
NARROMINE SHIRE COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING BUSINESS PAPER – 10 FEBRUARY 2021
QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE REPORT

The following questions with notice have been received from Cr Hamilton: -

1. *Noting the reply from the December Council meeting questions 2,3,4, "Until Council receives a copy of the report or is notified & or directed by the EPA, Council is unable to undertake specific action with regard to this matter", & given that Council have now received an EPA report that chemical drift had occurred on August 3rd 2020 onto Council administered land, what risk assessment for public exposure has been undertaken in response to the EPA notification? What risk assessment has been undertaken for staff exposure to the notified pollution event? What were the respective results for those risk assessments?*

Response from Director Governance

Councillors have received a copy of the notification from the EPA into the alleged overspray of 3 August 2020 wherein it has been advised that following a thorough investigation an offence was not committed under the Pesticides Act 1999 which is likely to injure a person, damage property, or harm any non-target animal or plant.

Council will await the EPA's instructions (if any) following conclusion of the referral of the incident to the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

2. *Do formulations of any of the possible chemicals to be used within the Zone SP2 at the Narromine airfield contain any PFAS compounds? Have potential PFAS contamination risks formed part of the assessment of "permissible related use" in meeting the definition as described in the answers provided by the Director of Community & Economic Development?*

Response from Director Governance

Under the Pesticides Act, pesticide users are only permitted to apply those pesticides listed by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority.

Several years ago, the EPA carried out preliminary PFAS investigations in areas where fire retardant was used. Council staff could not locate any records relating to the use of PFAS based chemicals at the Narromine Aerodrome.

It is noted that PFAS based chemicals are being phased out around the world, however certain chemicals containing PFAS are still in use in industries such as metal plating. PFAS can be found in food packaging, non-stick cookware, fabric, furniture and carpet stain protection applications, clothing and some types of fire-fighting foam.

3. *Given the lack of information supplied on the chemical toxicity levels permitted for use within Zone SP2, would the location within the zone vary if toxicity levels varied?*

Response Director Governance

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Under the Narromine LEP, the Narromine Aerodrome is zoned SP2. Within the LEP, each zoning specifies permitted uses with the consent of Council. Council assesses each development application for use in that zone on its merits and in accordance with the LEP permissible uses. Conditions of consent are placed on approvals that protect the amenity and the use of the land and in the case of any accidental contamination, Council would order the user to clean up the area to pre-contamination conditions.

As Council is the owner of the Narromine Aerodrome and owns certain infrastructure on the land, Council may lease the infrastructure. The lease for the chemical shed at the Narromine Aerodrome provides for remediation and clean-up of the land should contamination occur.

4. *Given the fact that construction of the promised overtaking lanes on the Mitchell Highway between Narromine & Dubbo by the local member prior to the last state election have not yet commenced, is Council aware when they will commence? Will they be completed before the Inland Rail N2N construction begins?*

Response from General Manager

Council staff are meeting with the Local Member for Dubbo at the end of the week and a verbal update will be provided to Councillors at the meeting.

5. *Can Council provide details of any meetings with the EPA regarding community pollution exposures including, & the basis of any Council public statements reported to be sourced from those meetings?*

Response from Director Governance

Council staff have spoken to the EPA in relation to the alleged overspray of pesticide on 3 August 2020, firstly to confirm that the EPA was in receipt of a complaint, and wherein they advised there was an active investigation; secondly Council staff contacted the EPA for consent to release its summary of outcomes to Councillors. Notification from Cr Hamilton was forwarded to the EPA as requested on 3 December 2020.

6. *Further to question 11 from the December 2020 Council meeting, could Council staff please table a copy of the response from Cotton Australia regarding their 2018 Defoliation Report conducted within the shire?*

Response from Director Governance

There has been no response received from Cotton Australia as yet. A follow up email has been sent.