



## **THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORFOLK ISLAND**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

# **Update on the Argentine Ant treatment programme at the Waste Management Centre**

Burning of the old green waste at the Waste Management Centre (WMC) commenced on 12<sup>th</sup> March and has resulted in most of the valley being now cleared of debris sufficient to allow the baiting for ants to commence in the first week of April. The burn has gone very well and whilst there has been a short-term inconvenience of smoke we have been fortunate in that most of the material has been dry enough to burn quickly and cleanly. This stage of the operation is now almost over, and full credit to the Forestry section in undertaking this work with the Fire Service. Once treated for ants the cleared valley will be planted by Forestry in native hardwoods and will provide a very pleasant backdrop to the centre.

The reduction of the huge pile of builders waste is well underway and the air curtain pit-burner is demonstrating that it burns the material very efficiently with very little smoke and at such a high temperature that no unburnt material remains before it is taken to Headstone for disposal –great for our coastline! It is expected that we have about another 15 days of burning to get through the remainder of the pile.

The bait for treating the site arrived on the last New Zealand ship and our current plans are to treat the entire site in the first week of April. There will be a short period of monitoring around where the builders waste pile was but it is expected that the centre will reopen for the receipt of builders waste before the end of April. New measures will be introduced to ensure that only sorted waste goes into the respective recycling waste areas at the site and these will include fees for mixed and unsorted loads which are delivered and dumped at the centre. There will still be no cost if the material delivered and sorted by the public into the respective areas. WMC authorised officers will be inspecting material coming to the centre and imposing the charges to ensure that the same problem does not eventuate in the future.

There will be a requirement to monitor the current mulch piles at the WMC for two years, after treating for the ants, before they can be safely released to the public as “ant free” and the site reopened for this activity. We are currently investigating alternate sites for the interim receipt and processing of green waste into garden mulch and it is hoped that a new location will be available for use soon.

The public is reminded that during the burning at the WMC they should adhere to the signs and barriers preventing access to where the works are being undertaken as these have been placed in order to minimise the risks of accidents occurring during this process.

George Plant  
**Chief Executive Officer**

20<sup>th</sup> March 2009