



**Hon Albert Jacob MLA**  
**Minister for Environment; Heritage**

Your Ref: ev.019.140225.let.001.aj (A437709)  
Our Ref: 50-02949

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

*Attn: Ms Amanda Liveris, Research Officer*

*Simon,*  
Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter dated 25 February 2014 requesting comment on Petition No 19 – Disposal of metropolitan waste in rural areas.

By way of background, I wish to provide the committee with some information on the status of the proposals that are the subject of the petition.

The proposed landfill facility at Allawuna Farm in the Shire of York was referred to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) by a third party in December 2012. After considering advice from the then Department of Environment and Conservation, Department of Water, Main Roads Western Australia and the Shire of York, the EPA determined not to assess the proposal under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act). The EPA published its determination and a statement of reasons on 8 July 2013.

In summary, the EPA was satisfied that the proposal could be adequately assessed and regulated under Part V of the EP Act and established land use planning processes.

The EPA's determination not to assess the proposal was appealed. On 5 February 2014 I dismissed the appeal.

The Department of Environment Regulation (DER) has responsibility for assessing the environmental acceptability of likely emissions and discharges from prescribed premises. Under Part V of the EP Act, a works approval is required to construct a putrescible landfill with a production or design capacity of 20 tonnes or more per year and a licence is required for premises causing emissions.

DER received a works approval application from SITA for the Allawuna Landfill in the Shire of York on 6 January 2014. DER also received a works approval application from Opal Vale Pty Ltd for a landfill at Lot 11 Chitty Road, Toodyay, on 19 June 2013.

When assessing applications for works approvals and licences, DER considers all potential emissions and discharges from proposed premises including discharges to land, water and air, and specifically, in the case of landfills, odour, noise and dust.

DER does not have powers under the EP Act to consider alternative locations for a landfill or to consider traffic issues associated with the transportation of waste to the premises.

Both works approval applications are presently at the public consultation stage, having been advertised in both *The West Australian* Newspaper and respective community papers. Copies of the applications have also been placed on DER's website and have been sent to other relevant authorities such as the Department of Water, for comment.

During the consultation process, DER is undertaking an assessment of each application and will consider all comments received as a result of the consultation process before making a decision on whether to issue or refuse a works approval for each premises.

The issues raised in the petition regarding the direct environmental impacts associated with these two specific proposals will be addressed as part of the works approval and licence application process. However, the broader issues raised in the petition need to be addressed through other mechanisms.

As part of its Strategic Waste Infrastructure Planning Project (SWIPP), the Waste Authority has been investigating the amount of waste processing infrastructure that would be required to meet the landfill diversion targets set out in the Western Australian Waste Strategy: "*Creating the Right Environment*" for the Perth metropolitan and Peel regions.

Although this project does include an overall estimation of the amount of putrescible landfill space that is likely to be required into the future, it did not investigate when or where this landfill space would be required. The focus of the project to date has been on infrastructure that would reduce the need for landfill. As such, the project would not directly address the issues listed in the petition. More detailed information can be found on the Waste Authority's website: [www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au](http://www.wasteauthority.wa.gov.au).

The Waste Authority is due to submit a report to me on the outcomes of the investigation stage of the SWIPP by the end of June 2014.

With regards to the petition and the associated submissions, I believe the scope of the proposed inquiry is too broad. Further, many of the issues cited are currently being addressed by the Waste Authority through its implementation of the Waste Strategy.

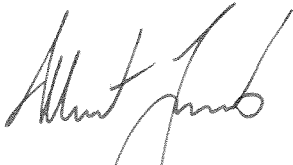
I suggest that the scope of any inquiry be restricted to issues directly relating to the siting of new putrescible landfills to service the needs of the Perth and Peel Regions. Specifically, I suggest the inquiry should address the following issues:

1. A detailed assessment of the need for putrescible landfill space to service the Perth metropolitan area in the medium to long term.
2. Siting criteria for locating putrescible landfills.
3. Costs and benefits of different siting policies for putrescible landfills (e.g. multiple versus single landfill, disposal close to the source versus long-haul landfills, restrictions on siting landfills on high-value agricultural land, etc.).
4. Investigation into different mechanisms to regulate the siting of putrescible landfills.

Some of the above issues may be dealt with as part of the upcoming statutory review of the *Waste Avoidance and Recovery Act 2007*. However, an inquiry that investigates these issues, particularly as they relate to the Wheatbelt, may be of value to inform policy development.

I trust this information has been of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Albert Jacob MLA  
**MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT; HERITAGE**

19 MAR 2014