

SMRC denies odour

By **ADAM BROCKMAN**

THE Southern Metropolitan Regional Council (SMRC) says it cannot stop odours from its Canning Vale waste composting facility because they do not exist.

Chairman Doug Thompson dismissed the methods of a Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) report released last week that found the regional resource recovery centre was "the most significant source of odour in the area".

The SMRC has been given until November 21 to formulate an odour abatement plan for the facility or risk it being shut.

"If the DEC can't tell us where the alleged odour is coming from, how can we possibly abate it?" Cr Thompson said.

"I was not convinced by the evidence the DEC put before us - they couldn't even identify exactly where the alleged odour source was coming from within the RRRRC."

Cr Thompson said the DEC's methods did not stand up to scientific scrutiny.

"When we carried out rigorous scientific tests using thermal imaging techniques, pressure readings and inspections, we could not detect any emissions that would have an impact on the community," he said.

Cr Thompson said the SMRC had engaged Utting Market Research to survey 609

residents living near the RRRRC in October and that odours had not ranked in the top 15 concerns that bothered them.

Riverton MLA Mike Nahan said the SMRC's response was unacceptable and he urged it to find the sources of odour pollution.

"If the SMRC fails to respond to the DEC's satisfaction, I expect the plant to be closed until they do so," he said.

"The SMRC has consistently failed to identify the pollution from its own monitoring and failed to work co-operatively with the affected community."

The DEC collected data from March to May this year, including a market survey of

265 households and businesses within a 1.2km radius of the facility, observations by trained assessors and chemical sampling.

Five odour field surveys were held at locations based on the DEC's complaints database and Bureau of Meteorology predictions of prevailing winds.

Assessors "sniffed" the air and graded the severity and nature of the smell, with 34 per cent of detected odours attributed to the RRRRC. Analysis of the odour characteristics attributed 65 per cent to the RRRRC's composting facility.