

**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES
EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT**

STATE SITUATION REPORT

1800 hrs, 18/02/2014

INCIDENT / EMERGENCY NAME:	<i>Fires February 2014</i>		
SITUATION REPORT NUMBER:	# 11	INCIDENT LEVEL:	2

SITUATION SUMMARY:

Situation Summary	<p>There are currently two significant incidents GOING:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Morwell – Hazelwood and Yallourn Mines fire – The fire has a number of complexities that are being dealt with, being fire response issues, air quality issues, Health impacts and information messaging to the community. 2. East Gippsland bushfires – Multiple fires continue to burn and will continue into the coming days and weeks. Residents of Goongerah and Martins Creek are being escorted by emergency services back to their properties today. <p>While there is some rain expected it is not expected to have a significant impact on current fires.</p> <p>The fires at Hazelwood and Yallourn open cut coal mines continue to produce smoke that is impacting on air quality. While progress has been made to extinguish this fire, there are still at least several weeks of work ahead. A health management plan is in place.</p> <p>Recovery activities are ongoing in the Grampians region and are now underway in the recently affected communities.</p>
Known impacts	<p>The smoke issues associated with the Hazelwood Mine fire continue to be problematic for the Morwell community.</p> <p>Forty-five (45) houses have been confirmed destroyed since Saturday 8 February 2014 resulting from fire. It is believed hundreds of cattle and thousands of sheep, along with pasture, feed and fencing have also been lost.</p>

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES:

Health Command/Coordination	<p>Ambulance Victoria's primary focus is on the fires in Gippsland.</p> <p>An Incident Health Commander and an Area of Operations Health Commander have been assigned to this response. Liaison officers are also present in the Incident Control Centre and Regional Control Centre. Ambulance Victoria is also contributing to strategies to manage community health concerns. Ambulance Victoria paramedics have been supporting the fire-fighters.</p> <p>Ambulance Victoria resources are also conducting health monitoring of fire-fighters responding to the East Gippsland fire complex. A Health Commander participates in daily briefings at the Incident Control Centre.</p> <p>Health Incident Management Team is active and is meeting regularly in response to the Morwell Mine fire.</p> <p>Contact has been made with the Commonwealth in regard to residential aged care for the Morwell area. Preliminary planning has commenced should relocation be required.</p>
Health Protection	<p>Smoke persists in the atmosphere and is being monitored by Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) Victoria. A high level bushfire smoke advisory has been issued. The EPA advised that air quality today was good, and people were advised to open windows and doors to allow clean air to circulate.</p> <p>Air quality monitoring continues to be undertaken by the EPA near fire affected areas with a particular focus with extra resources on the Latrobe Valley.</p> <p>Revised key messages relating to Health and Bushfires continue to be included in the whole of government media strategy which includes print media and radio. An information sheet has been prepared for the Latrobe Valley community on 'Smoke and your health' with specific advice on protecting your health.</p> <p>The Chief Health Officer continues to speak to key media throughout metro and regional Victoria in relation to the health affects of bushfire smoke.</p> <p>The Department of Health is liaising with the regions and DEECD to provide health protection advice to the Regional Incident level.</p> <p>A Health Protection EMLO has been deployed to the Mines fire Control Centre. A Department of Health representative will be in attendance at the community meeting in Morwell tonight at 6pm.</p> <p>Community liaison teams have been present at various information points in Morwell to provide support and information to the community.</p> <p>There are no water quality or drinking water supply issues in fire affected areas except for Romsey where a restriction on use has been applied while repairs are effected. The Department of Health continues to liaise with water authorities.</p>
Human Services Command	<p>All relief centres have now transitioned to recovery centres. Financial assistance payments officers are present to provide emergency relief and re-establishment payments as required. Relief payments will continue to be assessed on a case by case basis, but are not expected to be significant in number beyond current levels.</p>

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	<p>Planning has occurred to identify DHS clients and services across all service streams in the potential impact area in Morwell. A total of 679 clients and 440 residences have been identified as a result of this analysis. Planning continues around strategies to manage the impact on these services if the situation changes.</p>
Relief (inc Red Cross)	<p>Relief agencies are continuing to provide relief support services as required. Red Cross volunteers in conjunction with VCC are conducting outreach activities in affected regions.</p> <p>Relief planning continues for the potential relocation of the broader community in parts of Morwell if deemed necessary. A senior planning officer has been deployed from central office to Traralgon to assist in the completion of a Regional Relief Plan to address this.</p>
Recovery	<p>The next State Crisis and Resilience '2014 Bushfires - State Recovery Coordination Team' meeting will be on Friday 21 February 2014 to continue to coordinate the recovery for the January and February 2014 fires.</p> <p>DHS and partner agencies continue to support affected communities at recovery centres, community meetings, and through outreach programs in conjunction with local governments. In Eastern Metropolitan region a need for further outreach visits over coming weeks has been identified.</p> <p>DHS staff continue to attend community meetings and monitor social media so that priority issues raised by communities are noted and responded to.</p> <p>Transition document from Response to Recovery now signed for two municipalities in Hume region.</p> <p>BlazeAid have advised they are setting up a base camp in Wandong to begin operations Monday 24 February 2014.</p>
Communications / Public Information	<p>Updates to relief and recovery content on www.recovery.vic.gov.au, the Victorian Emergency Recovery Information Line and social media messaging continue.</p> <p>Participation in a number of planning meetings focussed on public information and provided contributions to media releases, Whole of Victorian Government public information campaign and Department of Health messaging, including smoke impacts for schools.</p> <p>Monitoring of social and traditional media is ongoing.</p>
Business Continuity	Nil to report

ISSUES:

Issue	Eastern Metropolitan region have identified potentially unrealistic expectations regarding emergency relief assistance payments among community members who relocated on emergency agency advice.
Actions taken	Currently monitoring this situation.
Issue	Concerns regarding ability to provide ongoing resourcing of community liaison teams in Morwell.
Actions taken	Currently monitoring this situation.
Issue	Hume Region continues to rely on other regions to support their operations. Some difficulties sourcing experienced staff.
Actions taken	Resources are being deployed from across the state to assist.

OPERATIONAL STATISTICS:

RELIEF/ RECOVERY CENTRES

Region and LGA	Location	Type of Centre	Hours/Attendees
Grampians Horsham Rural City Council	Grampians Community Centre, Stawell	Recovery	Open Monday to Friday 9am – 5 pm
Hume Mitchell Shire Council	Wallan Library, 12/81 High Street, Wellington Square, Wallan	Recovery	9am – 5:30pm daily
Hume Mitchell Shire Council	Kilmore Library, 12 Sydney Street	Recovery	9am – 5:30pm daily
Hume Moirra Shire Council	36 Melville Street, Numurkah	Recovery	10am - 4pm Closing COB Tuesday 18/02/2014
Loddon Mallee Region Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Romsey Community Hub, 96–100 Main Road Romsey	Recovery	9am – 12pm
Loddon Mallee Region Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Darraweit Guim Town Hall Bolinda Darraweit Road	Recovery	12pm – 5 pm

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (FOR THE FEBRUARY FIRE EVENT)

Region and LGA	Number Emergency Grants	Total
Loddon Mallee – Macedon Ranges	165	\$176,750
Hume - Wallan	488	\$503,500
Hume - Kilmore	264	\$260,500
Hume - Seymour	46	\$49,000
Hume - Numurkah	56	\$45,350
Hume - Mitchell Shire	1	\$1,000
Gippsland – Wellington	4	\$4,250

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Gippsland – East Gippsland	27	\$20,250
Gippsland – Baw Baw	1	\$500
Gippsland – Latrobe	2	\$1,750
Eastern Metro - Manningham	4	\$5,750
North West Metro - Whittlesea	2	\$1,500
North West Metro – Hume City Council	19	\$20,450
Sum Total	1,079	\$1,090,550

Region and LGA	Number Re-establishment Grants	Total
Hume - Wallan	9	\$20,750
Hume - Kilmore	9	\$27,000
Gippsland – Wellington	1	\$3,000
Sum Total	19	\$50,750
Grand Total		\$1,141,300

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Location	Date	Time
Latrobe City Council – Morwell, Kernot Hall	18 February 2014	6:00pm
Hindmarsh Shire – Rainbow Community Hall	24 February 2014	5:00pm

Next Sit Rep: The next situation report will be issued at 1800hrs, Wednesday 19 February 2014

Endorsed by:

Carmel Flynn: State Recovery Coordinator / Human Services Commander

Alison McMillan: State Health Coordinator