

# ODOUR ABATEMENT TASKFORCE

## Update on odour issues

### Site update

Transport of water off-site from the Cleanaway New Chum landfill resumed on Tuesday 17 May. It had temporarily stopped on Friday 13 May due to increased pressure on sewage treatment systems during heavy rainfall.

The water is being transported to the Bundamba sewerage treatment plan via authorised points (manholes).

More information about the impact of the current rain event is available in the [FAQs](#).

Daily site updates are published on the [Cleanaway New Chum odour issues](#) webpage.

### Temporary emissions licence (TEL)

As a result of last week's rainfall, water levels at the Cleanaway New Chum landfill site were increasing. On Sunday 15 May, Cleanaway lodged an application for a temporary emissions licence (TEL) to pump excess water to another water storage facility on site, so the water could be diluted and released into Six Mile Creek.

After reviewing the application and liaising with Cleanaway, the department deemed the application to be invalid due to insufficient information being provided about how water quality and odour risks associated with the proposal would be addressed.

The department continues to ensure Cleanaway considers other options for reducing the volume of water on site and address odour issues.

### Enforcement history

As the environmental regulator, the department takes strong compliance action against authority holders who breach their obligations.

Enforcement records, actions and notices are available at the department's website in the [Public Register Portal \(Environmental Protection Act 1994\)](#).

Since 2019, Cleanaway Solid Waste Pty Ltd (the operator of the New Chum site) has been issued with **eight** enforcement notices under the Environmental Protection Act. These include:

- From 2020-2022, five Environmental Protection Orders (EPOs) in relation to varied issues including air monitoring, implementing water management plans, non-compliant water releases, waste reduction in a Resource Recovery Area (RRA), implementation of stockpile management and fire management practices (Enforcement reference numbers STAT-E-100235131, STAT-E-100175431, STAT-E-100098264, STAT-E-100077276, STAT-E-100013012)
- In 2022, two Direction Notices in relation to odour nuisance and leachate management (Enforcement reference numbers STAT-E-100230420 and STAT-E-100230380)
- In 2019, one Environmental Evaluation to investigate PFAS onsite (Enforcement reference number STAT1414).

In addition, in 2022, one information notice was issued under Section 451 of the Environmental Protection Act 1994, relating to activities to manage odour onsite. Unlike Directions Notices and EPOs these are not available on the Public Register Portal.

A formal investigation is also under way into the Cleanaway issue to determine if there has been any unlawful activity.

Formal investigations can take several months as investigators are required to conduct interviews and collect evidence. A brief is then submitted for detailed legal consideration, leading to a decision whether to prosecute.

If a company is prosecuted and found guilty, it will be a matter for a court as to what penalty is imposed. Penalties imposed by courts after a conviction for offences of this nature can vary greatly depending upon the seriousness of the offending. Maximum penalties include approximately \$1.1 million for environmental nuisance and approximately \$4.3 million for licence contraventions.

Visit the [Cleanaway New Chum odour issues](#) webpage to read the list of current actions being taken. The [FAQs](#) also include a list of enforcement actions taken in the Swanbank area since 2018 when the Odour Abatement Taskforce was established.

## **Air quality monitoring**

The 'static' [air quality monitoring](#) data has been updated to include data from 15 April to 18 May.

There are no significant changes to the key findings. Results to date have not identified the presence of air pollutants that could impact human health. Some results show pollutants at levels that cause nuisance with most spikes recorded in the late evening or early morning.

As temperatures drop in autumn and winter, temperature inversions can occur at night and in the early morning which prevents pollutants dispersing. This coincides with the timing of odour reports from the community. [Learn more about temperature inversions.](#)

## **How you can get involved with community air monitoring**

Air quality monitoring in the community is an important part of the department's regulatory

response to the odour issues at the Cleanaway New Chum site. Read the [FAQs](#) to find out more about the data.

If you live locally and would like to participate in the air quality monitoring, contact the Pollution Hotline on 1300 130 372 for more information. It's easy—simply make a phone call and a canister will be delivered to your door. There is no cost to residents to participate in the program.

### **Stay up-to-date**

The dedicated [Cleanaway New Chum odour issues](#) web page features updates from Monday to Friday and previous editions of this newsletter. It also includes [frequently asked questions](#), the links to [air quality monitoring results](#) and [live hydrogen sulfide air data](#).

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**

While we are working to address the current situation, we encourage all community members to continue to report odour issues to assist us with our ongoing response efforts.

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



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