

Waste management giant Cleanaway goes up in smoke.

Media release
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The Cleanaway Materials Recovery Facility in South Guildford, Western Australia – the largest in the southern hemisphere - has today caught fire and burnt through potentially 1 million tonnes of waste materials, including mixed plastic and cardboard wastes.

The WA Fire and Emergency Services are still battling the blaze at 5.15pm today and have gained control of the blaze but are unable to put the fire out. The fire started at 9am this morning.

Jane Bremmer, National Toxics Network Australia, “This fire represents a lot about our waste management sector and the failed regulation that supports it. The dangers of stockpiling mixed plastic waste and cardboard and allowing this industry sector to be located close to residential areas is profoundly demonstrated here.

The health of our fire fighters, workers and surrounding communities have been put at risk today unnecessarily.

This facility has a licence to store up to 1 million tonnes of material. Their licence to operate has been approved until 2032.

The combustion of mixed plastic waste is a serious concern for health and environmental impacts. It is known to generate deadly dioxins and other toxic pollutants that can cause serious health impacts not only after a short term, acute exposure but over a longer time frame as the pollution deposits in the surrounding environment.

We are calling on the WA government to immediately conduct a full and thorough inquiry into the Cleanaway MRF, the fire and its impact on the surrounding community.

There needs to be an urgent assessment of the residual ash and particulate depositions in the surrounding community and monitoring of community and worker health.

Our government needs to step up and guard our communities against waste management companies who would allow dangerous stockpiles of waste to build up and represent a fire risk in our state. This is especially important following the Prime Ministers recent decision to ban waste exports which could motivate unscrupulous players to commit crimes.”

For more information:

Jane Bremmer (WA based) - 0432041397
Co-coordinator
National Toxics Network