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## **MLA Condemns SMRC's Community Education Funding**

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton, condemns the decision of the Waste Authority to provide the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council (SMRC) with a grant of \$10,000 to develop local Earthcarers community education packages.

"The SMRC does not have the standing in the community or the skill base to undertake this important task," said Dr Nahan. "There are far more deserving environmental groups in our community who could put this \$10,000 funding to proper use."

Dr Nahan said the SMRC's track record in environmental management is very poor. It has a long and unresolved record of emitting excessive odour pollution at its waste facility in Canning Vale. The facility was closed in December 2006 by Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) for odour pollution. The SMRC closed the facility again in May 2007 in response to closure threats from the DEC. The facility is currently under renewed investigation by the DEC for excessive odour pollution and will shortly be subject to an Environmental Abatement Notice by the DEC.

"The SMRC's approach to community relations has been abysmal. It has ridiculed, ignored and alienated people in the community who are affected by its pollution," said Dr Nahan.

"Its recent decision to put up a series of videos on You Tube dismissing the community's legitimate complaints as being baseless was possibly one of the most irresponsible corporate decisions I have ever witnessed. As a result, its standing in the community is extremely low and it has lost its rapport with the community."

"The SMRC's main business is waste processing on an industrial scale. Its skills do not lie with communication, environmental management or community relations. Moreover, its waste business is facing serious on-going problems, which should be an overwhelming focus of the organisation."

"My concern is that the SMRC does not have the credentials to undertake the education packages and it may use the grant funds in part to try and solve its own problems."

"I recommend that the Waste Authority review its decision to give the SMRC \$10,000 for community education packages. That funding should be reallocated to some of the many better-placed community groups working on practical environmental issues in the local community."

**Mike Nahan 9457 1282 or 0412 911 969**