

# ODOUR ABATEMENT TASKFORCE

## Update on odour issues

### **Cleanaway New Chum site update - 8 December 2022**

The flooded landfill cell which had previously been generating odour is now effectively empty.

Cleanaway is undertaking groundworks on site as part of their wet weather planning. This includes diverting water away from landfill cells and installing a liner to ensure any water that does enter the cell does not come into contact with waste and create odour issues.

Community complaints about odour issues have significantly reduced and air monitoring results are generally below nuisance levels.

As a result, the department is transitioning the environmental regulatory incident response into standard operations.

This means the regular website operational updates will finish.

The department remains committed to ensuring Environmental Authority (EA) holders in the Swanbank and surrounding areas are complying with their environmental responsibilities.

The department will continue to monitor the Cleanaway New Chum site and will update the community about significant compliance actions.

The department will continue to manage and monitor risks through our assessment, compliance, investigation and enforcement activities.

The department commenced a formal investigation into the Cleanaway issue earlier this year to determine if there has been any unlawful activity. The investigation is ongoing.

Updates about our regulatory work in the Swanbank and New Chum areas will continue to be provided in this newsletter.

If someone you know is interested in receiving these updates, they can subscribe [here](#).

Visit the [Cleanaway New Chum odour issues](#) web page to read full details about the response

including regulatory actions, operational updates, air monitoring key findings and links to previous email updates.



*Pictured above: This photo, taken on 14 October 2022 shows the cell empty of water and the liner which will ensure any water that does enter the cell does not come into contact with waste and create odour issues.*



*Pictured above: This photo from May shows the affected cell 3B with water volume at its peak of about 60ML.*

## **Air monitoring key findings**

Between April and November 2022, the department conducted a community air monitoring program in New Chum and surrounding areas as part of the Cleanaway New Chum odour issues response.

This program included air monitoring by departmental officers in the community, hydrogen sulfide monitoring at homes and other locations and the deployment of 43 air sampling canisters that sampled up to 74 different types of chemical compounds in local homes.

This air monitoring was designed to specifically assess whether there were any contaminants from the current odour issues that would pose any potential health impacts.

The department liaised with Queensland Health to review the data.

Throughout the program, results from all devices consistently returned results that were well below health and wellbeing objectives.

However, nuisance objectives were exceeded which explains why odour issues were reported.

Visit the Cleanaway New Chum odour issues air quality monitoring [results](#) to read the key findings and view the data.

During December 2022, the department will be in touch with a small number of residents who still have canister devices to find out if they wish to take an air sample or return the device.

Air and weather monitoring and modelling will continue in the Swanbank and surrounding areas, including New Chum, to help model and assess air movement.

The department continues to trial new air monitoring equipment in the area (read the story in the [18 July edition](#) of the newsletter).

The department is also developing a longer-term air monitoring strategy for the Swanbank and surrounding areas.

## **Wet season planning**

The department is committed to ensuring EA holders across Queensland are planning for the upcoming wet season.

The department has written to a number of EA holders, including high risk sites in Swanbank and the surrounding areas, to highlight the department's expectations of operators during the wet season and remind operators of their environmental obligations.

Additionally, the department has hosted webinars for key industries including mining, petroleum and gas, quarrying and waste management, to help inform and assist operators to plan for significant or prolonged rainfall.

Departmental officers are also undertaking pre-wet season site inspections for higher risk

activities.

## Ongoing regulatory response

The department's environmental regulatory response to the odour issues associated with the flooded landfill cell (3B) is moving into a standard operations phase, however our investigation and other regulatory actions related to the Cleanaway New Chum site are continuing.

The full list of actions taken during the response is available at the dedicated [Cleanaway New Chum odour issues web page](#).

Two key actions, the investigation and the Notice of Proposed Amendment (NOPA) to Cleanaway's Environmental Authority (EA) are continuing.

While not directly related to the 2022 Cleanaway cell 3B odour issues regulatory response, on 21 October 2022, the department reached a decision about the lawfulness of the resource recovery area (RRA) declared by Cleanaway.

This process started in September 2021 to determine if the necessary approvals at a state and local government level are in place.

After careful consideration of all the information, the department determined that Cleanaway does hold the necessary approvals required for conducting the recycling activity on the site, and therefore there is no basis for the revocation of the RRA at this time.

The department considered information provided by Ipswich City Council, Cleanaway's submission and proactively sought independent, expert advice as part of the review.

## Stay up-to-date

Visit the dedicated [Cleanaway New Chum odour issues](#) and [air quality monitoring results](#) web pages to view details about the Cleanaway New Chum odour issues response, including a summary of air quality monitoring results.

If someone you know is interested in receiving regular email updates, you can forward them this email and they can subscribe to the [OAT Update newsletter](#).

## Report odour

We encourage all community members to continue to report odour issues to assist us with our ongoing response efforts in the New Chum and Swanbank areas.

Phone: 1300 130 372 (option 3) or [report online](#).