

Legislative Council



MEDIA RELEASE

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Environment and Public Affairs Committee Report into Petition No 59—Bio-Organics composting facility, Oakford

The Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs tabled its report on Petition No 59—Bio-Organics composting facility, Oakford in the Legislative Council today.

The Committee inquired into Bio-Organics' operations, particularly its acceptance of controlled waste, and the regulation of the premises by the Department of Environment Regulation and its predecessors responsible for the administration of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*.

The Committee concluded that the Bio-Organics compost facility operated for many years with little or no regulatory control.

The department did not verify that construction of the facility complied with all aspects of Bio-Organics' works approval, nevertheless a licence to operate was issued in 2002. Non-compliance with infrastructure requirements was a key reason for the eventual revocation of Bio-Organics licence to operate in 2014.

Between 2002 and 2007, the department gave approval to Bio-Organics for 15 limited trials of biological activators to assist the composting process. These biological activators included controlled wastes such as grease trap waste, food processing waste, blood waste, acid sulphate soil and drilling mud.

The Committee identified serious deficiencies in the department's approval processes and its documentation, monitoring and assessment of biological activators. The department's failure to correlate controlled waste tracking data and Bio-Organics' waste intake, meant that a *green waste* composting facility was able to receive at least **87 million litres** of controlled waste without the authorisation, or apparent notice, of the regulating authority.

Bio-Organic's licence was eventually revoked on 27 June 2014 following increased complaints about odour and the contamination of an adjacent property in August 2013.

Until comprehensive groundwater investigations are concluded in November 2016, the nature and extent of contamination is unknown.

Further information, including the report, is available at www.parliament.wa.gov.au/env

For media inquiries, contact Hon Simon O'Brien MLC, Chairman on 0407 190 541.

Other inquiries to Ms Margaret Liveris, Committee Clerk on (08) 9222 7229.

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC
Chairman