

# We're on the scent



RRRC communication manager Chuck Ellis on top of a pile of ground green waste material, which has now been identified as causing the odour problem at the RRRC.  
Picture: Marcelo Palacios [www.communitypix.com.au](http://www.communitypix.com.au) d31503

## Council finds the big stink culprit

By MICHAEL FERRANTE

THE Southern Metropolitan Regional Council (SMRC) will change its handling of green waste after discovering the material was to blame for much of the foul odours from its Canning Vale recycling plant.

A study commissioned by the SMRC, which has previously denied being the source of the odour experienced in Leeming and Canning Vale, identified green tree prunings, dry leaves and other garden clippings as major culprits of unpleasant odours emanating from the Regional Resource Recovery Centre's (RRRC) green waste processing facility.

The grinding process used to produce garden mulch was found to cause high odour concentrations. It produces up to seven times more odour units than solid waste composting, according to the SMRC.

The SMRC is working on a new odour management plan, with proposed measures to include grinding and storing mulched material in an enclosed structure rather than outdoors, and removing mulch from the site within 24 hours.

Other measures being looked at include covering stockpiles overnight, limiting grinding to selected hours and monitoring wind

direction to minimise odours spreading.

SMRC chairman Doug Thompson said the findings were an important breakthrough for the green waste processing industry.

The SMRC's announcement came a day after an Upper House inquiry was tabled in State Parliament about the odour problems and broader waste management issues in WA.

In the report, the Canning Melville Community Odour Action Group representatives said the "vile" and "foul" odours were making life a misery for nearby residents, and wanted the plant relocated. The group's Mandy Clarke blamed health-related side effects, including blood noses, elevated heart rates, dizzy spells and severe headaches, on RRRC odours.

The SMRC refuted claims that its plant was causing lifestyle and health problems for residents, and described the language used in a petition of residents as "extravagant".

The report said residents' claims were legitimate, but acknowledged "considerable improvements" in odour reduction from measures put in place by the SMRC since 2007. It described council's communication with concerned residents as poor.

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