

Incident Control Centre Hazelwood

MEDIA RELEASE

13 March 2014

Firies flying visit to Morwell primary school students

Hundreds of primary school children in Morwell had the opportunity to meet the firefighters working at the Hazelwood open cut mine fire today.

Three water-bombing aircraft landed at Ronald Reserve, and were met by more than 200 students from St Vincent's Primary School, Tobruk Primary School and Morwell Park Primary School.

Fire Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley said the event was a chance for students to learn about the aircraft and thank the firefighters who have worked tirelessly to bring the mine fire under control.

"We know many of these students have seen helicopters flying overhead recently so this gives them the opportunity to see them up close, learn about how they operate and ask questions," he said.

Two Sikorsky helicopters and a Firebird were on show, along with several trucks from the Traralgon CFA brigade and the New South Wales Rural Fire Service.

"It's been a tough time for the entire community, especially the kids who have had their normal routines disrupted, so we hope this helps them to understand what the emergency services are doing to put the fire out," Mr Lapsley said.

"It also gives us the opportunity to thank the students and the wider community for their encouragement and support over the past four weeks."

Latrobe City Council's mayor, Cr Sharon Gibson said the event was important for the school children to understand the situation that has been faced not only by themselves and the community but by the emergency services and the work that they do.

"With this experience and knowledge, it takes away the element of fear and gives the children understanding so that they can have confidence that they are in safe hands with our fire fighters and emergency services," Cr Gibson said.

The aircraft returned to the mine for duty following the visit.

Emergency services will conduct more school visits in coming weeks.



Media contact: Traralgon Incident Control Centre media unit - 5177 3286