

Question on Notice

No. 538

Asked on Wednesday, 25 May 2022

MR L MCCALLUM ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND YOUTH AFFAIRS (HON M SCANLON)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the ongoing odour impacts on our local community from Cleanaway's New Chum landfill site—

Will the Minister advise (a) what is being done to urgently stop community odour impacts and (b) what action is being taken to bring those responsible to account?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Department of Environment and Science has taken strong action in response to the odour impacts on the community alleged to be caused by Cleanaway's New Chum landfill site.

A key focus of the department is ensuring that these impacts are addressed as quickly as possible, and as such, the department has issued several enforcement notices to Cleanaway.

Two direction notices have been issued to Cleanaway requiring that it transfer excess water offsite to reduce water levels, and that Cleanaway is to continue to treat water onsite to reduce odours.

Separately, the department has issued to Cleanaway two environmental protection orders. The first requires Cleanaway to undertake air quality monitoring onsite to determine if there are any contaminants at levels that may impact human health. The second requires Cleanaway to engage an appropriately qualified person to undertake a fugitive gas assessment and prepare a report outlining the findings of the assessment. The report will assess the existing landfill gas collection, extraction and management infrastructure, and will include recommendations for improvements to the detection and mitigation of any fugitive gas emissions.

A formal investigation into Cleanaway has also commenced to determine whether any unlawful activity has occurred.

The department recognises the community is concerned about potential health impacts and is working with Queensland Health to undertake a range of air quality monitoring activities on site, and within the community, to assess the likelihood of health impacts on the community.

Results to date have not identified the presence of air pollutants at concentrations that are likely to cause impacts to human health. The department continues to liaise with Queensland Health to review air quality results and is publishing results on the department's website regularly. The community will continue to be kept informed of progress.

The department is continuing regular inspections at Cleanaway's New Chum landfill site to ensure odour issues are addressed.

It is my expectation that Cleanaway, as the responsible party, takes all actions necessary to resolve this issue as soon as possible.