

Incident Control Centre Hazelwood

Media release

Wednesday, 5 March 2014

Hazelwood open cut mine fire - update

Fire update

Fire services have extra crews, trucks and firefighting aircraft in place for increased winds today that could see extra fire activity in the Hazelwood open cut mine fire.

Incident Controller Bob Barry said significant progress has been made in reducing the active fire ahead of today's wind change.

"We have reduced the amount of fire activity by about 85% which is great work and has put us in a good position for today," Mr Barry said.

"In preparation for increased fire activity, extra pumpers have been stationed near critical infrastructure and two extra firefighting helicopters are on standby if any embers escape the mine and cause grassfires.

"This morning's wind change is pushing the smoke back over Morwell township and the EPA has issued a high level smoke alert which means visibility is less than 10 kilometres due to high particle concentrations in the air.

"We are asking the community, mine staff and surrounding industry to be alert today because of the potential for increased fire activity – listen to the radio and monitor multiple sources of information for any warnings."

Firefighting crews have reduced fire activity in the northern parts of the mine and are now moving their focus to the southern parts of the mine.

Community information

- Community engagement officers were on V/Line trains this morning. This afternoon they will be at the Community Information and Recovery Centre, and walking around the Boolarra community and the Morwell RSL and bowls club.
- Emergency service staff will attend Federation University (Churchill) to talk to students from 1pm – 2pm.
- The **Moe Town Hall respite centre** is open on Albert Street from 9am - 6pm and offers a relaxed air conditioned space to take a break from the smoke.
- The **Community Information and Recovery Centre** will be open from 9am-6pm daily and is located at 22 Hazelwood Street, Morwell. The centre offers support and information from council, DHS, Red Cross, CFA, Victorian Council of Churches and other key agencies.
- **Community Health Assessment Centre**, Ambulance Victoria Gippsland Regional Office, 2 Saskia Way in Morwell, next to the Mid-Valley Shopping Centre, 8am – 8pm. Two nurses and two paramedics offer basic health assessments, such as respiratory and blood pressure checks.



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