

Incident Control Centre Hazelwood

Media release

Wednesday, 26 February 2014

Weather creates more challenges

Yesterday's hot, windy weather conditions created further challenges for firefighters at the Hazelwood open cut mine when an ember from the fire ignited a grassfire between the mine and the power station.

Incident Controller, John Haynes said crews were immediately directed to the fire, local CFA brigades and volunteers from further afield were called in to assist, ensuring the fire was quickly contained and it didn't get into the bunkers.

"The fire got within 200 metres of the power station and damaged an old conveyor belt, but the power station was not affected," Mr Haynes said.

"The conditions yesterday caused flare-ups within the mine too and undid some of the good progress we were making, but by 6.00am today, we had regained that lost ground and crews are already making further progress."

At the height of the increased fire activity yesterday there were 80 firefighting appliances, including tankers, ladder platforms and aircraft, operated by crews from Victoria, Tasmania, ACT and South Australia.

"We're continuing to focus on the northern batters of the coal mine, which are closest to Morwell, particularly with the use of compressed air foam systems (CAFS) to help smother the fire and reduce smoke," Mr Haynes said.

Residents immediately to the north of Commercial Road, Morwell will receive a letterbox drop of information today and there will also be information available in the following locations:

The CFA bus will be outside Coles in Elgin Street, Morwell, from 10.00am till 1.00pm, then at Mid-Valley shopping centre from 2.00pm till 5.00pm
Information will be available at the Traralgon Shopping Centre from 11.00am till 1.00pm

Community Liaison officers will also continue to travel on V-Line trains between Traralgon and Warragul today to inform travellers about the situation and answer their questions.

There has been some confusion about the services being provided at the Respite Centre in Moe Town Hall.

This is a place to go for a break from smoky conditions, a cup of tea or coffee and information about the fire situation. It does not provide health assessments.

The place to go for health information and checks is the Community Health Assessment Centre at the Ambulance Victoria Gippsland Regional Office, 2 Saskia Way in Morwell, next to the Mid-Valley Shopping Centre, open from 8.00am until 8.00pm.

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