

Incident Control Centre Hazelwood

Media release

19 March 2014

Firefighters at the Hazelwood open cut mine are preparing to commence works on Thursday to extinguish a fire in the northern batters known as the 'Old Faithful'.

While this fire does not currently pose any risk to the community or surrounding infrastructure, fire services are taking this opportunity to dig the fire out which has been smouldering in an un-used section of the mine for several years.

"To put this fire out once and for all would be a significant win for our crews who have been working tirelessly over the past five weeks to bring the mine fire under control and reduce smoke over the Morwell community," Incident Controller Bob Barry said.

Crews will be using specialist firefighting equipment to remove the clay capping and dig out the hot spot which is located in the northern batters.

"As part of our firefighting strategy, we will begin tackling this blaze when the winds are favourable to minimise any potential smoke impacts on the Morwell community," Mr Barry said.

The 'Old Faithful' fire has been effectively controlled and managed by the mine staff who have been capping it with clay to smother it from oxygen.

The fire is not related to the February 9 blaze which spotted into the mine.

"We want to take advantage of the firefighting crews, aircraft, trucks and technology currently on the ground in the mine to finally put this fire out," Mr Barry said.

"While we are not anticipating that the community will be significantly impacted by ash or smoke as a result of work on 'Old Faithful', it is likely community members will see some smoke and we are encouraging people to stay aware of the current conditions," he said.

People can stay informed via the EPA website or by calling 1300 372 842, or by visiting the Community Information and Recovery Centre in Morwell.

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For more information: Traralgon Incident Control Centre media - 5177 3286

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