



July, 2001

Prepared by Planning SA, the Environment Protection Agency, the Department of Industry and Trade, and the Local Government Association

## Guide for Applicants

### Composting, organic fertiliser and soil conditioner works (including some mushroom farms)

*Applications referred to the Environment Protection Authority*

All applications should provide the following information as identified in "Guide for Applicants: All applications".



#### General Information

- application form
- application fee
- site plan
- description of the surrounding area
- description of proposal

A Composting, organic fertiliser and soil conditioner works is referred to the Environment Protection Authority as part of the assessment process



The description of the surrounding area and the description of the proposal should include additional information that is relevant to the Environment Protection Authority covering the following topics:



#### EPA required information

- separation distances
- air quality
- environmental noise
- pollution prevention
- water demand and use
- wastewater disposal and water quality
- soil quality

A composting, organic fertiliser and soil conditioner works are types of uses that can be established successfully if they are sited, designed and operated properly, but have the potential to cause environmental harm if not sited, designed and operated properly.

This Guide has been written specifically to assist applicants and designers of proposed composting, organic fertiliser and soil conditioner works in seeking Development Approval. As indicated in the "Guide for Applicants: All applications", development applications are generally lodged with the council for the area in which the proposed development is to take place or, in the case of out-of-council areas, with the Development Assessment Commission (DAC).

### WHAT IS REFERRED TO THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY?

A composting, organic fertiliser and soil conditioner works (including a mushroom farm) application in the case of works of the scale outlined below, will be referred to the Environment Protection Authority ("the Authority") as part of the development assessment process. Relevant works include:

as per **Schedule 21 Part 5(3)**, *Development Regulations 1993*

"mushroom or other compost, organic fertiliser or soil conditioner having organic components are produced or are capable of being produced at a rate exceeding 20 tonnes per year",

and

as per **Schedule 22 Part 6(3)**, *Development Regulations 1993*

"mushroom or other compost is produced or is capable of being produced at a rate exceeding 200 tonnes per year".

An application involving the production of less than 20 tonnes per year of mushroom or other compost, organic fertiliser or soil conditioner having organic components will not be referred to the Authority, but will be assessed by you local council or the DAC who may require similar information to that outlined in this information sheet.

### HOW IS AN APPLICATION ASSESSED?

When assessing your proposal the Authority must, in determining its response, have regard to:

- the objects of the *Environment Protection Act, 1993*
- the general environmental duty (Section 25, *Environment Protection Act 1993*)
- any relevant Environment Protection Policies.

It is important therefore that you provide the information that the Authority needs to assess your application. Proponents should seek professional advice in selecting the site and determining the operational aspects of establishing these types of businesses. Ongoing management of composting, organic fertiliser and soil conditioning works is also critical to the environmental performance and applicants should provide detail of management regimes for such operations.

Where the Authority considers that a proposal will result in environmental harm, it may **direct** (Schedule 22 referrals) or **advise** (Schedule 21 referrals) the council or the Development Assessment Commission to refuse your application. In other cases, it may direct or advise the council or the Development Assessment Commission to attach certain conditions to any approval that is granted.

Upon completion of its assessment of your proposal, the Authority will forward its advice to the Development Assessment Commission. Responsibility then rests with the planning authority to make a decision on your application.

In cases where Development Approval is granted and the proposal involves production of mushroom or other compost at a rate exceeding 200 tonnes per year, an Environmental Authorisation (licence) under the Environment Protection Act must also be obtained before operations can commence.

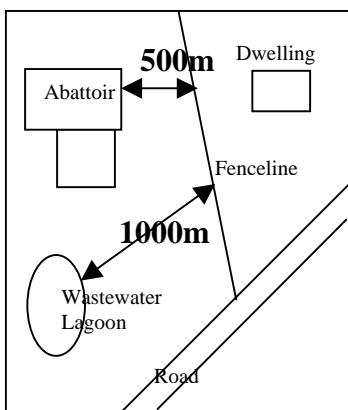
### WHAT WILL THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY LOOK FOR?

The information that you provide with your application is the basis upon which your application is assessed. If the information is inadequate, you run the risk of delaying the assessment or creating confusion about the nature of your application. For this reason the information that you provide should aim to ensure that:

- the assessing officers clearly understand what currently exists and what you are proposing (during construction as well as the completed development);
- all potential environmental impacts are identified, including off site impacts on the neighbouring environment such as noise, dust, fumes, water, odour, waste etc.;
- any action you propose to take to minimise impacts on the environment is clearly explained and documented.

The Authority aims to achieve sustainable development by providing for economic development opportunities but at the same time maintaining healthy ecological processes and providing opportunities for future generations. In particular, the Authority aims to prevent pollution of:

- **air (by dust, smoke, particulate matter or odour);**
- **the local environment (in terms of noise);**
- **water (including surface or groundwater, the marine environment and water catchment areas);**
- **soil.**



The following highlights the information that you should provide with your application where applicable to the nature of the application (e.g. proposals for new operations may need to provide all the information listed below, whereas proposals for minor expansions or upgrades may only need to provide some of the information listed below). This information should be provided **together with** the information requirements set out in the “Guide for Applicants—All applications” (which includes a site plan, description of the surrounding area and description of the proposed development).

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Land ownership, depot operator and manager details;
- Site selection criteria;
- Depot establishment and improvements, such as:
  - landscaping, buildings, trafficable surfaces, amenities, plant and equipment.
- Raw materials, type and quantity to be used in the proposed operations.

- Hours of operation.
- Composting processes.
- Details on depot maintenance.

### SEPARATION DISTANCES

The Authority's Guidelines for Separation Distances recommend nominal separation distances between various sensitive land uses and composting, organic fertiliser and soil conditioner works. Proponents should be aware that compliance with the relevant separation distance does not guarantee support by the Authority as it's assessment will also take into account other relevant matters (detailed below).

Separation distances are only one aspect given consideration by the Authority. You should also provide the following information to enable the Authority to properly consider your proposal:

### AIR QUALITY

An environmental consultant should be engaged to:

- provide an outline of measures to be employed to control odour nuisance from:
  - liquid waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities;
  - storage and disposal of solid/semi-solid wastes such as spent diatomaceous earth and wastewater lagoon/tank sludges;
- provide an estimate of odour adjacent to sensitive land uses (e.g. where odour impact is likely, odour modelling using AUSPLUME (or similar software) should be included);
- evaluate required separation distance in consultation with staff of the Authority. Separation distances for any existing or proposed establishment will be determined by the Authority on a site-specific basis;
- describe the climatic conditions of the locality including:
  - wind strength and direction (during summer, autumn, winter and spring);
  - mean annual and average monthly rainfall;
  - 1 in 10 year high monthly rainfall and average monthly evaporation.

### ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE

An acoustic consultant should be engaged to determine whether noise can be managed so that it does not adversely impact on nearby sensitive land uses. The consultant should identify the location and nature of nearby sensitive uses (e.g. houses, food preparation activities, tourist accommodation, schools, hospitals etc.) and should assess the following:

- expected noise levels to be generated including from temporary and permanent fixed plant;
- predicted vehicle and other heavy machinery noise levels adjacent to nearby sensitive land uses;
- existing background noise levels adjacent to nearby sensitive land uses.

### POLLUTION PREVENTION

- Describe the chemicals to be used, where they will be stored and how accidental spills will be contained, controlled and cleaned up.
- Identify wastes to be generated (e.g. liquid and non-liquid), where they will be stored and how they will be treated and method of disposal.
- Describe practices to be used to minimise the risk that accidents might pollute the environment (e.g. bunded storage areas).
- Describe how stormwater will be managed to separate clean stormwater (e.g. from roofs) from dirty stormwater (e.g. from carpark areas) and what form of treatment will be provided for dirty stormwater.

**WATER DEMAND AND USE**

- Estimate the amount of water that the operation will need per year in kilolitres.
- Identify sources of water (e.g. dam, bore, reticulated supply, treated wastewater).
- If you intend to use bore or treated wastewater, describe the quality of this water (e.g. bacterial and salinity levels).
- Describe what the water will be used for (e.g. cleaning and wash down, as part of the production process, irrigation).
- Describe techniques to be used to minimise water demand and encourage careful use.

**WASTEWATER DISPOSAL AND WATER QUALITY**

- Estimate the wastewater that will be generated (annual and monthly volumes) and the source (e.g. production process).
- Describe how will this wastewater be captured, stored, treated and disposed of so that it does not pollute the environment e.g. contaminating clean water in creeks, groundwater or aquifer.
- If water is reused, describe how will it be treated and stored and for what purpose will it be reused.
- If wastewater is to be disposed of by irrigation, describe:
  - the site of the irrigation (total land area to be used);
  - methods and equipment to be used;
  - soil qualities (depth, texture and structure of all layers);
  - slope;
  - likely impacts on groundwater and proximity of surface waters;
  - details of trees, crops or pasture to be grown in the wastewater irrigation area.
- If wastewater is to be disposed of by carting off-site, explain:
  - the nature of storage tanks to be used on site;
  - any alarm systems;
  - bunding to be put in place to prevent overflow or accidental loss of wastewater.

**SOIL QUALITY**

- Describe the type and depth of the soil affected by the development (e.g. wastewater irrigation areas).
- Describe the topography and slope of the site and affected areas in particular.
- Identify areas of the site that may be exposed to erosion (i.e. wind and water erosion) and what methods are proposed to minimise erosion (e.g. paved traffic areas, vegetated slopes).

**Further information**

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