

STATEMENT

Name: Alan ROACH

STATES:

My full name is Alan William ROACH , I am 51 years of age born the 9th of November 1962. I reside at an address known to investigators.

I hold a Diploma of Business specialising in Human Resource Management. I hold a Certificate III Public Safety Fire fighting Operations, and issued by Tasmania TAFE.

I am not a member of the Country Fire Authority.

I am currently employed by GDF Suez working out of the Hazelwood mine. I have worked for GDF Suez since April 2010.

My rostered shifts are normally Monday to Friday 9am to 5 pm. I am currently part of the on call Emergency Services Liaison Officer, where six employees share the on call response for the mine. This role entails liaising with outside emergency agencies where they are required to respond to incidents within the mine. This runs right across the business so could include the mine or the station. The on call is rotational every six weeks working from 7:00 am Monday to 7:00 am the following Monday.

On Friday the 7th day of April 2014 I was rostered to work dayshift. I was also the on call ESLO for this period. I didn't receive any phone calls on the Friday in my capacity as the ESLO alerting me to any incidents within the business.

I was attending to a funeral in the Traralgon area and other employees of GDF Suez were present and they informed me of the fire in the Hernes Oak area on the Friday afternoon. I was made aware of this fire whilst at the wake at the Traralgon football club

I received a telephone call from Fiona RICKWOOD giving me the heads up on a fire in the Hernes Oak area. She was with us in Traralgon and observed the fire on her way home to Churchill. I then made a phone call to Steve HARKINS making him aware of the fire which he already knew about. The conversation was simply on the line was it a threat to Hazelwood, was it going to affect us, did I need to come into work.

I came into work and spoke to the Diamond Protection guys at the gate house and got a briefing on what they thought the threat was to Hazelwood. There appeared to be a larger threat towards the north east area of Hernes Oak. More towards the Yallourn north, Tyers area due to the wind direction.

From that information I was satisfied there was no threat to the business, so I went home.

There was nothing of any significance on the Saturday that required my attention.

On Sunday the 9th of February 2014, I woke up around 9:30 – 10:00 am there was a strong northerly wind in the Traralgon area. I will refer to my phone log to aid my memory.

I left home at around 11:15 am as I had decided to go into work. I received a missed call from Nick at 11:37 and then returned the call at 11:38 am, to Nick DIMETRIOUS from AGL LOY YANG, just informing me on the weather as he had been to a briefing at the RCC in Traralgon. He gave me an update on the weather as we were expecting stronger winds with the change in the afternoon and the fire was still

burning at Hernes Oak. The RCC had been operating in the area due to a number of fires. Nick is the CGEIG (Central Gippsland Essential Industry Group) Agency representative at the RCC.

After that phone call I headed over to Morwell along the freeway to have a look at the fire at Hernes Oak. I drove along the Freeway to Moe and over the bridge to return towards Morwell. I could see a couple of puffs of smoke from the Hernes Oak fire but further beyond in the distance was the smoke column from the Jack River fire.

According to the gate logs, I was on site at 12: 27 pm. I entered the site through the rear slide access gate. A couple of minutes after that at 12:29 referring to my log, I was driving from the gate to my office building when I observed small plumes of smoke rise from the Hernes Oak fire. These plumes I thought were of no significance.

At 12:30 I was at the mine control centre, and while I was there I had a conversation with Geoff MURRAY who was the control centre attendant and that conversation was on the weather activity at the time, fire activity and what sprinklers were activated. There was nothing to cause us any grief at that time.

At 12:45 pm I went to the mine training centre, that's our emergency control centre if a major incident occurs. I went there to clean up just in case something happened.

In my log I have a record at 1:20 pm a telephone call from the gate house namely Brian CUNNELIFFE who is one of the Diamond Protection guys, informing me the wind had picked up and that the Hernes Oak fire was flaring up. I looked out the window at that time and noticed the fire had a fire front of about 2 kilometres. The smoke was more of a grey colour not thick black smoke. It wasn't white or blue rather a dark grey. The smoke was coming straight at us from the north west, looking out the window of the training centre to the west.

Going back to the phone logs, at 1:36 pm I made a phone call to Steve HARKINS just providing him with a sit rep relating to the Hernes Oak fire.

At 1:45 pm, I made a call to John ROBINSON providing him the same information.

Around that time I left the mine training centre and returned to the control centre. Around 1:55pm I gave a message to Dave SHANAHAN to open the Drilling Depot Road gates that gives access to the north west side of the open cut around the RTL depot. We have perimeter gates to stop access to this area. This was a verbal message to Dave at the Control centre where we met.

At 2:00 pm, a mine fire alert was issued. That is an automatic system that the control centre attendant activates. If employees have phones it comes in on an SMS message and two way radios a voice message. I cannot comment on any other warning systems within the mine and station.

At 2:05 pm, the Diamond Protection fire appliance had been responded to the level below the open cut control centre where some form of fire fighting was taking place. That would be the only reason they would be down there. That's when I first become aware of the fire at DRIFFIELD and a log entry indicates this at 2:07 pm. I was told of this fire by another employee in the control centre. There would have only been three of us in the control centre.

At 2:15 pm, I went for a drive with Matt WEDDELL to the south west to TP5 to assess the situation and to open the gates to let traffic through and Matt turned on sprinklers at that point for the conveyors.

I also have a note made that Dave SHANAHAN informed me the Drilling Depot Road gates were open.

On my log at 2:20 pm, I made a note that there was no water on the risers. The only thing I can conclude from that is that there was no water on the rising conveyers. I can't recall why or from whom I got that message. This is of concern as it is the last point where the coal comes up to the bunker.

Matt and I were at TP5 and we then drove over to the south west lookout above the open cut. We stopped there to get an assessment of the DRIFFIELD fire. By this time there was a fairly strong south westerly wind blowing. The smoke from the DRIFFIELD fire was travelling from the south west towards Morwell over the open cut. I looked up and observed embers and other material in the smoke as it was going across the open cut. With the wind direction, the Hernes Oak fire was not an issue for me any more the DRIFFIELD fire was.

That was the very first time I looked back towards Morwell and the northern batters where I observed pockets of smoke on the northern batters near the mine base level, possibly level 5 or 7. An old fire which is buried as we refer to as 'Old faithful' was not putting up any smoke.

At 2:30 pm referring to my phone log, I made a call to Ricky ROSS on his mobile at the RCC informing him that a fire at DRIFFIELD was now beginning to spot in the open cut.

Ricky then gave me the RCC phone number 51773200.

At 2:31 pm, I received a radio message from the Diamond Protection tanker, Peter DIXON informing me he was under ember attack from below the open cut control centre and asking for assistance.

In my event log at 2: 43 pm, and in my phone log at 2:31pm I made a call to the RCC and on my hand written notes, I wasn't able to communicate with anybody of relevance so I would have left a message with my mobile for somebody to call me back.

My next entry is a phone log at 2:47 pm, and that was a call to Steve HARKINS more than likely giving him an update.

At 2:43 pm, I got a call from Peter McQUE at the Traralgon ICC and I gave Peter a sit rep that a fire at DRIFFIELD was spotting into the open cut and heading towards the south west corner of the mine.

I then travelled with Matt to the south west corner of the open cut on the surface where other plant and machinery had gathered this was to perform strategic line breaks to protect the mine. This was in the vicinity of the High voltage lines.

At about 2:50 pm Matt and I parted company. Matt stayed out in the field and I returned to the control centre.

On the phone log I have an entry at 2:48 pm where I rang the control centre to detail a situation report.

At 2:50 pm, there was a radio message, Ian WILKINSON the shift supervisor in the mine. I heard him ask for water to be turned on at the 520 conveyor. I am not sure what it meant but I made a hand written note.

At 3:00 pm I contacted Steve HARKINS and gave him an update / sit rep.

At 3:10 pm, I am back at the control centre.

With the DRIFFIELD fire intensifying, I was starting to organise some additional two way radios from Diamond Protection. To assist the radio communication we have a pool of spare radios that we issue to strike team leaders for communication as the CFA work on a different frequency.

At 3:10 pm I caught up with Steve HARKINS and had a verbal conversation to contact Romeo PREZIOSO and to advise Romeo that he was to become the Emergency Commander.

At 3:22 pm I made a call to John ROBINSON providing him with a sit rep and at 3:27 pm I made a call to Romeo. Romeo was actually on site at that time.

At 3:20 pm I have an entry that I am at the Mine training centre setting that up for the emergency command centre.

On the activity log at 3:35 Romeo met me at the Emergency command centre.

At 3:47 pm, I made contact with Peter McHUGH at the ICC and just given him a sit rep that the fire was encroaching us from DRIFFIELD, that there was spotting in the mine.

At 3:52pm I made a call to Peter McHUGH informing him that a radio message from crews on the ground that the fire had reached the Morwell main drain. I can't say if this fire was from the Hernes Oak or DRIFFIELD fires. My thought is that due to the wind direction it may be the DRIFFIELD fire.

At 4:04 pm, I made a phone call to the ICC speaking to Peter providing another sit rep.

At 4:42 pm, I made a call to Romeo who is back out in the field assisting the guys on the northern batters, at that point we were trying to ascertain what support we were going to get from the CFA.

At 4:45 pm, I got a call from Matt WEDDELL. Matt was at the MWN sub station on the northern batters. He was with the tanker HPFT2 and the Beaconsfield and Boolarra CFA tankers. I believe they were doing asset protection and fire fighting. There was a concern the fire would impact the sub station.

After this time, we lost power at the mine training centre. There is no generator back up to restore power. I had a lap top computer with me which was operating which could have been the battery power.

At 4:46 pm, I called Steve HARKINS to provide a sit rep and that was an update regarding Romeo in the field and CFA on scene at MWN

The situation quietened down for a while and then at 6:00pm I got a call from Peter in the ICC informing me that they had aerial photographs of the open cut and where the fire was. They wanted me to reference critical infrastructure points so that aircraft could water bomb. There was a mix up with mapping which was quickly rectified. The critical points were highlighted for the ICC.

At 6:18 pm, I picked up a radio message that the Driffield fire had met the Morwell river diversion on the south west side corner but had not come east of the river. I contacted Peter at the ICC and informed him of this.

At 6:41 pm I made a call to Fiona RICKWOOD and that related to meals and catering for the guys in the fire fighting operations.

At 7:30 pm, we moved the emergency command centre from the training area to the mine administration building whilst there was some daylight left.

At 8:20 pm, I had Ross MALE from the CFA as the Incident Controller at the Emergency Command Centre. I do recall having Peter LOCKWOOD (SO Traralgon) on site later in the evening.

I recall from my memory that a CFA strike team where on site for a short period of time as they called in at the Training Centre and then went back out into the field to the DRIFFIELD Fire.

Once Ross got on site, I knew at that point we were in for a pretty serious fire fight. I was confined inside most of the time after I had opened the Emergency Command Centre which was around 3:30 pm.

I did go outside at 11:30 pm, and noticed that the northern and eastern batters were well alight at that time.

I made a couple of calls to the ICC at 8:41 pm and that would have been in relation to road closures in an endeavour to get shift personnel in and out of the mine.

At 9:21 pm, another call to the ICC relating to road closures and staff movements.

My relief was Chris MORLEY. I made contact with him just after 11:00 pm on Sunday night. At about 12:20 am Chris would have been on side. I left the site at 12:55 am on Monday 10th February 2014.

Alan ROACH

Statement taken and signature witnessed

By me at 2:50 pm on 2nd April 2014 at HAZELWOOD

Michael WALSH

Det. Leading Sen. Const. 27788

I hereby acknowledge that this statement is true and correct and I make it in the belief that a person making a false statement in the circumstances is liable to the penalties of perjury

Alan ROACH

Acknowledgement made and signature witnessed

By me at 2:55 pm on 2nd April 2014, at HAZELWOOD.

Michael WALSH

Det. Leading Sen. Const. 27788