

Tarago Times May 2024 edition

Introduction

We wanted to address some recent confusion and questions around the Environmental Risk Rating for the Woodlawn site. In an attempt to explain how the Risk Based Licencing (RBL) system works and why Woodlawn is currently rated as a high level 3, we put an article in the February Tarago Times.

However, in an early draft of the article, the writer misinterpreted the guidelines, stating Woodlawn had always been at the highest level level 3 risk rating. This occurred because the EPA has two parts to the ratings. One part of the rating goes to the complexity of a site, which is relatively fixed, the second is around compliance history. This is where the confusion occurred.

This incorrect interpretation of the guidelines on our part, was pointed out in subsequent articles in the Tarago Times and also discussed at the Woodlawn Community Liaison Committee February meeting.

Every year, the EPA reviews the risk of the site and includes their rating on the annual licence return and fees notice. The Woodlawn site risk was increased from a level 1 to a level 2 in 2022, and then to a level 3 in 2023. The notification we receive of any change to our rating is through these annual return and fees notices, which were previously directed to our administration team in Sydney for prompt payment. Subsequently, we have changed our processes so these notices are first checked by the relevant personnel on site at Woodlawn, ensuring any changes to the risk rating can be communicated immediately to the operations team.

What does risk level 3 mean for our site?

In short, it means the site is under closer regulatory oversight compared to other levels. That's because the EPA's risk-based licensing system is designed to tailor the level of regulation to the potential environmental risks posed by the licensee. Those with higher-risk operations face increased regulatory oversight, and this rating is used to determine the annual licence fees - the higher the rating, the higher the administrative fees.

We have been collaborating closely with regulatory authorities and independent industry experts to implement long term strategy measures that effectively mitigate these risks and lower our overall risk rating. We are addressing the dam levels by increasing evaporation, investigating further treatment processes for beneficial reuse, increasing groundwater monitoring and building new engineered containment facilities.

Ongoing Improvements and Upgrades

We have also worked tirelessly on improving our container maintenance, assessing, repairing and where needed, water testing every container in circulation. Additionally, we have introduced another 100 new containers and continue to order new ones as required to replace decommissioned stock.

And, of course, we continue to work on odour management actions arising from the independent odour audits by addressing potential odour sources and improving our gas capture infrastructure.

We are hopeful that all this hard work will once again reduce our rating back to level 2, and we will keep working just as hard until we can get it back to level 1, the lowest risk level.

Woodlawn ARC Update

You may have had the opportunity to meet a few of our team participating in the Tarago Show and Medieval Faire. It was a great chance to interact with local residents and discuss the ARC project and Woodlawn Eco Precinct. We appreciated the valuable insights and feedback provided by community members who spoke with us.



Planning Update and Next Steps

Back in late 2023, we submitted our interim response to the submission report and draft studies to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and NSW Environment Protection Authority.

Just last month, we received the results of this gap analysis review, and our team is currently working through the comments received. We appreciate your patience as we strive to provide comprehensive responses to the matters raised in your submissions. Veolia is

committed to providing full and transparent information to the community about the project - and this takes time.

We are working to finalise the response to the Submissions Report, and update the additional studies requested. Once completed, the report will be lodged on the Major Projects portal, making it publicly available for everyone to access. We'll be sure to notify the community once the report is available.

In the meantime, we encourage you to visit our official [Woodlawn ARC Project](#) website for detailed information about the project. As always, our team is more than happy to answer any questions you might have. Feel free to reach out to us at thearc@veolia.com - we're here to help!