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Time For SMRC Compost Plant To Move

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton said the long awaited Department of Health's (DOH) report into the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council's odour issues has shown that it is time for the SMRC's composting plant to be moved to a new site well away from residential areas.

"The Department of Health's overview report, which has been a very long time coming, has once again confirmed what so many members of the community have known over the last six years – that the surrounding residential areas are experiencing offensive and potentially harmful odours attributable to the composting plant," said Dr Nahan.

"This pollution is unacceptable and it's time for the composting plant to be closed and relocated to a new site or for it to be replaced with a new alternative technology at a new site well away from residential and community areas."

Dr Nahan said the DOH Odour, Health and Management Report takes into account seven reports that have been undertaken into the ongoing odour issues at the SMRC.

"I can't believe that the SMRC recently came out publicly and said that it's their green waste facility that is causing the odour when they know full well it is their composting plant that is the major problem," said Dr Nahan.

"They are constantly trying to deflect the truth away from the composting plant and the problems they are having with the biofilters. Now, the DOH report clearly states that compost, greenwaste and garbage odours were the most commonly detected odours with compost odour by far the most dominant odour detected 65% of the time compared to less than 20% for the others."

"Similarly, a survey undertaken by Patterson Marketing Research that the Department of Health also looked at showed that approximately 93% of residents within 600m and 64% of residents within 1200m of the composting plant reported odours."

"These are overwhelming facts that have been ignored by the SMRC for way too long. I call on the seven member councils of the SMRC; Canning, Melville, East Fremantle, Fremantle, Cockburn, Kwinana and Rockingham to reconsider their support for the composting plant in light of the terrible impact that it has had on families living close to it."

"I have written to all of those councils to ask them to let their elected members know about the problems the SMRC management has caused and about its tenuous financial status. The member councils cannot continue to ignore the plight of the local community just because the SMRC composting plant is not located in their patch."

Dr Nahan said the report stated that although public health professionals and regulators are often challenged by the difficulty in identifying odour complaints, regulators should be aware that acute reactions to offensive odours can lead to chronic psychological stress over time.

"That is exactly what the local community has experienced. There is no doubt that we need to recycle our rubbish but it should not be done at the expense of the quality of life of nearby residents. Despite some changes, the SMRC has proven that it cannot operate the composting plant without producing these offensive odours," said Dr Nahan.

"The last six years have been appalling for the local residents but their stance against the SMRC has been vindicated. The composting plant's location can no longer be deemed acceptable given the results of the Department of Health's report."

"It is up to the SMRC's member councils to take responsibility for this situation and to investigate alternative new technologies and to find a suitable new site well away from residential communities for their waste processing requirements."

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