



# State Strategic Support Team Brief:

## LATROBE VALLEY COAL MINES

**Version No. 7**

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Mine Fire**





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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this document is to outline the approach being taken to provide strategic support to Regional Control currently managing the fires in the Latrobe Valley coal mines. This Brief supports and will be an appendix to the Strategic Risk & Consequence Plan for Latrobe Valley Mine Fire. A strategic support team has been established at the request of the State controller.

The Strategic Support Team will:

1. Ensure that State level agencies are engaged and actively supporting the response effort;
2. Provide a one-stop for strategic support to the Assistant Regional Controller for any mine/power incident;
3. Action resource requests in a timely manner;
4. Provide assistance and advice to work through any blockages;
5. Consider broader impacts and what if (?) scenarios of smoke impacts in the community, as well as associated potential health impacts;
6. Support a suppression strategy including:
  - a. Safety advisors providing health guidance for responders
  - b. Interstate/international expertise to support local personnel
  - c. Suppression of fire and how this will be achieved
  - d. Prevention of fire entering critical coal pits of infrastructure and how this will be achieved
  - e. Appropriate level for command staff
  - f. Appropriate SME on site
  - g. Connection to industry
  - h. Support the development of consistent messaging at Incident / Region and State levels as well as ESOs and ensure messaging to the community is consistent and relevant
7. Link into the State Control Centre – EMJPIC;
8. Ensure that resourcing is provided, where and as needed, as a priority;
9. Ensure that 4-day cycles of Incident Management Team (IMT) resources are planned for (full for day shift, core for night shift) jointly with MFB.

### *End State*

The ultimate goal for this team is to assist the Regional Control and IMT to; manage the fire effectively, achieve containment of the fire, minimise impact and ensure that focus is maintained as the States strategic priority, second to protecting life.





### *Participants*

| <b>Name</b>            | <b>Role</b>  | <b>Mobile</b> | <b>Email</b>   | <b>Position</b>                               |
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|                         |           |            |  |            |
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## 2. INCIDENT STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

### *Situation Summary*

On Sunday 9 February, a large number of grass fires started around Morwell. As a result, fires impacted a range of infrastructure including the Hazelwood Power Station and Yallourn Power Station.

Current analysis suggests that the fire will be contained within the Hazelwood mine site and will not extend to the working face of the mine, with a longer term prediction of extinguishing the fire.

### **Hazelwood Power Station**

Hazelwood Power Station is currently burning along three levels of batter on the Northern, Eastern and Southern sides of the mine. These areas with active fire are in non-working sections of the mine however, there is infrastructure within these areas that is critical to mine operations. Wet lines have been put in place between the active fire area and the working sections of the mine to prevent the spread of the fire.

Contingency plans have been made for fall back lines in the event of increased fire behaviour or loss of control.

Reported damage:

- Some damage occurred to onsite power lines and pumping stations prior to 11/02/14.
- Power lines have been partially restored.
- Damage has also occurred to the conveyor to Energy Bricks.

Critical control factors:

- Low humidity and high winds, particularly anything from the North East, East or South East.
- Loss of infrastructure to provide power to onsite pumps.



## Yallourn Power Station

Fires continue to burn around the Yallourn Power Station but there are currently no fires in the Yallourn operational coal faces. *Energy Australia Yallourn* continues to operate at full capacity.

There are occasional fire flare-ups on the border of the coal mine operating areas. Resources are working to safely keep fire out of the operating areas.

## Weather Outlook (As advised by BoM on Tuesday 18/02/2014)

### Forecast for Thursday 20 February

Maximum temperature 20 C. Minimum relative humidity about 35%. Minimum morning mixing height: 600m. Maximum afternoon mixing: 1700m. Chance of at least 5 mm rainfall 20%. 9 am conditions: Temperature: 11 C; Relative humidity: 80%; Wind: W 30 km/h. 3 pm conditions: Temperature: 20 C; Relative humidity: 35%; Wind: W 35 km/h.

### Forecast for Friday 21 February

Maximum temperature 21 C. Minimum relative humidity about 35%. Minimum morning mixing height: 700m. Maximum afternoon mixing: 1600m. Chance of at least 5 mm rainfall 0%. 9 am conditions: Temperature: 12 C; Relative humidity: 70%; Wind: W 15 km/h. 3 pm conditions: Temperature: 21 C; Relative humidity: 35%; Wind: SW 20 km/h.

### Forecast for Saturday 22 February

Maximum temperature 24 C. Minimum relative humidity about 40%. Minimum morning mixing height: 400m. Maximum afternoon mixing: 1100m. Chance of at least 5 mm rainfall 5%. 9 am conditions: Temperature: 14 C; Relative humidity: 75%; Wind: W 15 km/h. 3 pm conditions: Temperature: 24 C; Relative humidity: 40%; Wind: SW 25 km/h.

### Outlook for Sunday and Monday

Warming trend with dry, stable conditions and lowering morning mixing heights (particularly Monday). Mostly sunny afternoons with light variable winds and seabreezes developing later in the afternoon.

Note that mixing heights may lower below 100 metres on any morning this forecast period if winds become light and variable and skies clear, allowing temperature to drop enough to form a low level inversion.

## 3. STATE CONTROL PRIORITIES

The State Controller's 'Strategic Control Priorities' for the 2013/14 Bushfire period are being utilised to ensure planning is focused and strategic. The 'Strategic Control Priorities' for the 2013/14 Bushfire period are:

- Protection and preservation of life is paramount. This includes:
  - Safety of emergency services personnel ; and
  - Safety of community members, including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists located within the incident area;





- Issuing of community information and community warnings detailing incident information that is timely, relevant and tailored to assist community members in making informed decisions about their personal safety
- Protection of critical infrastructure and community assets that support community resilience
- Protection of residential property as a place of primary residence
- Protection of assets supporting individual livelihoods and economic production that support individual and community financial sustainability
- Protection of environmental and conservation assets that considers the cultural, bio diverse, and social values of the environment.

### **Principles covering the separate management of this fire (refer: State Operational Brief – overview for Bushfire major incidents 12-13 February 2014)**

- A boundary of operations footprint is clearly identified covering the Hazelwood mine, Yallourn mine and adjoining infrastructure
- A separate IMT is established for the above footprint
- The balance of the Morwell – Hernes Oak fire outside the above footprint continues to be managed by the Traralgon IMT
- Strong management of the Regional Control function to ensure efficient use of resources and messaging (refer to management structure below)
- The Incident Controller (IC) for the above footprint reports to the Assistant Regional Controller Gippsland (Hazelwood)
- The Assistant Regional Controller will coordinate Regional Strategic Planning relating to the mine fires
- The Hazelwood Incident Control Centre is located at the Hazelwood Emergency Operations Centre
- The Hazelwood IMT is responsible for fire suppression within the operations footprint
- Suitable Emergency Management Team arrangements are established
- Coordinated community messaging is critically important
- Communication relating to the progress of suppression and smoke issues will be managed by the Hazelwood Mine IMT
- Communication involving potential impacts associated with interruption to power supplies, will be coordinated through the Regional Controller and/or the State Controller or referred to broader State arrangements, as appropriate.





### Incident Control Strategies

- Contain fire spread to minimise impacts on mine critical infrastructure and critical coals supplies
- Prevent fire from spreading to critical coal supplies
- Prevent perimeter fires from impacting on mine critical infrastructure and coal supplies
- Suppress/extinguish fire
- Monitor and advise community on smoke impacts.

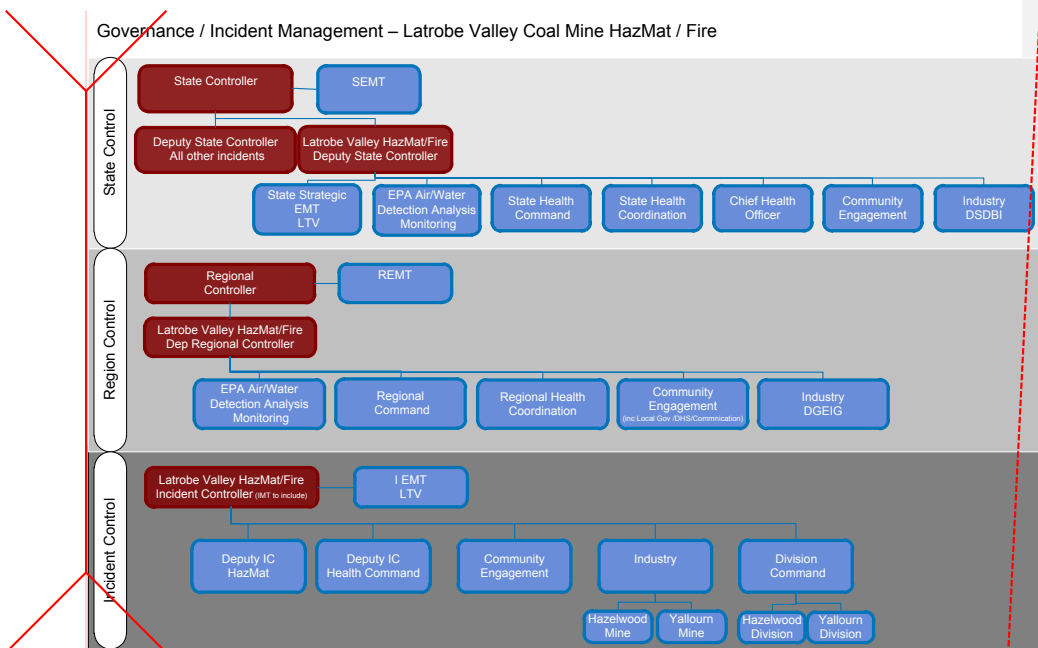
Comment [C]: Need to insert new structure

## 4. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

### Control Structure

Due to the specific issues relevant to fires in mine sites, an Assistant Regional Controller has been established to focus on the area of interest of the Latrobe Valley Coal Mines. A single Incident Controller is reporting directly to the Assistant Regional Controller. This Incident Controller is managing fires in two mining sites as two divisions (Hazelwood and Yallourn).

The control structure that has been established from State, Regional and Incident, is outlined below.







## ***Resourcing***

The Gippsland Region recognises that with a number of significant incidents occurring across the State, there is a limitation on the availability of resources for both response to the major fires and for readiness in the event of new fire starts.

The Assistant Regional Controller, in consultation with the Regional Controller and IMT, is developing a resourcing plan for the Latrobe Valley Coal Mine IMT, to ensure there is consistent and efficient use of resources. The current resourcing strategy involves developing a 16-day plan with 4-day rotations of IMT staffing levels.

The intent of the resourcing strategy is to maintain a steady number of State resources at the fire sites, provided partly from within the Region and partly from outside the Region where required. Substantial support has been prepared and provided by MFB personnel.

Resource requests will be submitted via the State Resource Request System and the State Strategic Support Team Lead in order to ensure that progress is monitored effectively and priority focus in consultation with MFB, is maintained.

## **IMTs**

Day shift requires a full IMT rotating on a 4-day cycle with 1-day travel at each end of the 4-day rotation.

Night shift requires a Core IMT rotating on a 4-day cycle with 1-day travel each end of the 4-day rotation. All IMTs to have key local personnel blended within IMTs.

## **Regional Control**

Assistant Regional Controller will continue to remain in place to focus on Latrobe Valley Mine Fires and provide a linkage back to the Regional Controller and strategies to broader fire surroundings. Assistant Regional Controllers will rotate on 4-day shifts.

## **Specialist Resources**

Specialist pumping equipment and monitors such as Aerial Pumpers, Tele booms, Heavy Pumpers and Ground Monitors have been sourced and provided to support the suppression/containment strategy. Atmospheric monitoring and CO monitoring equipment is in place and has been expanded in order to advise on community impacts.

## **5. ACTIONS**

### **Following meeting 19/2/2014**

| Item | Action Required                    | Agency/<br>Person | Date | Complete |
|------|------------------------------------|-------------------|------|----------|
| A    | Department of Health (DoH) and EPA |                   |      |          |



|   |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
|   | <p>implementing Bushfire Smoke Air Quality Guidelines for mine fire. Communications sheet being prepared and further work being done on air monitoring.</p> <p>Message that Bushfire and Mine smoke have same content but dispersion issues for mine are different.</p>  | DoH<br>EPA   | 14/2/2014  | Complete  |
| B | Ensure consistent messaging to emergency responders, mine workers and the community.   | Health commander<br>DoH<br>EPA<br>RC   | 12/02/2014   | Complete  |
| C | Ambient Air monitoring in Morwell Community to provide assurance on air quality analysis. SME Paul Torre on site at Morwell and working with Assistant Regional Controller.  | EPA  | 12/2/2014  | Complete  |
| D | <p>i/ WH&amp;S Occupational Hygienist advice. Independent Hygienist Specialist engaged to validate systems at mine, working with the Incident and Regional Controller. Plan is being reworked and validated with a CFA medical officer.</p> <p>ii/ Ambulance Victoria Health Commander assisting in health monitoring systems for responders and workers (only at the mine) Sector health commander focused on health monitoring at the mine incident (Neil Aikers).</p> <p>Potentially engaging St Johns to take lead of monitoring of people.</p> <p>iii/ WorkSafe to provide a contact for specialist hygiene advice as part of 'normal' WorkSafe advice. (Ian Grayson)</p> | <p>Robert Golic – AMCOSH</p> <p>Sector health Commander<br/>Neil Aikers</p> <p>AV</p> <p>Ian Grayson</p> | <p>12/2/2014</p> <p>12/02/2014</p> <p>14/02/2014</p> <p>12/02/2014</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Closed</p> <p>Complete</p> |



|   |   |   |            |   |
|---|---|---|------------|---|
| E | CO monitoring within Morwell community by: expanding the CO boundary monitoring at the mine and providing dynamic monitoring by SME at critical times within community. This is weather dependent.  | EPA   | 14/02/2014 | Complete and ongoing  |
| F | Energy and Mine Sector to be directly engaged at State and Incident level.<br>- JB has engaged DSDBI energy and mines divisions and are now participating as part of SSST   | Joe Buffone                                   | 12/02/2014 | Complete  |
| G | CFA and MFB to work together to provide IMT and specialist resources to support response/suppression effort.  | Joe Buffone<br>David Youssef<br>Andrew Zammit | 11/02/2014 | Complete and ongoing  |
| H | Regional Communications Strategy be developed:<br>Led by CFA media/communications, supported by EMJPIC.<br>2 people at regional level feeding directly back into EMJPIC.  | CFA<br>RC                                     | 12/02/2014 | Complete  |
| J | Ensure that appropriate representations at regional level from the Team are available to support Community meeting.   | All   | 14/02/2014 | Complete  |
| K | Ensure that Vicroads are engaged to:<br><br>- Check that remote monitoring gear is operating correctly.<br><br>-Be aware that there is potential that current fire could be impacting on this section of the mine/road.<br><br>-Be engaged at regional level to support the community meeting regarding this issue. | Department of Transport                       | 14/02/2014 | Complete<br><br>Note: monitoring equipment on road is functioning |
| L | Explore options for videos to be produced for public information and induction onto worksite.   | Joe Buffone to discuss with local media team  | 15/02/2014 | Complete  |
| M | Emergency Management Planning   | Joe Buffone                                   | 15/02/2014 | Complete  |





|   |   |                                   |            |                 |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
|   | for an emergency such as Earthquake, Landslip etc   | to discuss with local EMT         |            |                 |
| N | Representatives from State Strategic EMT Latrobe Valley to visit Traralgon RCC and meet with key regional personnel to discuss strategy documentation.  | All                               | 16/02/2014 | <u>Complete</u> |
| O | <u>EPA and Dept. of Health to discuss information that is required to make decisions for community messaging. EPA to advise what data and information is available for Health. Dept. of Health and EPA to connect to discuss information re Health requires to make decisions on Health messaging</u> | DoH<br>EPA<br>Worksafe            | 18/02/2014 | Complete        |
| P | <u>WorkSafe to consider using their network of clinical hygienists to develop a coordinated approach for consistent messaging to emergency responders at the incident.</u>  | <u>WorkSafe</u>                   | 18/02/2014 | Complete        |
| Q | <u>EPA / Health to conduct analysis using known data identify if there are any key risk times within the day and any other trends available.</u>  | DoH<br><u>WorkSafe</u>            | 18/02/2014 | Complete        |
| R | Determine viability of a community respite center – mobile CO testing station and establish baseline levels, for community reassurance  | AV<br>DoH                         | 19/02/2014 | Complete        |
| S | Explore necessity for general community information line, possibly through VBIL or other.   | DoH<br>EPA feeding back to EMJPIC | 19/02/2014 | Complete        |

## 6. COMMUNITY MESSAGING

Messaging to the community must be consistent and strategic, particularly where multiple agencies are providing community information (e.g. Environment Protection Authority; EPA). The release of media information is being coordinated with the mine operations personnel.

At the strategic level, the community messaging will continue to provide critical community information, including information about:

- health warnings



- potential community impacts
- other places to access information, including community meetings

EMJPIC will be linked with Regional Control.

## 7. MEETING FREQUENCY

This briefing group is now closed and no longer requires and further actions or meetings,  
21/02/2014

