

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

23 May, 2024

### **UPDATE RE SMOULDERING MATERIAL NEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT CENTRE**

As the community would be aware, Norfolk Island Regional Council has been dealing with smouldering from the area behind the Waste Management Centre over recent months.

A fire caused by self-combustion of green waste has subsequently spread into the ground, in an area where Council understands that landfill occurred over many years. While we are not certain what this landfill contains, it appears that it is mostly trunks and green waste, although we cannot exclude the possibility of other materials in the landfill.

On Tuesday of this week, strong winds and rain caused a fire to flare up several times, resulting in smoky conditions. While the island's firefighters brought the fire under control, they continue to monitor the smouldering area as Council looks at options for rectifying this issue.

Council understands that ongoing smoke can cause impacts to neighbouring landholders, and it may cause temporary closure of waste management areas to protect public safety, should conditions worsen. This may include both bulky waste drop-off areas and the Norfolk Wave Recycling Centre.

Residents are asked to drop their green waste and materials such as sawdust and wood shavings in the green waste area, located on the left after the Norfolk Wave.

Among the difficulties in managing this situation is the fact 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.

Council continues to engage with experts in this area to find a solution that focuses on community safety and halting continued burning of underground material. More information will be supplied as it comes to hand.

ENDS