

SOUTH METROPOLITAN REGIONAL COUNCIL, COMPOST TRIALS, GRANT

763. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Housing and Works representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage
- (1) Has the Minister recently approved a grant of \$600 000 from the Waste Management Fund to the South Metropolitan Regional Council for compost trials?
 - (2) What are the specific objectives of this project?
 - (3) Is the Minister aware that this compost is likely to be contaminated with broken glass, batteries and toxic materials?
 - (4) Was the EPA asked to assess this project before funding was approved as it is likely to cause pollution?
 - (5) Who will pay for the decontamination of the sites where these trials are going to take place?
 - (6) What is the Government's preferred strategy for the disposal of municipal solid waste?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has provided the following response:

- (1) A grant of \$800,000 has been awarded to the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council for a two-year project to develop a municipal solid waste compost market development program.
- (2) To create a demand for compost within the farming industry, by establishing 50 compost trials within a 100 kilometre radius of Perth.
- (3) Special conditions have been included in the Waste Management and Recycling Fund contract to address this issue. All compost must meet the relevant Australian Standard. Monitoring programs are to be incorporated into the project to detect heavy metals and results of any testing are to be reported to the Waste Management Board.
- (4) The facility underwent EPA assessment before it was established. The EPA's assessment report was released in June 1999.
- (5) Contamination from these compost trials is unlikely because the compost will be produced to meet Australian Standards.
- (6) The strategic approach to waste management in this State is to recover resources in a manner which best conforms to the waste management hierarchy: reduce, reuse, recycle, recover energy and finally to dispose. For municipal solid waste, the process adopted by Southern Metropolitan Regional Council is seen to be a good fit in the hierarchy. Dry recyclables are collected and processed separately to ensure the residual organics are uncontaminated and are suitable for reprocessing into compost. Composting of the organic fraction of municipal waste fits sustainability principals by returning organic materials to agriculture. The process of composting has the added benefit of redirecting as much as possible organic waste away from landfill.