

TITLE:	Low Aromatic Fuel (OPAL) Policy		
DIVISION:	Corporate		
ADOPTED BY:	Barkly Regional Council		
DATE OF ADOPTION:	31 August 2016	DATE OF REVIEW:	31 August 2017
MOTION NUMBER:	OCCS202/16		
POLICY NUMBER:	CP000039		
AUTHORISED:	Chief Executive Officer		

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:

All employees of the Barkly Regional Council, Elected Members and Council contractors and their employees.

SUMMARY

This Policy commits the Barkly Regional Council and its contractors to use low aromatic petrol whenever possible as well as committing the Barkly Regional Council to encourage and promote the use of this type of fuel.

OBJECTIVES

To reduce the incidence and impact of petrol sniffing amongst youth and communities by supporting the use of OPAL (low aromatic fuel) within the Council area and surrounding regions.

BACKGROUND

Petrol sniffing is a major problem in communities across four Australian states. It destroys health and families.

The introduction of a “non-sniffable” petrol variety has greatly reduced, but not ended sniffing. Since 2005, some petrol providers have offered low aromatic substitutes for regular, unleaded, 91 petrol specifically designed to reduce this form of substance abuse. An evaluation report written for the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing in 2008 revealed that in 17 out of the 20 communities surveyed where OPAL was the only available petrol, the prevalence of petrol sniffing had declined. The largest decrease was observed in Central Australia and the APY lands of South Australia, with 94% and 93% decreases respectively. The number of people sniffing had most significantly dropped among heavy, regular user groups (90%), leading to a comparable substantial decrease in the negative social impact caused by sniffing in communities in the sample.

Replacing most of the aromatic compounds (such as benzene, toluene and xylene) in regular unleaded petrol with non-aromatic compounds, low aromatic fuels are designed to reduce the narcotic effect induced from sniffing petrol and to discourage sniffing. Conforming to the National Fuels Quality Standards Act 2000, low aromatic fuel has replaced regular unleaded 91 fuels at a number of selected sites throughout Central Australia.

In 2013 the Commonwealth enacted legislation to enable the Minister to establish *low aromatic fuel areas* and *fuel control areas*. ”. [See Appendix One – page 4](#)

POLICY STATEMENT

Recognising the very serious health risks associated with petrol sniffing, the Barkly Regional Council supports the use of Opal and low aromatic fuel whereby the aim is to reduce the incidence and impact of petrol sniffing amongst youth and communities.

Barkly Region is designated a “Low Aromatic Fuel (Designated Area) – Instrument 2016”. [See Appendix One – page 4](#)

- Use exclusively low aromatic fuel in all Barkly Regional Council vehicles suited to low octane fuel subject to its availability
- Include, in all contracts and tender documents the requirement for Council contractors (and their employees) to use low aromatic fuel in all vehicles works suited to this type of fuel when undertaking work pursuant to the contract and where low aromatic fuel is available
- Ensure that Barkly Regional Council employees do not transport to or store any high octane fuel in any of its communities
- Use of high aromatic fuel in the Barkly Regional Council depot must be stored in a secured locked area after hours
- Direct Barkly Regional Council employees on or visiting communities not to use or transport any higher octane fuel
- Include in contracts and tender documents a requirement imposing a similar obligation upon Barkly Regional Council contractors and their employees
- Continue to work with Federal and Territory agencies and other organisations to encourage and promote the exclusive use of low aromatic fuel within the Barkly region

Note:

As a direct substitute for regular unleaded fuel with an octane rating of 91, both Opal fuel and Unleaded 91 Low Aromatic fuel can safely be mixed with the regular unleaded 91 already in a vehicle.

However, it is important to note, Opal fuel and Low Aromatic fuel is not suitable for vehicles that require a premium unleaded fuel with an octane rating of 95 or higher.

TERMINOLOGY & DEFINITIONS

Policy

The Barkly Regional Council Policy sets out what the Council wants to do and how they do it. Policies are formed to meet legislative requirements and to ensure smooth decision making. Policies must be formally adopted in a meeting of Council and comply with the Barkly Regional Council’s legal obligations and relevant standards.

Low Aromatic Fuel

Low aromatic unleaded fuel has been specially designed to contain lower levels of the toxic aromatic compounds such as benzene, toluene and xylene. Low aromatic unleaded fuel has a minimum octane rating of 91 so it can be used in any engine in which manufacturers recommend the use of regular unleaded 91 fuels.

High Octane Fuel

High aromatic fuel has levels of the toxic aromatic compounds such as benzene, toluene and xylene which give people who sniff petrol a "high".

Fuel Control Areas

In 'low aromatic fuel areas', corporations cannot supply, transport or possess regular unleaded fuel.

In 'fuel controlled areas', the Minister may determine a range of requirements relating to fuels. This may include, for example, how fuels are stored, what information is communicated in relation fuels, and record keeping requirements.

REFERENCES

Barkly Regional Council Purchasing & Procurement Policy
Barkly Regional Council Hazardous Chemicals Policy
Barkly Regional Council Risk Management Policy
Barkly Regional Council Conduct in the Workplace Policy

LEGISLATION & STANDARDS

Low Aromatic Fuel Act 2013
Work, Health & Safety Legislation (NUL) 2011
Work, Health & Safety Act (NUL) 2011
National Fuels Quality Standards Act 2000 (In Force –being Reviewed-Superseded Version)

LINKS

<https://www.lowaromaticunleaded.gov.au/for-communities/faq>
<https://www.lowaromaticunleaded.gov.au/faq-page>
<https://www.lowaromaticunleaded.gov.au/low-aromatic-fuel-areas>
<https://www.lowaromaticunleaded.gov.au/tenant-creek-consultations>
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/num_act/lafa2013180/
<http://www.abc.net.au/health/library/stories/2005/11/24/1831506.htm>
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nt/num_act/whasula201139o2011543/
http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nt/num_act/whasula201139o2011543/
<https://www.environment.gov.au/topics/environment-protection/fuel-quality/legislation/about-act>

RESPONSIBILITY & DELEGATION

Barkly Regional Council
Elected Members
Chief Executive Officer
Director Corporate Services
Director Infrastructure
Director Community Services

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

31 August 2017 (Review)

APPENDIX ONE

Low Aromatic Fuel (Designated Areas) (Barkly Region) Instrument 2016

I, Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, make the following instrument.

Dated 12.2.2016

NIGEL SCULLION
Minister for Indigenous Affairs
