

WASTE DISPOSAL, CANNING VALE DIGESTER, MONITORING OF COMPOST USE

1946. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development representing the Minister for the Environment

- (1) Did the South Metropolitan Regional Council receive a grant of \$800 000 from the Waste Management Fund to investigate uses for the compost produced at its digester in Canning Vale?
- (2) Where will this compost be used and for what purposes?
- (3) If farms are involved in accepting the compost, what criteria are used to select the farms and how many are involved?
- (4) Will the Minister please give the names and locations of each farm involved in accepting compost from the Canning Vale plant?
- (5) Does this compost meet national standards for the use of waste-derived compost in agriculture?
- (6) If so, what are those standards?
- (7) What fraction of the output from this digester is being used for agriculture?
- (8) What is being done with the remainder of the compost?
- (9) Is the proponent required to follow a code of practice in respect to the use of this compost?
- (10) If yes, where can the public obtain a copy of this code of practice?
- (11) If not, why not?
- (12) How will the short and long-term impacts of the compost use be monitored and how will the results of the monitoring be reported?
- (13) How often is the compost monitoring to be carried out?
- (14) Are the results of the compost monitoring publicly available?
- (15) If so, where can the public access them?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following response:

- (1) The South Metropolitan Regional Council (SMRC) was granted \$800,000 from the Waste and Recycling Fund as part of a \$2,000,000 compost-market development program initiated by the SMRC.
- (2) I understand the compost is being used for the growing of above ground crops on cereal and horticultural farms generally within a 100 kilometre radius of the Canning Vale Waste Composting Facility.
- (3) The criteria for selecting up to 50 cereal and horticultural farms involved in the market development program are – commercial farmers, growing major crops on soil types typical of region. The farms must have the ability to spread the compost and have good access roads for receiving the compost. Farmers were also prepared to allow access for crop and soil monitoring, and open days.
- (4) Due to privacy provisions the names of the individual farmers are withheld. Should the Hon Member require the names, they can be released only with the express permission of each farmer. The locations of the trial farms are in the following regions;
  - New Norcia
  - Gingin
  - Swan Valley
  - Bindoon
  - Karragullen
  - York/Beverly/Brookton
  - Pingelly
  - Wandering
  - Serpentine
  - Dwellingup
  - Waroona/Harvey
  - Williams
  - Northam

- (5) Yes, the compost meets the Australian Standard for compost quality which is applicable to the application of compost to farms.
- (6) Australian Standard AS 4454 – 2003 for compost quality.
- (7) Approximately 80% of the organic matter contained within the municipal waste that is processed results in compost for use on the farms.
- (8) At present the residual waste (non-compost) is sent to landfill.
- (9) There is no compost use code of practice, however, the SMRC is required to produce compost that meets relevant compost standards in accordance with the Environmental Management System, which was required as part of the Ministerial Conditions for the Canning Vale Waste Composting Facility approved by the then Minister for the Environment in 1998.

The SMRC has developed criteria for use of compost in conjunction with the steering committee (members include farmer, Department of Agriculture, compost industry) and are using Guidelines for Direct Land Application of Bio-solids and Bio-solids Products. The objective of these guidelines is to provide guidance on acceptable practices for the beneficial reuse of bio-solids on agricultural land, rehabilitation sites and forestry applications. These guidelines are based upon the National Water Quality Management Strategy Draft Guidelines for Sewage Systems Sludge (Biosolids) Management 2000 (published by ARMCANZ/ANZECC) but are adapted specifically to Western Australian conditions. These guidelines have been produced jointly by Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Health and the Water and Rivers Commission, with consultation from key stakeholders.

A copy of the Guidelines for Direct Land Application of Bio-solids and Bio-solids Products can be obtained from the Department of Environmental Protection.

- (10) Not applicable.
- (11) The compost industry is in its infancy and to date no code of practice has been developed. The Guidelines for Direct Land Application of Bio-solids and Bio-solids Products is considered conservative as the compost produced by the SMRC only uses 16% by weight of bio-solids (of which 95% is water) in its production process.
- (12) The demonstration project will run for 2 years. A consultant has been employed by the SMRC to monitor soils and plant growth throughout the trial. The monitoring protocol has been agreed by the steering committee involved. Reporting of results will be via farm open days, a website that has been developed and reports to the Waste Management Board. Interested parties can register on-line at the SMRC's website to receive compost on farm monitoring results as they becomes available.
- (13) Compost monitoring is conducted daily as part of the production process. Monitoring of the demonstration project commences with soil analysis prior to application of compost, includes mid season soil and plant tissue samples and concludes with a soil analysis at the end of the project.
- (14) The demonstration project results will be publicly available as mentioned earlier. This information is from public funds and as such is available to the public. General information on the compost demonstration project is available on the SMRC's website.
- (15) The Southern Metropolitan Regional Council website: [www.smrc.com.au](http://www.smrc.com.au)