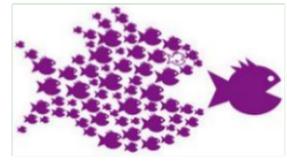


Voices of the Valley

Voicing the concerns of the Latrobe Valley community

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voicesofthevalley.nationbuilder.com



Voices of the Valley

Incorporated Association A0060859B

Thursday, 9 October 14

Voices of the Valley Inc. Research overview, Community Health October 2014

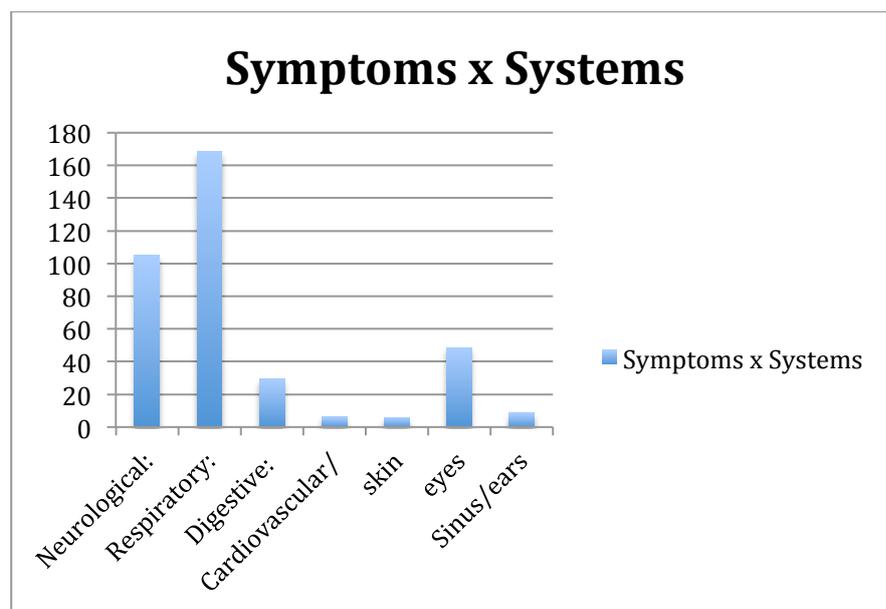
There was considerable disparity between what the Latrobe Valley community experienced during and after the Hazelwood minefire and what they were told they were experiencing. Voices of the Valley, a community group forged in the minefire, continues to address this.

This is a quick overview of the research done by the community of the health effects on the Latrobe Valley population during and after the Hazelwood Minefire.

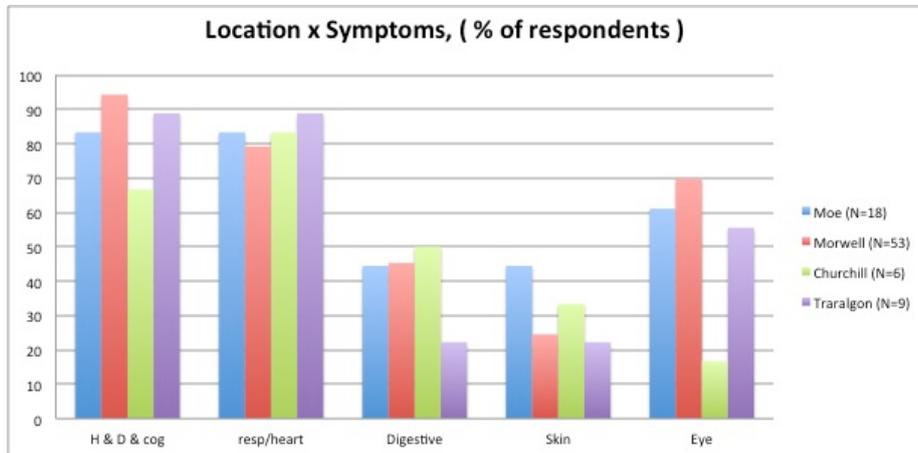
For more detail follow the links to the online documents:

Are there health effects from the minefire and what are they?

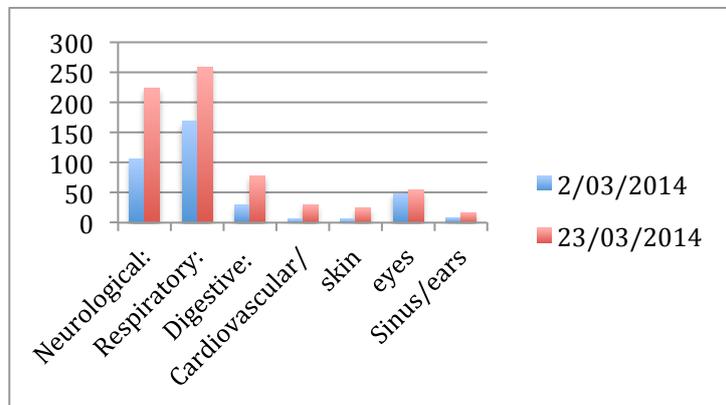
1. **2nd March 2014** - At the first large community rally Voices of the Valley handed out questionnaires that included health information, from this we collated the information of what the current symptoms were. [Snapshot Survey of 2nd March 2014](#), shows the widespread experience of the debilitating effects from toxic smoke.



2. **5-17th March 2014:** done fully online an [Online Wellness Survey](#) explored the symptoms by location across the broader Latrobe Valley. Postcodes within 10-15km radius of the mine. It shows similar symptoms across a range of postcodes.



3. **24th March 2014,** The next set of health data came with the [Affidavits gathered at Kernott Hall](#) where increases in, and the trends of symptoms are noted over the 3 weeks interval.



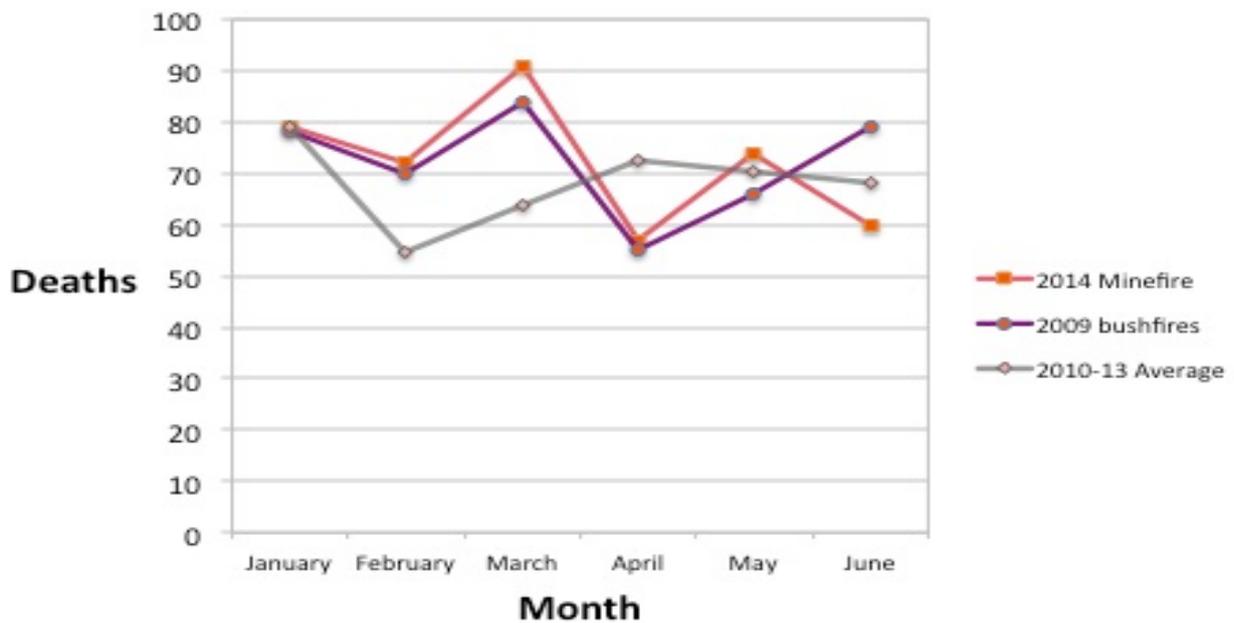
4. **6th May 2014** -A correlated health data briefing sheet was given by hand to Rosemary Lester, Chief Health Officer for the Department of Health during the Community consultations. It was to inform the Health Department that the effects were across a large area, and requesting an official snapshot of the valleys health as it was feared the long term study would be no more than a body count.

All health and data sheets were collated and presented to the HMTI as a submission.

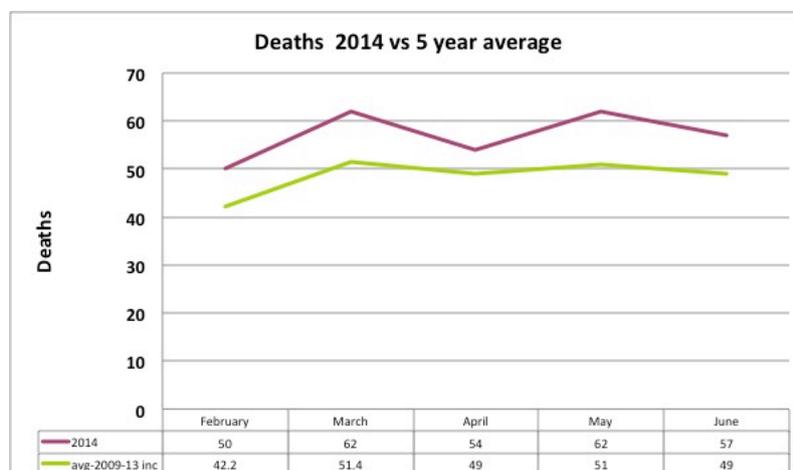
The Body Count.

- Because of a the considerable delay in getting and deaths information from the Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages (RBDM/BDM), VOTV had to obtain indicative death statistics by tallying unique death notices in the local newspaper, the Latrobe Valley Express.

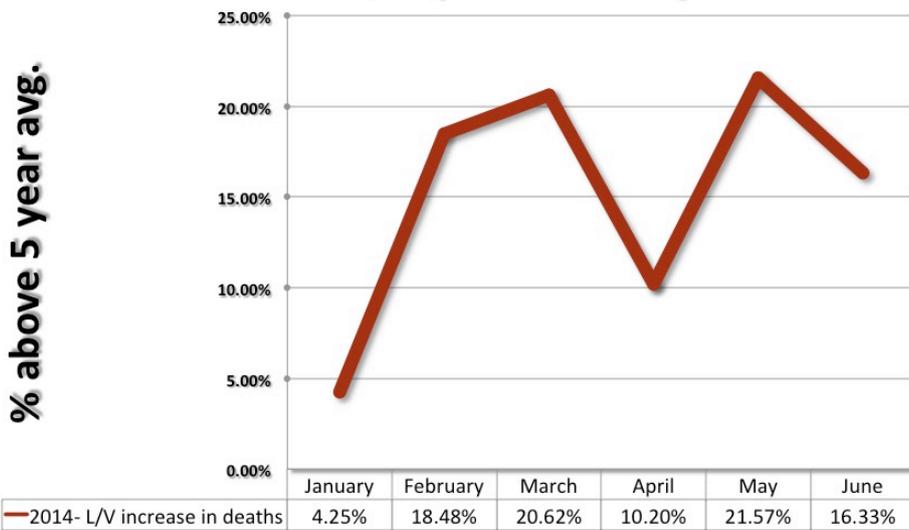
[This is the letter](#) the VOTV committee voted unanimously to send immediately to the Hazelwood Minefire Inquiry to seek advice. HMF I informed us that they have forwarded it to Health Department (DOH) and the Coroner. It is now obsolete and was only ever indicative but we are including it for housekeeping.



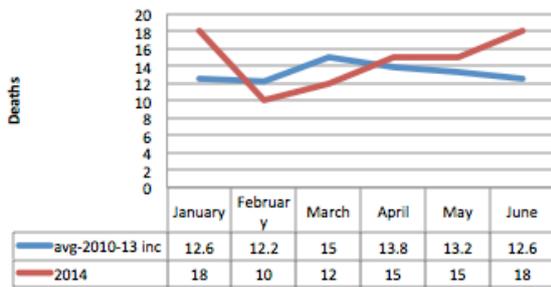
- An analysis and presentation of the [Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages official death statistics](#), which were not received until after the Inquiry reported. This data – when represented on simple charts – confirmed the trends seen in our "Death Notices" newspaper analysis.



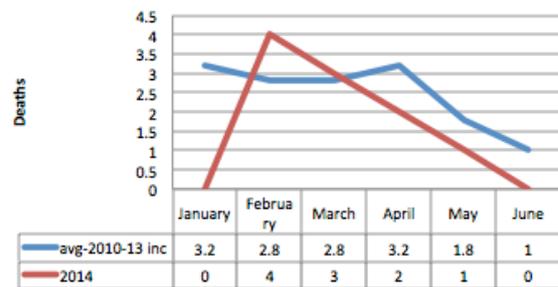
2014 -% INCREASE IN DEATHS IN THE L/V (RBDM DATA)



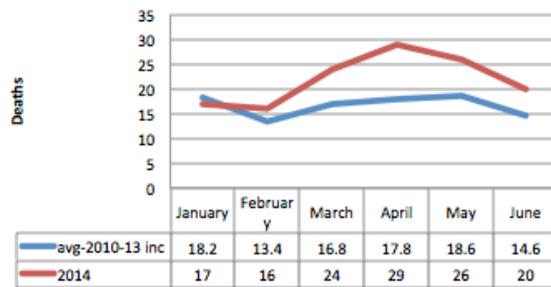
Morwell -3840 Deaths - BDM



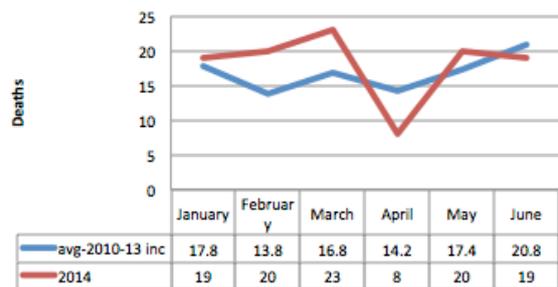
Churchill - 3842 Deaths - BDM



Moe -3825 Deaths - BDM

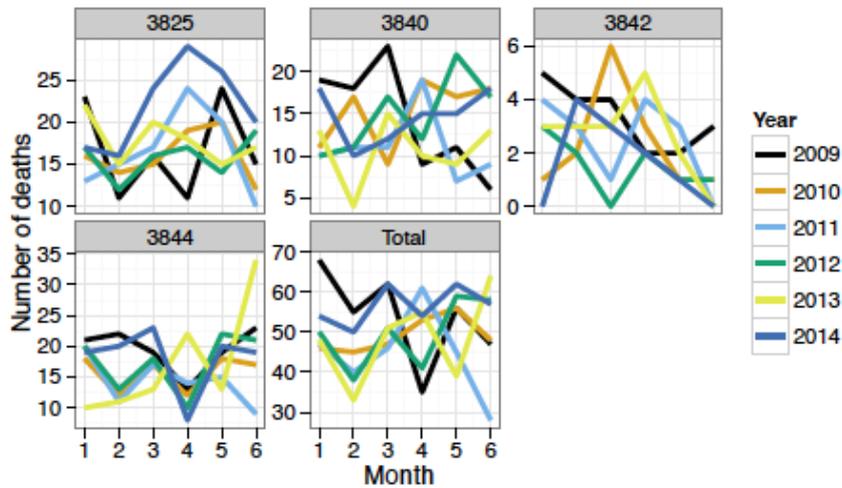


Traralgon - 3844 Deaths - BDM



To check for scientific validity health statistician Associate Professor Adrian Barnett, from Queensland University of Technology was requested to do a thorough statistical analysis.

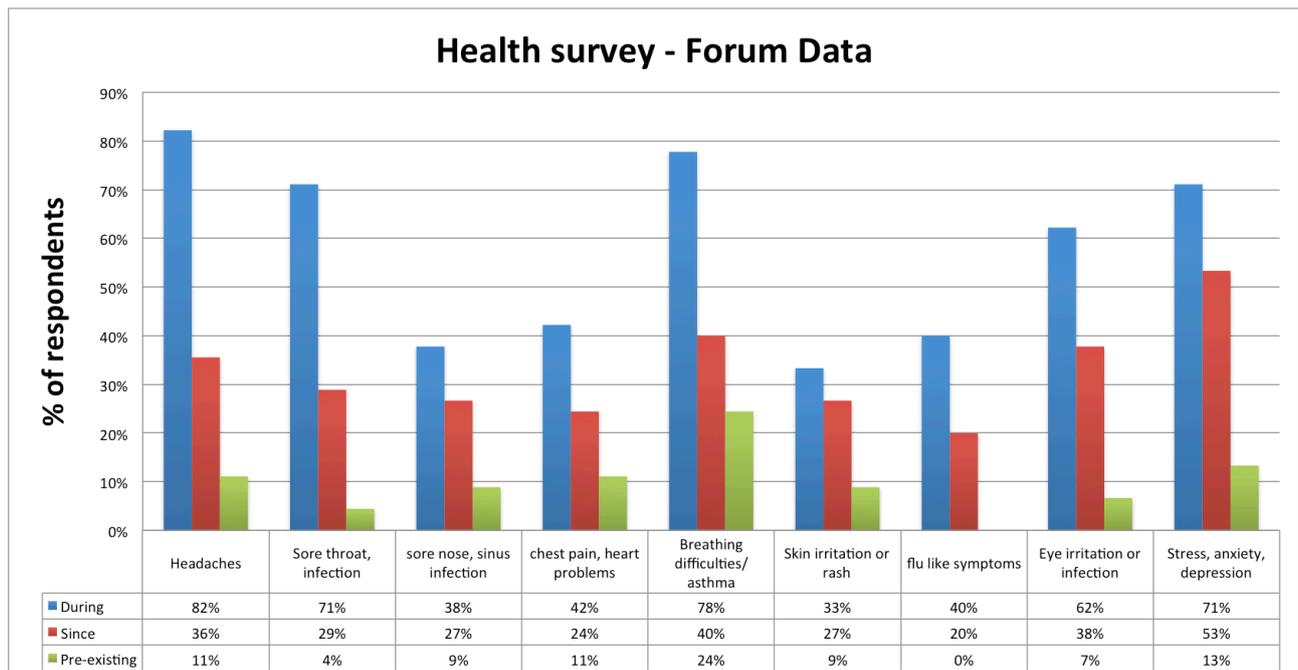
7. **Associate Professor Adrian Barnett from QUT**, conducts statistical analyses of public health problems, including air pollution. Professor Barnett's shows statistically that there are 11 deaths attributable to the minefire.



17th Sept 2014 - *The information to this date was collated and was handed over on the steps of parliament house to a representative of the Minister for Health and also to the Opposition leader.*

Are people still sick?

8. **14 September 2014**:- During the Community Forum called to discuss the Inquiry Report a health questionnaire was included in the handouts and ran online.



What Next?

Get more data,

- RBDM : VOTV have requested data for 6 postcodes for the full 10 year period and cause of death from RBDM as well as the state averages for comparison.
- Community Health Audit : A much closer and more detailed snapshot study of the communities health is being developed and implemented. VOTV is seeking both academic and professional guidance in its implementation and reporting.

Comment:

It would be good to get further access to BDM data particularly as to cause of death, and some political and departmental commitment to, and help in, righting the historic health deficit pointed out so succinctly in the Minefire Inquiry's report.

We need specialists to hold training sessions with our doctors to give guidance on what to look for and how to treat it.

We need a Health Conservation area and regulatory measures taken to make sure that our area is safe to live in.

This mine fire was an industrial spill on a massive scale, not a natural disaster.

Our cities are surrounded by privatised mines that the government regulates.

We are asking that they are made safe for our health and our children's health.

Yours faithfully,

Ron Ipsen,
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ron@votv.org.au

on behalf of the
Committee,
Voices of the Valley Inc.

9 October 2014