

# Higher costs await councils

By JANE EVANS

THE City of Canning's controversial withdrawal from the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council (SMRC) last month could force member councils to bear a greater financial burden, according to the City of Melville.

However, CEO Shayne Silcox declared Melville's long-term commitment to the council.

"The City of Canning was a very significant participant in the SMRC... it could be expected that

their withdrawal will result in a substantial increase in the financial obligations of the remaining participants to fund the SMRC," he said.

"But despite withdrawal from the SMRC, the City of Canning will continue to be required to honour its share of loan commitments."

Dr Silcox said that if Canning was not disposing of waste at the facility, the SMRC would lose income from gate fees.

"If that loss of income cannot be offset by income from other users,

then extra costs will certainly be incurred by the councils.

"These costs will need to be passed on to ratepayers through an increased refuse charge."

Dr Silcox added the SRMC's mid-year budget review flagged the increased cost of running the Regional Resource and Recovery Centre at \$1 million.

"In addition, due to the impact of the global economic crisis, the income it receives from the sale of recycled material has reduced by as much as 60 per cent," he said.

"This has meant the SMRC has lowered its expected income from recycling sales by \$2.8 million.

"As a result of these cost increases and revenue reductions, the City has been notified of increases in the gate fees it pays to dispose of residents' waste, effective from April 1."

An SMRC spokesman declined to answer further questions on the topic, instead referring to a media statement issued in early March.

Leeming resident Mandy Clarke said she had experienced

the odour from the RRRRC in Canning Vale for five years and felt that the City of Melville should withdraw from the SMRC and investigate a safer and more environmentally viable waste option.

"If the Melville council had a conscience, they would be taking action instead of turning their backs on residents," she said.

Dr Silcox said the City would continue to work with the SMRC and all the relevant authorities regarding any odour complaints from the area.