

NORFOLK



ISLAND

THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

New directions for waste management

The Minister for the Environment, Education and Social Welfare the Hon Vicky Jack MLA, said today that for some time there had been concern in the Norfolk Island community about the range of undesirable impacts associated with the practice of burning at Headstone. She said that when the top tip at Headstone was closed down, it demonstrated a desire to do better, but to date there had not been significant improvement to the burning process.

“Open burning is still our standard practice and this often results in windblown and partially burnt litter finding its way to our coastal areas”, Mrs Jack said. “No one who lives on this island and who enjoys any interaction with the sea and the coast wants this to continue”.

Mrs Jack noted that Norfolk was not alone in facing the issue, because small islands throughout the world struggled with the problem of waste disposal. Some of the issues faced in such communities included disproportionate amounts of packaging and transport waste, high freight costs, complex issues associated with exporting waste and making use of external recycling streams.

“Any discussion about waste management on this island inevitably leads to the view that proper incineration should play a major role”, Mrs Jack said. “With this in mind there has been some effort made to find a way to take the next steps in determining the feasibility of an incinerator for Norfolk. We now believe we have the commitment and the means to take the next step”.

The Minister said that the Land Use & Environment Branch is currently preparing a brief to seek expert advice on the best available and practical option for waste treatment on Norfolk. The focus of this brief would be on incineration, however there were many issues to consider before a clear recommendation could be made.

She said that incineration would not solve all the island’s waste management our problems. Incineration came at a cost both in up front purchase and in running costs.

“Badly designed and managed incinerators are being decommissioned as fast if not faster than new ones are being built so we need to make an informed decision as to the direction we take, and having done so, commit to doing it well”, Mrs Jack said.

“In coming months you will have the opportunity to be part of the development of the next phase of waste management in Norfolk Island. This is an important issue and one that we should all engage with. We fully expect and will encourage the broadest spectrum of opinion possible and if the opinion is not well informed at the beginning of the process, it should be by the end of it”.

Stephanie V Jack

Minister for the Environment, Education and Social Welfare

20th July 2007