calls and made a total of 284 appointments. A total of 781 calls and 591 appointments have been made since Monday. 79 appointments with affected members of the public were held at the Morwell DHS office today.</p> <p>A Regional Respite and Relief Plan has been updated to address possible relocation of Morwell township.</p>
Recovery	<p>DHS and partner agencies continue to support affected communities through community meetings and outreach programs in conjunction with local governments. Psycho-social issues are being identified and monitored.</p> <p>The Grampians Regional Recovery Committee meeting for the Northern Grampians and Black Ranges fire was held on Thursday last week. Taskforce groups for each of the recovery environments reported back to the committee on progress.</p> <p>Meetings for the social and economic working groups under the East Gippsland fires recovery plan are scheduled for next week. Recovery planning continues in East Gippsland Shire and the community is being supported through access to a dedicated recovery phone number. The official appeal of the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund for the 2014 bushfires will be launched on Friday.</p> <p>The psychosocial sub-committee of the '2014 Bushfires Recovery Coordination Team' met today and will meet fortnightly in relation to priority needs and responses for residents for the 2014 fire events.</p>
Communications / Public Information	<p>The Chief Health Officer appeared at today's press conference for the Latrobe Valley/Hazardous Material incident and has conducted a number of radio interviews. Key topics for the day have included long term health impacts, carbon monoxide levels and evacuation triggers.</p> <p>Communications and Public Information activities today have included responding to media queries, liaison with Latrobe City Council on respite messaging to the community, participation in the Emergency Management Joint Public Information Committee and updating web content and call centre scripting. Media monitoring across multiple channels has also been occurring.</p>
Business Continuity	Nil significant for this report.

ISSUES:

Issue	Nil significant for this report.
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OPERATIONAL STATISTICS:

RELIEF/ RECOVERY/RESPITE CENTRE

Region and LGA	Location	Type of Centre	Hours/Attendees
Hume Mitchell Shire Council	Wallan Library, 12/81 High Street, Wellington Square, Wallan	Information and referral service	9.30am – 5pm (Mon – Fri)
Hume Mitchell Shire Council	Kilmore Library, 12 Sydney Street, Kilmore	Information and referral service	9.30am – 5pm (Mon – Fri)
Grampians Northern Grampians Shire Council	Grampians Community Health Centre (Shack) Patrick Street, Stawell	Recovery	9am – 5pm
Gippsland LaTrobe City Council	Moe Town Hall, Albert St, Moe	Respite	9am – 7pm
Gippsland LaTrobe City Council	Ambulance Victoria Gippsland Regional Office, 2 Saskia Way, Morwell	Community Health Assessment	8am – 8pm
			Cumulative total of attendees: 114

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (FOR THE FEBRUARY FIRE EVENT)

Region and LGA*	Number Emergency Grants	Total
Loddon Mallee – Macedon Ranges	186	\$199,500
Hume - Wallan	491	\$507,500
Hume - Kilmore	265	\$261,750
Hume - Seymour	46	\$49,000
Hume - Numurkah	57	\$46,600
Gippsland – Wellington	6	\$5,750
Gippsland – East Gippsland	37	\$29,500
Gippsland – Baw Baw	1	\$500
Gippsland – Latrobe	4	\$2,250
Eastern Metro - Manningham	5	\$5,750
North West Metro – Hume City Council	21	\$24,000

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Sum Total	1,119	\$1,132,100
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Region and LGA*	Number Re-establishment Grants	Total
Hume - Wallan	10	\$23,750
Hume - Kilmore	9	\$27,000
Hume – Numurkah	1	\$2,530
Gippsland – Wellington	1	\$3,000
North West Metro – City of Hume	1	\$3,000
Sum Total	22	\$59,280
GRAND TOTAL		\$1,191,380

**Note:*

Figures represent the region and LGA in which the emergency relief or re-establishment payment was issued. This does not always correlate with the location of recipients' principal place of residence.

Personal Hardship Respite Payments

Region and LGA	Number Payments	Total
Gippsland - Latrobe	154	\$78,750
GRAND TOTAL		\$78,750

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Location	Date	Time
Glenaladale – Community Recovery Information Session Glenaladale Hall East Gippsland Shire	Thursday 27 February	10.00 am
Bonang – Bonang Hall, East Gippsland Shire	2 March 2014	12.30pm

Next Sit Rep: The next situation report will be issued on Thursday 27 February 2014 at 6.00pm

Endorsed by:

Carmel Flynn: Director Health and Human Services Emergency Management

Julian Meagher: State Health Coordinator