Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority

SECTION 14 INCIDENT REPORT (*Waste Management and Pollution Control Act*)

Date and Time of Notification:	11.20am - 23rd December 2025
Person / Company:	Connor Jones – Alice Springs Town Council – Regional Waste Management Facility
Incident:	Fire on Landfill and Demolition Cell

(a) the incident causing or threatening to cause pollution	A fire ignited within the Stage 5A demolition waste stockpile at the Alice Springs Landfill, involving mixed demolition materials including timber, tree stumps, palms, pallets, concrete, steel and other inert construction waste. The fire was first identified by NT Fire & Rescue Service at approximately 1:00am on 23 December 2025, with thermal assessment indicating it had likely been burning since around 6:00pm on 22 December 2025. The incident created a significant risk of pollution through: • Air pollution – smoke and particulates moving across the landfill and potentially toward the township depending on wind direction. • Potential subsurface spread – risk of fire migrating beneath waste layers into the active mixed waste cell, which could increase emissions and destabilise the landfill mass. Contaminated fire water runoff – potential for water used in suppression efforts to carry suspended solids and contaminants into surrounding soil or waste layers
(b) the place where the incident occurred	The incident occurred within Stage 5A of the Alice Springs Landfill, located on Commonage Road, Ilparpa. The affected area is the demolition and dirty concrete stockpile zone, positioned adjacent to the active mixed-waste tipping face. Stage 5A contains mixed demolition waste including timber, palms, tree stumps, pallets, concrete slabs, steel sections and other construction materials. The fire began within this stockpile and posed a risk to the neighbouring municipal waste cell.
(c) the date and time of the incident	The incident is believed to have begun at approximately 6:00pm on 22 December 2025, based on the assessment from NT Fire & Rescue Service (NTFRS). The fire was first observed by NTFRS at approximately 1:00am on 23 December 2025 during unrelated travel past the landfill. The incident was formally notified to landfill management at 4:30am on 23 December 2025, at which point the response commenced. Active suppression, containment, and monitoring operations continued continuously from 23–30 December 2025. As of today 30th December on making this incident report, the risk of fire is very low and expected to smoulder for up to another week.

(d) how the pollution has occurred, is occurring or may occur	Still unknown how the fire has initially started. The pollution risk came from a fire that possibly started in the demolition waste pile in Stage 5A. This area contains things like timber, tree stumps, palms, pallets, and mixed demolition debris, which produced a lot of smoke once they caught alight. The smoke created the main pollution concern, as wind direction could push it across different parts of the landfill and towards town. The Wind was in our favour as it has been blowing in an north eastern direction away from the town centre. There was also a chance the fire could travel underground through buried demolition waste, which would increase emissions and potentially reach the active mixed-waste area if it wasn't contained. Fire suppression required large amounts of water, which created a risk of firewater soaking into the surrounding waste or soil. This was managed by building a deep clean-fill trench and monitoring runoff closely.

(e) the attempts made to prevent, reduce, control, rectify or clean up the pollution or resultant environmental harm caused or threatening to be caused by the incident	A range of actions were taken immediately and continuously to control the fire, limit smoke impacts, prevent underground spread, and contain any potential environmental harm. These included: 1. Immediate fire suppression Large-scale and continuous use of water carts and tankers (including contracted units). Direct dousing of the active fire front and later smouldering pockets. Use of the cannon tanker to reach deeper or harder-to-access hotspots. 2. Construction of major containment controls Excavated a deep clean-fill firebreak trench (approx. 3m deep × 2m wide) to stop the fire spreading toward the mixed-waste cell. Built a clean-fill wall and working platform to allow safe machine access and to block subsurface spread. Built a new trench 3m x 3m across the face approximately 30 metres from the first one mentioned above as hotspots were discovered to isolate heat and prevent fire travelling beneath the waste. 3. Excavation and exposure of burning material Continuous use of excavators and the compactor to pull down smouldering waste and expose buried hotspots. Removal and sacrifice of affected demolition waste in Stage 5A, following NT Fire & Rescue advice, to protect the municipal waste area. 4. Monitoring and heat detection NTFRS attended multiple times and once with thermal imaging equipment to identify hotspots and confirm safe zones. Staff monitored smoke direction and adjusted operations as required. Regular inspections across day and night shifts. 5. Site closures and operational changes Landfill closed to the public initially and restricted to essential waste only (curbside and resident wheelie bins). All demolition, recycling, and non-essential waste was temporarily refused to reduce traffic and risk. Traffic was redirected safely using temporary signage and a new temporary tip face was opened. 6. Pollution and worker safety controls Respirators issued to weighbridge staff to give to customers, contractors and operators when smoke drift increased in opposidte direction. Added reflective markers and extra lighting to improve night-time visibility and avoid machinery incidents.

	Water management focused on ensuring runoff remained within the landfill footprint. 7. Clean-up and recovery work Continued excavation and dousing of any remaining smouldering material. Construction of new access roads to reach deep hotspots safely. Ongoing addition of clean-fill and scalps to stabilise the area and prepare for eventual rehabilitation.
(f) the identity of the person notifying the NT EPA	I Connor Jones, Supervisor of the Alice Springs Town Council's, Regional Waste Management Facility (Acting Manager at this time) was the on-site supervisor coordinating the response from the time the fire was confirmed on the morning of 23 December 2025 and made the initial notification to the NTEPA Pollution Hotline at 11:20am that same day.