



Norfolk Island Fire Control

Community consultation sessions – burning of green waste

March 2021

Background

In October 2020, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (the department) released a consultation paper setting out proposed reforms to the legislation dealing with fire control in Norfolk Island. In response to the consultation paper, only one submission was made. That submission raised some concerns about the proposal to amend the Fire Control Act 2000 (NI) to further regulate burning of green waste.

Green waste

‘Green waste’ means waste that consists of branches, grass, leaves, plants, loppings, tree trunks, tree stumps and similar materials. The burning of green waste poses health and safety concerns for local residents and the environment. This includes increased risk of uncontrolled fire, damage to land and property, and danger to those in the community living with respiratory problems such as asthma.

Consultation sessions

The Norfolk Island community was invited to share their views on the regulation of green waste burning during two face-to-face community consultation sessions hosted by the Norfolk Island Administrator, Mr Eric Hutchinson, on 2 March 2021. A total of 15 people including the Chief Fire Control Officer and other Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC) staff attended.

Notable themes from the discussion included the importance of improving air quality, bio security issues arising from the movement of material around the island, the need to educate the community and the suggestion of ‘zoning’ into rural and urban areas with different levels of regulation.

Some attendees raised concerns about the cost of permits. The department understands that the NIRC is not currently collecting fees for permits, with the preference being to encourage open communication to achieve safety and health outcomes.

Generally, those attending the sessions were in agreement that further controls on burning of green waste need to be introduced, and that regulation and education will be beneficial for the health of the community, visitors and the island environment.

Further information

The consultation paper and public submission can also be found at:
https://www.regional.gov.au/territories/norfolk_island/legislation-updates.aspx

Next Steps

The Assistant Minister will be briefed about the outcomes of the consultation and approval will be sought for changes to the legislation.

Future updates will be provided in local media and on the department’s website.