

Canning Vale Waste Facility Must Reduce Odour Emissions

Friday, 31 October 2008

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) is requiring a Canning Vale waste facility to carry out extensive odour reduction works following community complaints and a subsequent investigation.

The Southern Metropolitan Regional Council's (SMRC) Regional Resource Recovery Centre (RRRC) separates recyclable products from waste, which is converted into compost and mulch.

After receiving ongoing community complaints about odours being emitted from the facility, DEC conducted an investigation which included extensive air quality testing and an independent market survey of 265 households and businesses within a 1.2km radius of the facility.

DEC Deputy Director General Robert Atkins said the results from the air quality tests and survey confirmed odours were being emitted from the facility and they were unreasonably impacting on the community.

"Almost one third of all survey participants identified odours in the local area, while 64 per cent of participants had noticed odours in the months leading up to the survey in July," Mr Atkins said.

DEC ordered the SMRC to carry out odour reduction works in 2006, and while the subsequent works have reduced the odours to an extent, they have failed to resolve odour emission problems at the facility.

The Department is also conducting investigations into potential breaches of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 relating to odour incidents linked to the facility from earlier this year.

DEC today directed the SMRC to prepare an odour abatement plan for the facility within 21 days, after which an Environmental Protection Notice will be served requiring the abatement of the emission of unreasonable odours and the implementation of the abatement program within a set timeframe.

"DEC will also amend the licence for the RRRC to include an offensive odour condition to enable prompt enforcement action when plant failures cause unreasonable odour emissions and the Department expects the SMRC to act quickly to resolve the odour problem in light of this conclusive evidence," Mr Atkins said.

"DEC recognises that the facility provides an important waste management service for its member councils, but the SMRC needs to reduce odour emissions to ensure its continued operation and acceptance by the local community."

The full air quality report and community survey is available at www.dec.wa.gov.au.

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