

# Public Health Inquiry into odour issues at Swanbank Industrial Estate

## Terms of reference

### 1. Purpose

A Public Health Inquiry into Odour Issues at Swanbank Industrial Estate (the Inquiry) has been being commissioned under s 294 of the *Public Health Act 2005* (PH Act) by the Honourable Tim Nicholls MP, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Member for Clayfield (the Minister).

The purpose of the Inquiry is to inquire into and report on the circumstances and possible causes of odour-related health concerns of the community living in the vicinity of the Swanbank Industrial Estate and recommend actions to mitigate the impacts.

### 2. Background

The Swanbank Industrial Area has been in place for many years. There are several landfill and composting sites within the Swanbank and New Chum industrial areas which are known sources of odour.

A significant number of residential developments, combined with infill from areas such as Redbank, have led to increased urban encroachment around the Swanbank Industrial Estate.

The Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation (DETSI) regulates environmentally relevant activities within the Swanbank Industrial Estate under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*. DETSI has been investigating and responding to concerns raised by the community about odours, dust, and other environmental nuisance in and around these areas for several years. A range of actions have been taken, including significant regulatory and compliance actions. A summary is available online at: [Swanbank and New Chum | Environment, land and water | Queensland Government](#)

Queensland Health's role has been to provide health advice and related support to the other lead agencies undertaking investigations.

To support the community, DETSI and Queensland Health have worked collaboratively to engage with the community, including establishing referral pathways for community members to access clinical services.

### 3. Scope of the Inquiry

The Inquiry will consider any relevant health-related evidence from 2016 to present day. This timeframe accounts for early complaints from the community about odour impacts, up until now.

The Inquiry will:

- investigate the extent of the health effects of the odours from the Swanbank Industrial Estate; and
- recommend actions that may be taken to mitigate any health-related impacts on local communities.

As part of this Inquiry, a number of public consultation events will be held with residents living in the vicinity of the Swanbank Industrial Estate to understand their experiences and the impact of odour on their everyday lives.

The term of the Inquiry is up to six (6) months.

The Inquiry will not consider any regulatory or compliance matters led by either the State of Queensland or Local Government, except to the extent that it provides context for any health impacts experienced by the community.

#### **4. Appointment**

The Minister has appointed Dr John Gerrard as the chairperson of the Panel of Inquiry (the Panel).

#### **5. Role of the Panel**

The key role of the Panel will be to undertake the Inquiry and prepare a Report for the Minister.

In undertaking the Inquiry, the Panel will be responsible for making decisions regarding commissioning any project briefs, evaluating impacts, and formulating recommendations, as part of the Report to the Minister. The Panel of Inquiry will specifically seek to:

- describe industrial activities occurring over time in the Swanbank Industrial Estate and summarise available data on odour and air quality in surrounding communities over the same period;
- determine whether the odour issues from the Swanbank Industrial Estate contributed to an increase in health impacts, having regard to any relevant evidence for the period 2016 to present day;
- document measures taken by relevant regulatory agencies to address odour-related complaints and health concerns and whether they have had any impact to date from a health perspective;
- identify measures taken (including by relevant regulatory agencies) to address odour-related complaints and health concerns of the community in the vicinity of the Swanbank Industrial Estate and whether they have had any impact on addressing health impacts; and
- draw on relevant domestic and international policy experiences, standards and best practices, where appropriate, in the conduct of the inquiry.

## **6. Conduct of the Inquiry**

In conducting the Inquiry, the Panel will comply with the relevant provisions of Chapter 7 of the PH Act. This includes observing natural justice and acting as quickly, and with as little formality and technicality, as is consistent with a fair and proper consideration of the issues.

## **7. Report to the Minister**

The Panel will provide a draft report to the Minister on 30 May 2025, with a final report to be provided by Friday 30 June 2025, or other date as agreed by the Minister.

The report will detail the Panel's findings, including any recommendations the Panel considers appropriate and other relevant matters.

As required under the PH Act, the Minister will table a copy of the final report in Parliament within fourteen (14) sitting days of receipt.

## **8. Media**

Enquiries from media representatives should be referred to the Media Unit, Integrated Communications, Queensland Health, [news@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:news@health.qld.gov.au)