

Burning issue for recycling

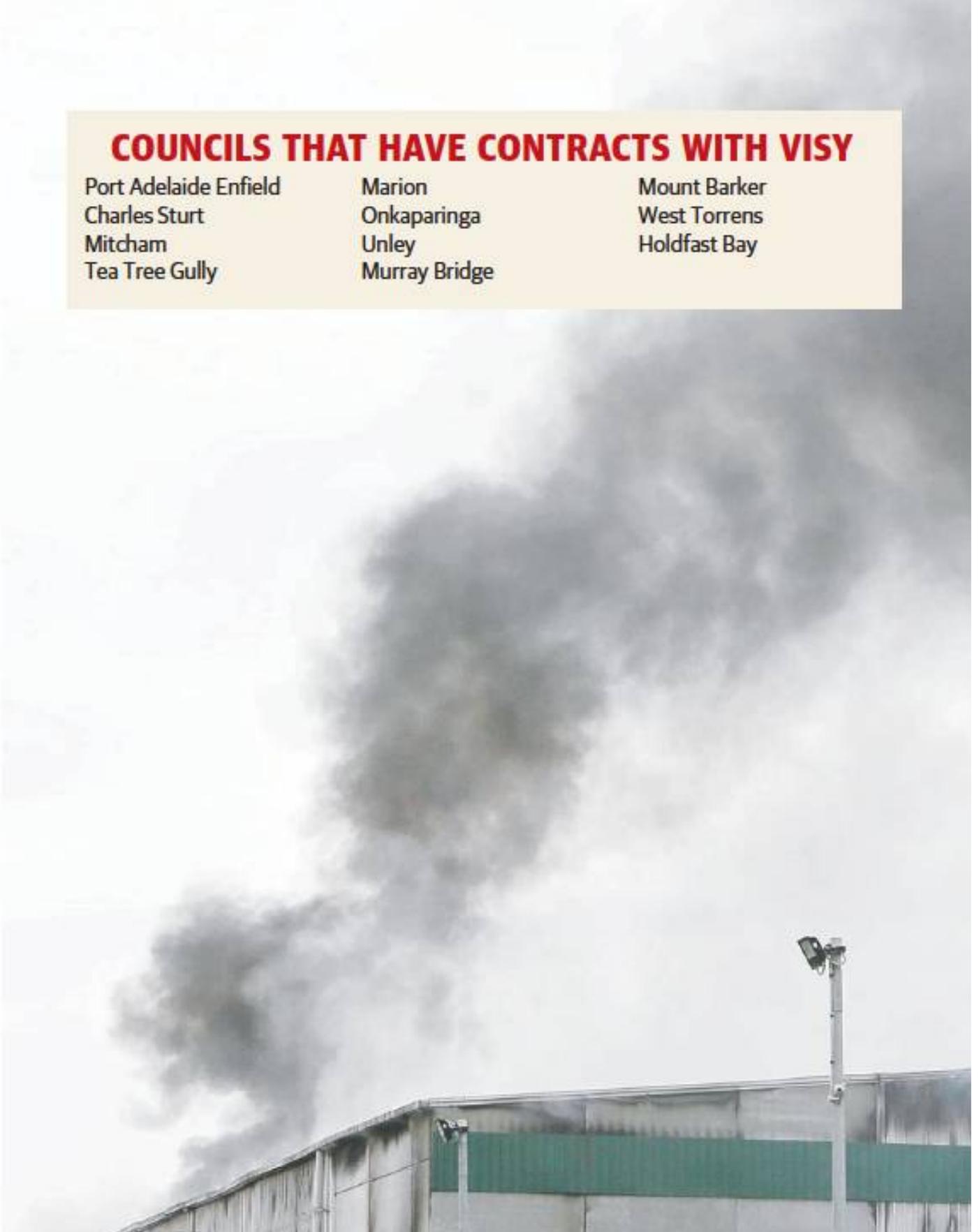
COLIN JAMES, BEN CAMERON

COUNCILS THAT HAVE CONTRACTS WITH VISY

Port Adelaide Enfield
Charles Sturt
Mitcham
Tea Tree Gully

Marion
Onkaparinga
Unley
Murray Bridge

Mount Barker
West Torrens
Holdfast Bay





Smoke billows from the Visy recycling processing plant at Wingfield. Picture: Emma Brasie

RECYCLING from councils across Adelaide will be stockpiled following a fire which crippled a processing plant.

Top-level crisis talks are being held in a bid to avoid mountains of paper, cardboard, plastics and metal being created at temporary sites.

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has been meeting with representatives of cardboard-making giant Visy in a bid to avoid sending the material to landfills.

The company owns a recycling plant at Wingfield which caught fire on Thursday.

Visy has contracts with several metropolitan councils to collect and process their residential yellow bin material.

The company has been asked to either use its trucking fleet to transport the material to its interstate facilities or arrange for its storage in Adelaide until it can be processed within Australia or overseas.

The other major recycling facility in Adelaide is operated by the Northern Adelaide Waste Management Authority at Edinburgh North.

Its chief executive, Adam Faulkner, yesterday said it was operating at full capacity processing recycling for 10 councils and was unable to accept any other material.

Industry sources say if the recycling cannot be processed by Visy, the EPA will have to grant dispensation to allow it to be sent to privately operated landfills north of Adelaide.

The last time this occurred was last year, when the contents of more than 400 shipping containers stored at Wingfield were sent to landfills at Inkerman after the collapse of a Melbourne-based company, SKM Recycling.

Thousands of tonnes of recycling also was dumped in Victoria, including yellow bin material collected from Adelaide councils.

Environment Minister David Speirs said a "small number of South Australian councils rely on Visy for recycling collection".

"We are working with industry and local government to ensure it's business as usual for household waste collection next week," he said. "Where possible, we are trying to avoid any possible recycling being diverted to landfill."

The Local Government Association yesterday said it was working with councils with Visy contracts to find a temporary solution to the latest recycling crisis.

The councils included Port Adelaide Enfield, Charles Sturt, Mitcham, Tea Tree Gully, Marion, Onkaparinga, Unley, Murray Bridge, Mount Barker, West Torrens and Holdfast Bay.

LGA president Angela Evans said recycling could remain uncollected across Adelaide if a solution was not found by next week.

"It's a pretty urgent problem that we've got," she said. "We need to come up with a solution to suit everyone as quickly as possible."

Visy did not respond to requests for comment.