

Incident Control Centre Hazelwood

Media release

Thursday, 6 March 2014

Hazelwood open cut mine fire - update

Incident Controller for the Hazelwood mine fire, John Haynes said while he is feeling confident the fire will soon be contained, there are some testing days ahead.

"We were able to hold the fire against yesterday's windy conditions and still have 85 per cent contained," he said.

"The last 15 per cent will be a challenge as it's in an area that we can't get to with the telebooms and the Compressed Air Foam units.

"We're working with mine personnel and machinery to gradually push tracks into the area so we can get closer to the most active spots.

"This last section will be hard to deal with, but if we can get access through with the dozers, and the weather stays in our favour, we'll be able to wrap it up.

"If this fire can be contained by Monday, it will be a terrific achievement. Our local firefighters will continue to be involved in the final stages of blacking out, patrolling and monitoring the area potentially for a number of weeks."

Victoria Police are still calling for any information about the cause of the fire, which investigators suspect was the result of a deliberately lit fire which ignited grassland and spotted into the mine on February 10. If anyone has information that might be useful for the investigation, please contact Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.

Community information

Since 17 February, community engagement teams have spoken to over 18,000 people face-to-face through engagement activities including train and bus travel, information points and walking the streets.

A twice-weekly community newsletter is distributed by email, at all information points and through community engagement officers.

Latrobe City Council officers are doorknocking in the community, answering questions and helping residents find out more about the support available to them.

A business breakfast will be held tomorrow morning (Friday) for business owners and operators in Morwell, giving them an opportunity to talk about business-related challenges resulting from the mine fire.

Continues...



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Two free seminars to help local business owners and operators manage business operations through the crisis and plan for recovery will be held tomorrow (Friday) at the Morwell Bowling Club at 3.00pm and at 6.30pm.

Grants are available for businesses with fewer than 20 employees. Call the Victorian Business Line on **13 22 15** or visit www.business.vic.gov.au

Business mentoring is available through Latrobe City Council on **1300 367 700**.

Low interest concessional loans are available through Rural Finance Corporation. Call **1800 260 425** or visit www.ruralfinance.com.au

Scouts Victoria is offering free temporary accommodation at popular campsites across Victoria. Call **03 5128 5616**.

A holiday house scheme has been put in place to provide accommodation support. If you would like to offer your holiday house or use the accommodation on offer, please call **1300 366 356** to register your details.

If you are leaving Morwell overnight, or for a longer period, you can register your details with the Red Cross **Register.Find.Unite** service to help you let family, friends or neighbours know where you have gone. Visit www.redcross.org.au or call **1800 727 077**.