

From: [Adrian Barnett](#)
To: [Justine Stansen](#)
Subject: Fwd: draft release
Date: Wednesday, 2 September 2015 4:09:44 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Adrian Barnett [REDACTED]
Date: 5 February 2015 11:31:34 GMT+11
To: shaun murray [REDACTED], Wendy Farmer
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: draft release

great

From: shaun murray [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 5 February 2015 10:21 AM
To: Wendy Farmer; Adrian Barnett
Subject: Re: draft release

Updated release:

Media release – Voices of the Valley

One year on, more data emerges about deaths due to mine fire

Embargoed till 6am Monday 9th February

Latrobe Valley residents' group Voices of the Valley has today released new data and analysis regarding probable deaths resulting from the Hazelwood coal mine fire which began one year ago today.

Initial analysis of deaths data obtained from Births, Deaths and Marriages last September indicated a high probability that eleven people had died as a result of the fire. Voices of the Valley have since obtained a larger data set which has again been analysed by Associate Professor Adrian Barnett from Queensland University of Technology.

The new analysis reveals that there is a very high probability (94%) that there was an increase in the death rate in the 3844 postcode, which includes Traralgon, the largest town in the area.

Associate Professor Adrian Barnett:

“The latest data provides some more clarity around the increased risk of death during the fire. There does seem to be some variability in the effect of the fire across the region, and that may be due to differences in exposure or because people in some suburbs were more likely to evacuate. Ideally we would have this information available to refine the analysis.”

“The most important missing information is the cause of death, if the majority of deaths were due to respiratory and cardiovascular disease then that would provide further evidence that the pollution from the fire was responsible. It would also be useful to know what people were doing prior to their deaths and whether they tried to reduce their exposure and whether they already had some pre-existing chronic illness. The sooner this information is gathered the more accurate it will be, as the passage of time means people could forget important details.”

Mrs Wendy Farmer, President of Voices of the Valley:

“The previous government denied our evidence which showed a high probability of deaths from this preventable disaster. One year on, there are many residents who were profoundly impacted from the Hazelwood fire both in terms of their health and financially. We hope that when the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry is reopened, the increase in death rate will be thoroughly investigated so that the community can finally have some resolution.”

“Our evidence strongly indicates that the fire had a widespread health impact across the Latrobe Valley. We want to see that the new Hazelwood Mine Fire Health Study examines this broader impact and does not just focus on Morwell.”

"We welcome the initiative shown by the Andrews government regarding fire safety at the mines. However, we know that the only effective long-term solution for fire safety is to ensure that the mines are fully rehabilitated. This needs to be greatly accelerated and should be happening while the mines are productive and profitable. The rehabilitation bonds also need to be greatly increased to provide sufficient incentive for the mine operators to carry out the task at hand, and then progressively refunded as rehabilitation work takes place."

“We also need permanent air quality monitoring stations near the power stations which are live streamed, so that the community can make our own judgements about the risk posed by any future incidents.”

For comment:

Wendy Farmer: [REDACTED]

Adrian Barnett: [REDACTED]

On 5 February 2015 at 10:33, shaun murra [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi Wendy & Adrian,

Here's the draft release - please review your quotes & let me know any thoughts/changes.

We should probably send it through to the Express this arvo & start talking to the ABC or the Age about an exclusive.

cheers, Shaun

Media release – Voices of the Valley

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The new analysis reveals that there is a very high probability (94%) that there was an increase in the death rate in the 3844 postcode, which includes Traralgon, the largest town in the area.

Associate Professor Adrian Barnett:

"I believe that a thorough investigation is warranted, and the sooner this is done the better. We need to examine cause of death to see if they were related to conditions we know to be associated with air pollution such as respiratory or cardiovascular disease. We need to see where people were living and what they were doing prior to their deaths to determine their level of exposure. It would also be useful to know if they were showing symptoms before their death and what medical help they sought and received. Getting this data would involve interviewing their relatives and friends."

"There's some evidence that pollution exposure causes longer term deaths. This can occur months later because of a compromised immune or cardiovascular system."

Mrs Wendy Farmer, President of Voices of the Valley:

"The previous government denied our evidence which showed a high probability of deaths from this preventable disaster. One year on, there are many residents who were profoundly impacted and are still counting the costs from the Hazelwood fire. We hope that when the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry is reopened, the increase in death rate will be thoroughly investigated so that the community can finally have some resolution."

"We welcome the initiative shown by the Andrews government regarding fire safety at the mines. However, we know that the only effective long-term solution for fire safety is to ensure that the mines are fully rehabilitated. This needs to be greatly accelerated and should be happening while the mines are productive and profitable. The rehabilitation bonds also need to be greatly increased to provide sufficient incentive for the mine operators to carry out the task at hand, and then progressively refunded as rehabilitation work takes place."

"We also need permanent air quality monitoring stations near the power

stations which are live streamed, so that the community can make our own judgements about the risk posed by any future incidents.”

For comment:

Wendy Farmer: [REDACTED]

Adrian Barnett: [REDACTED]

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Shaun Murray
Community Organiser
Friends of the Earth Australia
[REDACTED]

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Shaun Murray
Community Organiser
Friends of the Earth Australia
[REDACTED]