

## Swanbank and New Chum odour update

### Frequently asked questions and odour report heat maps now available

We've created a list of [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#) about how we're addressing odour reports in the Swanbank and New Chum areas. The FAQs provide information about how our regulatory activities align with the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

As requested in last month's community meeting, we've also uploaded [heat maps](#) to our website that indicate the frequency of community odour reports across the affected area.

[Find community resources](#)

### Air monitoring in educational facilities

In response to community concerns, we are working with Queensland Health to conduct air quality monitoring in the community. Fourteen air sampling canisters have been provided to residents and education facilities since the Community Town Hall meeting on 17 September 2023.

Any samples taken will be analysed by Queensland Health laboratories and results will be shared with the sampler and published online as they become available.

No results from air sampling to date have exceeded health guidelines for air pollutants.

[Find out about air sampling canisters](#)

## **An update from Queensland Health**

It is acknowledged that odour affects community amenity and liveability. Queensland Health continues to work with the Department of Environment and Science, Ipswich City Council, and local healthcare providers to review community level health information from residents to understand more about the issue.

While air quality monitoring shows levels of hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S) in the air in the area are not harmful to health, some residents are reporting issues such as headaches, nausea, watery eyes, nasal congestion, irritated throat, coughing or wheezing, especially when they have allergies, asthma, or other chronic lung problems. We know some people, such as those with underlying health conditions, may experience these side effects at levels of air contamination below the health guidelines. There are no known long-term impacts of low-level exposure to H<sub>2</sub>S on health.

The available evidence suggests that emissions from sites around Swanbank present a relatively low risk to health for people living nearby, and there is no indication that the odour is causally related to cancers reported near the site. It is important to note that cancer is not a single disease and there are over a hundred different types of cancer, each with several different risk factors and causes in common, such as increasing age, smoking, obesity, and drinking alcohol above recommended levels. However, Queensland Health recognises odours can cause physical symptoms and impact people's wellbeing.

People with symptoms are encouraged to visit their GP, who are in the best position to assess symptoms and health concerns and provide medical advice. Residents can also call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) 24/7 for confidential advice from a registered nurse.

Knowing your community is affected by odour may increase stress and worry, and people living in communities affected by environmental issues such as odour may be more likely to experience psychological distress. Individuals can access mental health support through a range of face-to-face, digital and enquiry services. For more information, visit the Queensland Health website.

[Find out more](#)

### **Fire ants**

We've referred all community reports about suspected fire ant infestations to Queensland Biosecurity in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAF).

DAF advises that they have conducted inspections at several sites following these referrals and continue to investigate.

If you have more information or questions regarding fire ants, please contact Biosecurity Queensland at 13 25 23 or report fire ants via the DAF website. A representative from Biosecurity Queensland will also be available at our upcoming community drop-in session; further information available below.

[Report fire ants](#)

## Community drop-in sessions

Our drop-in sessions are returning. The sessions are designed to give community the opportunity to drop in at a time that suits them and speak with our officers one-on-one about our compliance activities and investigations into the current odour issues. Our officers will be joined by representatives from Biosecurity Queensland (DAF) and the West Moreton Public Health unit for our first community drop-in session.

Where: [The Villa, YMCA Ipswich](#)

When: 10am – 12pm, Saturday 28 Oct 2023

If you need further information about this session, please email [engagement@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:engagement@des.qld.gov.au).

## Have your say on environmental laws

You are encouraged to have your say on proposed changes to the state's environment laws, which are designed to modernise environmental laws and protect communities.

Ongoing odour nuisance issues in the Swanbank industrial area initiated, in part, an independent review of the *Environmental Protection Act*, which was undertaken by retired Judge of the Planning and Environment Court and a Senior Crown Prosecutor.

The review recommended that greater emphasis should be placed on the concepts of human health, wellbeing, and safety.

This was a comprehensive review to ensure environmental odour laws are

modernised and fit for purpose to meet the needs of the community, and we are now consulting on the necessary changes to ensure that it can take timely and effective action where the community is negatively impacted by operations.

Submissions are due to [EPAct.Policy@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:EPAct.Policy@des.qld.gov.au) by 5pm 10 November 2023.

Find out more about the  
proposed reforms

We are dedicated to working together to address concerns and create a safer environment for our community. Your participation and feedback are greatly valued.

Please encourage other residents to [subscribe to this newsletter](#) for updates and information on upcoming community drop-ins.



Queensland  
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