



CLIMATE AND  
HEALTH  
ALLIANCE

## **Latrobe Valley to benefit from cleaner air and better health**

Tuesday March 28, 2017

Engie's decision to close its Hazelwood coal-fired power station will immediately improve the health of the thousands of people living nearby, health groups say.

Fiona Armstrong, Executive Director of the national health coalition, Climate and Health Alliance, said closing the power station presented an opportunity for the community to reap significant health benefits.

"People in the Latrobe Valley have suffered a burden of ill-health from the pollution caused by the burning of coal over a long period, given it is linked to cardiovascular, respiratory and neurological diseases, as well as lung cancers.

"For children with asthma, the elderly, and people with respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, this announcement is good news."

The 2014 Hazelwood coal mine fire brought home the health risks Latrobe Valley residents have faced for decades, Ms Armstrong said.

"The coal mine fire was preventable and catastrophic. It put the health of emergency service workers at risk and led to increased deaths in the local community."

Ms Armstrong said developing new economic opportunities in the Latrobe Valley was important for the health of the local community.

"We must ensure the families living in 'sacrifice zones' where their health and well-being has been compromised by polluting industry are not further disadvantaged by changing economic circumstances.

"Replacing outdated coal-fired power stations with clean and safe renewable energy like wind and solar will create jobs, improve air quality and water supplies and slow the rate of climate change which is intensifying the extreme weather that puts health at risk."

For details of the health impacts associated with Hazelwood please refer to the explainer attached.

Health professionals are also available for comment.

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