

## Incident Control Centre Hazelwood

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# MEDIA RELEASE

14 March 2014

### Hazelwood open cut mine fire - update

**Fire fight:** Long arm excavators are being used to dig up and pull apart hot coal so it can be doused and cooled by fire trucks as the Hazelwood incident enters its final stages.

Regional Controller Steve Warrington today said a number of hot spots still exist below the surface.

"We are focused on eliminating the remaining hot spots – this is one of the last steps in the mine fire fight," he said.

"Eliminating hot spots by scraping off the surface and digging up coal takes time but we are confident the vast majority of this work will be completed soon.

"There is a lot of heat still in the mine, especially on the floor, and there is still some smoke."

Mr Warrington said the hot spots were only about 50cm deep in the coal and that any rain would greatly assist the fire fight on the mine floor.

"We are pretty keen to get some rain, we will get a little on Saturday and Sunday night but after that there is none forecast for the period we have been told about," he said.

**Health:** Chief Health Officer Dr Rosemary Lester today said that, weather permitting, the temporary relocation advice message for at risk people could be lifted within the next few days.

"The air quality unfortunately has not been quite good enough for us over the past couple of days for us to lift our temporary relocating advice, I think we are almost there," she said.

Dr Lester also told people that, while the ash is not toxic, when cleaning their property they should avoid stirring up the smaller particles by doing wet mopping and dusting, not using blowers and to consider wearing a mask.

Advice on cleaning and how to use a mask is available at the Department of Health website.



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