

Date

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Issue:

Waste management facilities within the Kwinana Region

KIC Position and Key Messages

KIC recognises the need to manage waste and urges that facilities be appropriately designed and buffered.

Proponents of municipal waste processing facilities should look toward appropriately zoned industrial land for their facilities.

Local governments who are part of the approval processes for these facilities should direct proponents to land that is zoned for the purpose.

Local government planners should tighten up zoning descriptions so facilities proponents are clearly directed to industrial land.

- State government environmental regulators should direct municipal waste facility operators to land which will not impact on nearby residential development.

Background

Two secondary waste treatment plants are being considered for the Kwinana region by regional councils set up to manage domestic waste.

The first is within the eastern edge of the industrial buffer to the west of McLaughlan Road (between Thomas and Anketell roads), adjacent to the Water Corporation's waste water treatment plant. The Rivers Regional Council processes municipal waste from the municipalities of Mandurah, Murray, Kalamunda, South Perth and Armadale.

The second is for a plant similar to the waste treatment facility at Canning Vale, operated by the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council (SMRC). Sites are still being considered by the SMRC, which processes waste from the municipalities of Rockingham, Kwinana, Canning, Fremantle, East Fremantle and Melville. While the State has some experience in waste management of this type, the Canningvale facility has had its problems. The waste management industry can learn from this experience by locating the facilities with sufficient buffers to residences and by designing in a high level of engineering around odour control.

KIC acknowledges the treatment of municipal waste is necessary and it must occur somewhere, but it is an industrial process and should therefore be considered in an industrial context.

Any consideration of industrial facilities being built within the Kwinana Industries Buffer Zone will be strongly opposed by KIC, as the buffer exists to create sufficient distance between community and industry; so industry can operate without adversely impacting surrounding communities.

The treatment of municipal waste through anaerobic digesters and composting has the potential to create odours which, if the facilities are placed too close to residential development, can give rise to ongoing complaints from the public.

The further away from residences the better, but if a facility is to be approved to operate within the buffer, the engineering design specification for odour control needs to be increased to account for proximity and the order of magnitude increased rate of biological activity (smell) that is generated as temperatures rise.

In Europe where in-vessel anaerobic digester technology is often used, temperatures are cooler than here. A 10 degree increase in temperature produces an order of magnitude increase in the rate at which biological activity proceeds, thus odour control downstream of these processes needs to be of a much higher specification

The Canningvale green waste facility is not a great success, in fact quite the opposite. Waste managers should learn from this and locate facilities where there is a sufficient buffer and with a high degree of engineering specified into the design.

Previous experiences here and overseas indicate that the placement of industrial processes outside appropriately zoned areas tends to give rise to complaints from affected communities. Once a facility is operational and there are complaints, these complaints tend to become increasingly intense and entrenched and it is too late for economic remedial action. The more efficient strategy is proper planning protocols during the siting and construction phases.

KIC encourages environmental regulators to ensure that they are included in any approval processes and that appropriate buffers are created around waste management facilities.

Contact

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