

 Adelaide Plains Council	3.1	Two Wells Transfer Station – Waste Matters
	Department:	Infrastructure
	Report Author:	General Manager - Infrastructure
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this report is to advise Council Members of recent activity at the Two Wells Waste Transfer Station in relation to Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) being found amongst building waste unlawfully disposed at the site over a prolonged period of time.
- Following the identification of ACM, Council duly engaged a licensed contractor to provide guidance and advice in relation the removal of the offending material.
- After this process was concluded, the remaining waste, estimated to comprise approximately 460 tonne, was transported to Council’s Dublin quarry site for recycling.
- Further evidence of asbestos was found while preparing waste for recycling and the licensed contractor previously engaged was called back to provide further advice.
- Council has heavily engaged the following agencies as a means of providing support and guidance:-
 - Environment Protection Authority
 - SafeWork SA
 - Local Government Association Mutual Liability Scheme
 - Local Government Association Asset Mutual Fund
 - Local Government Risk Services
- Management has provided staff involved with the appropriate medical services to ensure their health, safety and wellbeing.
- Management, in concert with the aforementioned agencies and contractor, are currently exploring remedial action at the Two Wells Transfer Station and quarry site.
- The Chief Executive Officer is continuing the undertake internal investigations in relation to this matter, with a view of improving processes and practices in the event that shortcomings are discovered.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

“that Council, having considered Item 3.1 – *Two Wells Transfer Station – Waste Matters*, dated 3 October 2017, receives and notes the report and in doing so:-

- 1. Acknowledges that unlawfully disposed Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) was discovered at the Two Wells Waste Transfer Station amongst approximately 450 tonne of building waste material and notes the actions taken by staff post its discovery to mitigate health and safety risks;**
- 2. Acknowledges that an unexpected expense will be incurred by Council in order to remove the ACM currently located at the Dublin quarry site and to remediate the affected areas at the Two Wells Waste Transfer Station and Dublin quarry site and in doing so acknowledges that an adjustment will need to be made as part of the 2017/2018 budget review process;**
- 3. Delegates the authority to the Chief Executive Officer to engage a suitably qualified contractor(s) to remove the ACM currently located at the Dublin quarry site and remediate the site to the satisfaction of the Environment Protection Authority;**
- 4. Delegates the authority to the Chief Executive Officer to engage a suitably qualified contractor(s) to assess and, if necessary, remediate the Two Wells Waste Transfer Station building waste area (now void of building waste) to the satisfaction of the EPA;**
- 5. Calls for a further report to the October ordinary meeting of Council to consider any further requirements that may be imposed by the EPA or SafeWork SA; and**
- 6. Endorses the actions of the Chief Executive Officer to continue to undertake internal investigations in relation to this matter, with a view of improving processes and practices in the event that shortcomings are discovered.”**

BUDGET IMPACT

Estimated Cost:	To be advised
Future ongoing operating costs:	Nil
Is this Budgeted?	No

RISK ASSESSMENT

The greatest risk is that which concerns the health and wellbeing of staff who have been inadvertently exposed to Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) and the potential future risks to their physical and mental health.

There is a risk to the public if they continue to access the Two Wells Waste Transfer Station. This risk has been mitigated by following Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and the Industrial Hygienists advice to keep the immediate site (waste footprint) damp, signed and cordoned off.

The risks associated with the placement of the waste at the quarry site has also been mitigated by following EPA directions to keep the waste damp, signed and cordoned off.

In the long term, each of the areas will require to be deemed safe to the satisfaction of the EPA.

Attachments

1. **Council's Internal Investigation Report (SafeWork SA) – redacted version**

DETAILED REPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to inform Council that asbestos waste has been discovered at Council's Two Wells Waste Transfer Station and what steps are being taken to safely deal with the matter.

Background/History

On 22 August 2017, a cleanup operation of accumulated building waste (consisting mainly of concrete and bricks) received over a number of years from the public at the Two Wells Waste Transfer Station began. At the early stages of preparing for the cleanup an amount of unlawfully disposed suspected asbestos material was discovered.

The building waste was originally going to be crushed up to make recycled road base, but this discovery triggered a change of plan.

was engaged to provide advice and remove the ACM in accordance with Council policy. The contractor duly removed the asbestos and the remaining material was subsequently deemed safe to move. Accordingly the remaining material was moved to the crushing plant located at the Dublin quarry site.

Once the remaining material was moved and a subsequent operation commenced to separate steel reinforcement from the concrete, more evidence of asbestos was discovered. The asbestos removal contractor was again called to advise what should be done. The contractor provided three options:

1. Management and disposal of hard waste material via a licensed Contractor to certified landfill.
2. Contract an Occupational Hygienist to attend site, conduct sampling and provide additional advice regarding management of the hard waste material.
3. Engage a contractor to conduct an "Emu pick". quoted \$1,100 a day and estimated it would take three (3) days to complete.

Option 3 was selected and the material spread out as instructed by the contractor whereupon the contractor commenced his search for asbestos. At this juncture staff became uncomfortable with proceedings and the EPA and SafeWork SA were called to provide advice. The EPA subsequently attended the sites and met with the General Manager Infrastructure, Depot Operations Coordinator and the Health and Safety Officer on 15 September 2017.

The General Manager Infrastructure, Depot Operations Coordinator and the Health and Safety Officer also met with representatives from LGA's Mutual Liability Scheme, Asset

Mutual Fund and Workers Compensation Scheme on 20 September 2017 to brief them on the matter.

Refer to **Attachment 1** which contains Council's Internal Investigation Report (SafeWork SA) – redacted version, which provides further details on the chronology of events.

Discussion

At the time of agenda distribution, Council has not received a formal response from neither the EPA nor SafeWork SA. Notwithstanding, Council staff have taken verbal advice from those agencies and also engaged an Industrial Hygienist as well as medical experts to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to control health risks and appropriately dispose of the waste. These include:

- Stockpiles of hard waste have been cordoned off and warning signage installed at the quarry site. Normal operation around the site have ceased until further notice.
- Obtaining quotes from licensed contractors for the safe handling and disposal of the hard waste from the quarry site to an appropriately licensed landfill in strict accordance with EPA requirements.
- Followed Safework SA advice to seek medical treatment for four potentially affected workers who attended a General Practitioner appointment at Two Wells Medical Clinic and were referred to Benson Radiology in Gawler for chest x-rays.
- Followed EPA advice that both sites should be kept damp until confirmed safe.
- Engaged an Industrial Hygienist who provided confirmation that the Two Wells Transfer Station should be kept damp and the area where the waste was located cordoned off and signs erected.
- Industrial Hygienist to take test samples at the two sites as they see necessary and provide advice regarding site remediation.
- The Industrial Hygienist has also confirmed that the steps taken to safeguard the machinery used in the operation is appropriate. This included changing cabin filters and their safe disposal.
- Understandably, the staff involved are concerned about their health under these circumstances, and so a psychologist has been engaged to talk to the affected workers about the incident and provide support.
- Met with LGA's Mutual Liability Scheme, Asset Mutual Fund and Workers Compensation Scheme to brief them on the matter.
- Advised land owner of the matter.

Conclusion

Whereas ACM was previously unknown to exist at the Two Wells Waste Transfer Station, once discovered, all relevant steps have been taken to handle and remove the material in a safe and compliant manner in strict accordance with EPA and SafeWork SA directions.

Given this unexpected occurrence, Management is continuing to undertake a detailed review of its processes and practices to ensure that Council is equipped to deal with a wide variety of instances where ACM may be encountered in the future.

Staff are working closely with the EPA and SafeWork SA to ensure a safe resolution to the matter.

References

Legislation

Environment Protection Act 1993

Work Health Safety Act 2012

Local Government Act 1999

Council Policies

Asbestos Procedure

Contractor Management Policy and Procedure

Hazard Management Policy and Procedure