

Submission to the Independent Inquiry into the EPA

We hope that the mine fire made the EPA aware of the need for:

1. air monitoring stations to be permanently set up in areas around the Latrobe Valley. These stations to provide the full range of data and to make that information available to the public.

*A temporary station has been set up in Moe but only reports PM 2.5
This is not good enough. We deserve permanent, full, comprehensive monitoring.*

1. A method of promptly warning people of the status of the air quality and action required.

Warnings on the radio as we have for bush fires. This did not occur early. We found out after the event about a scale of rating for visual air quality states "<10 km Very poor". What was it when we couldn't see more than 200m? Should we have been outside? Should we have still been here?

WE need timely, accessible information.

1. Should the air quality be as poor as it was during the mine fire then steps are taken to evacuate affected areas.

Suggesting that somehow people were to leave the area was weak. Why weren't evacuation procedures set up. Hadn't they been considered in emergency management scenarios for the region? Have they for future problems such as smoke generated by bush fires and controlled burns?

We need appropriate emergency planning and action.

The lack of air monitoring stations, lack of adequate warnings and action by the EPA and related authorities has given us little confidence in the EPA's ability to protect our health and our environment. A great deal of positive action is required to rebuild public faith in the EPA.

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