



The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) recently completed a detailed investigation into odours that were suspected to be coming from the waste facility – also known as a Regional Resource Recovery Centre – on Bannister Road, Canning Vale. This environmental update contains a summary of that investigation, as well as the results of a recent phone survey of Canning Vale households and businesses.

## What happens at the waste facility?

The Southern Metropolitan Regional Council uses the facility as an alternative to sending domestic waste to landfill (rubbish tips). The facility separates recyclable products from the remaining waste, which is converted into compost and mulch. The facility is licensed by DEC under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

## How has the waste facility dealt with odours in the past?

Following community complaints in 2006 and a subsequent investigation, DEC directed the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council to carry out extensive works to resolve odour emission problems at the facility. These works were carried out during a temporary closure of the facility between December 2006 and February 2007.

## What have this year's investigations by DEC revealed?

Using scientifically proven methods, air quality experts conducted extensive night time odour testing at multiple locations near the waste facility. The testing confirmed beyond any doubt that the waste facility was the source of unreasonable odours, which had one or more of the following characteristics: the smell of garbage, the smell of green waste, and/or the smell of compost. Odours were at their strongest within 700m of the facility.

To complement the air quality testing, DEC commissioned an independent market researcher to survey 265 local households and businesses about lifestyle and environmental issues in Canning Vale. This was an accurate method for gathering feedback from the community in a way that protected the privacy of all participants.

The people who voluntarily participated in the survey came from within a 1.2km radius of the waste facility.

The results showed that without prompting, 29 per cent of survey participants mentioned odours in the local area as an issue that concerned them. Among people living within 600m of the waste facility, 72 per cent mentioned odours.

Sixty four per cent of all survey participants had noticed odours in recent months. Among people living within 600m of the waste facility, 93 per cent had noticed odours within recent months.

The majority of odours reported by survey participants were described as either: the smell of green waste, a musty/earthy odour or a fruity/pine odour.

Among survey participants who noticed the smell of green waste, 95 per cent considered the waste facility on Bannister Road to be the prime source of the odours.

DEC has concluded that:

- The source of the majority of the odours is the waste facility operated by the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council.
- The odours are unreasonable and are having a significant impact on the community.

## What is being done to remove the odours?

Although the facility performs an important service for the community, it is an offence under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* for a licensed facility to emit unreasonable odours. As a result, on 31 October 2008 DEC gave the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council 21 days to produce a comprehensive plan that will put an end to the odours. DEC will assess the plan and require its prompt implementation.

## More information

You can read the full air quality report and community survey at [www.dec.wa.gov.au](http://www.dec.wa.gov.au).

To report a pollution incident contact DEC's Pollution Response Unit on 1300 784 782 (24 hrs) or email [pollutionwatch@dec.wa.gov.au](mailto:pollutionwatch@dec.wa.gov.au).