

MEDIA RELEASE

April 30, 2024

SMOKE FROM WASTE MANAGEMENT CENTRE

As the community would be aware, Norfolk Island Regional Council have been dealing with smouldering from the area behind the Waste Management Centre for several weeks now. A fire was caused through self-combustion of green waste, which subsequently spread into the ground. Council understands that there has been a practice of landfilling in this area over many years. While the green waste was extinguished quickly at the time, the landfilled material continues to burn. We cannot guarantee what is within this landfill, but it appears to mostly be trunks and green waste. We cannot exclude other materials potentially being there as well.

Council understand that ongoing smoke can cause impacts to neighbouring landholders. While most of the time, predominant easterly winds push smoke impacts into the valley below, this may present air quality issues to land holders further downwind. Southerly winds may also push smoke towards town and properties in close proximity. We are also observing that rainfall exacerbates the smouldering, potentially causing more smoke. This is caused by formation of steam and introduction of oxygen into the ground, something typical of landfill fires. This also means that pouring water from a fire truck does not extinguish the smouldering.

While this is a very difficult issue to fix, we are engaging experts to assist in defining the area and developing a solution to stop the smoke. This includes any recommendations for air quality monitoring that are available. However, we currently cannot confirm a timeframe for this. The location and steepness of the area also add to the complexity. The community will be kept up to date with our efforts to address this issue.

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