

# New rules for waste

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has placed new rules on how the Regional Resource Recovery Centre's (RRRC) waste composting facility runs.

The rules cover procedures for failures and say that the South Metropolitan Regional Council (SMRC), which is responsible for the facility, must filter gases before discharging them and that odour should not unreasonably affect people's health.

Member for Riverton Mike Nahan said the DEC amended the SMRC's licence to operate the RRRC to include six new odour clauses.

"While I personally believe the new clauses are still not strong enough, I am pleased that they have now been included in the SMRC's new licence," he said.

"Those clauses should have been in place years ago in the SMRC's first licence to operate.

"It seems incredible that it has taken years of complaints from the community over the emission of odours into their homes and the loss of amenity they have suffered to finally get the SMRC's licence amended.

"From experience, the local community knows that it is impossible for the SMRC to convert putrescible waste into compost without creating unpleasant and unwelcome odours.

"The problem is exacerbated because the plant

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- Ensure all odorous gases are collected from the process operations area and treated by the biofilters and pollution control equipment prior to being discharged into the environment.

- Ensure odour emitted from the premises does not unreasonably interfere with the health, welfare, convenience, comfort or amenity of any person who is not on the premises.

- Ensure that in the event of a failure or malfunction of any pollution control equipment, it shall inform the director within 24 hours of the cause and duration of the malfunction, remedies taken and time of start up.

- Operate and maintain a system to detect failures in the pollution control equipment in real time on and after August 1, 2010.

- Take all reasonable and practical actions to cease any emissions of unreasonable odours when a failure or malfunction of the pollution control equipment is detected.

- Ensure that if pollution control equipment failure is not rectified within 24 hours and unreasonable odours are likely to be emitted, no further putrescible waste is to be accepted at the premises until such time as the failure has been rectified.

is located far too close to residential homes.

"While other similar plants have extensive buffer zones, the SMRC does not."

Dr Nahan said he expected the SMRC to appeal the most important new clause under odour con-

trol, (clause 16), which states, the licensee shall ensure that odour emitted from the premises does not unreasonably interfere with the health, welfare, convenience, comfort or amenity of any person not on the premises.

"This is an important new clause for the protection of the community and I urge the DEC not to allow any amendments to it," Dr Nahan said.

Dr Nahan said despite the SMRC undertaking expensive remedial work to contain the odours the surrounding community was still experiencing the stench in their homes on a regular basis.

SMRC communications manager Chuck Ellis said management was still determining what impact the amendments may have on the operations of the composting facility.

"The SMRC is committed to ensuring the RRRC meets its licence conditions, environmental goals and community expectations," he said.

Mr Ellis said it was important to clarify the licence concerned the composting facility.

The RRRC is made up of three recycling facilities, the WCF, the green waste processing facility and the materials recovery facility, which burned down in 2009," he said.

Residents should contact DEC's emergency pollution response hotline on 1300 784 782 if they experience annoying odours.