

Establishing a Licensed Composting Facility



2007
Third Edition

A guide to siting, designing, gaining approval
and a license to develop and operate
a composting facility in
New South Wales

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SYDNEY · AUSTRALIA



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This package has undergone national peer review by a range of technical and industry experts (see acknowledgments) and has been endorsed by COMPOST NSW and the NSW branch of the Waste Management Association of Australia.



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Preface to the *Establishing a Licensed Composting Facility* Information Sheets

The management of organic materials attracts significant community and government interest. For some time now there has been very strong community support for the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) and waste reduction to landfill. This is reflected in local, state and federal initiatives and policies. There are also government targets for waste minimisation and incentives for recycling.

Despite significant community support for improved management of organic materials normally disposed of in landfill, the dilemma the composting industry faces is that it continues to experience considerable difficulty in establishing new facilities that are required to improve the management of organic materials and meet waste reduction targets.

A substantial part of the problem is community perception. Many people have preconceived opinions that composting facilities tend to be smelly, noisy and uncontrolled. With modern design, construction and management techniques, composting facilities can be located in close proximity to other land uses with little or no impact on the amenity of the community or the environment.

This package of Information Sheets has been developed to assist councils, their communities and the composting industry to better understand the issues and decisions involved in the establishment and location of composting facilities, in order to achieve community and government targets for waste reduction in accordance with ESD principles.

The web addresses for downloading the *Establishing a Licensed Composting Facility* Information Sheets is <http://www.recycledorganics.com/>

Mark Jackson and Angus Campbell

Recycled Organics Unit,

The University of New South Wales.

Sydney, 2002.

1. Information Sheets in “*Establishing a Licensed Composting Facility*”

This package contains a collection of eight Information Sheets:

- Information Sheet No. 1-1: Introduction to the approvals and licensing process for composting facilities
- Information Sheet No. 1-2: Preliminary planning and identification of appropriate composting technologies
- Information Sheet No. 1-3: Site selection and impact analysis
- Information Sheet No. 1-4: Overview of the performance based development assessment process
- Information Sheet No. 1-5: Consultation with government authorities for all developments
- Information Sheet No. 1-6: Detailed site design and documenting an environmental management plan
- Information Sheet No. 1-7: Preparing the impact statements, gaining development consent and relevant environment protection licenses
- Information Sheet No. 1-8: Case study—successful landscape supplies business expands into composting

2. Other Packages

A series of eight packages are available on important aspects of recycled organics industry development. These are listed below.

- Package 1: Establishing a licensed composting facility;
- Package 2: Guide to developing a process control system for a composting facility;
- Package 3: Producing quality compost;
- Package 4: Guide to selecting, developing and marketing value-added recycled organics products;
- Package 5: Composting science for industry;
- Package 6: Buyers guide for recycled organics products
- Package 7: How to use recycled organics products;
- Package 8: Occupational health and safety and commercial composting.

All of these packages are obtainable from <http://www.recycledorganics.com>

3. Who should read the Information Sheets?

The *Establishing a Licensed Composting Facility* package of Information Sheets has been developed for all stakeholders concerned with the planning, development and licensing of composting facilities in New South Wales.

More specifically, the handbook has been developed for:

- prospective RO processors wishing to establish a composting facility;
- experienced processors of RO materials who may wish to expand or create a new facility;
- waste board officers who are involved in the development of composting facilities;
- local council waste management officers;
- local council planning and approvals officers; and
- government authorities concerned with the approval and licensing of composting facilities.

4. How to use the handbook

The *Establishing a Licensed Composting Facility* package of Information Sheets are designed to complement and demystify existing government documents and legislation regarding the establishment and licensing of a composting facility in New South Wales. These include:

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979). NSW Consolidated Acts. Internet publication:
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation (2000)¹. NSW Consolidated Regulations. Internet publication:
- Protection of the Environment Operations Act (1997). NSW Consolidated Acts. Internet publication:
- Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation (1998). NSW Consolidated Regulations. Internet publication:
- NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (1996).² Composting and Related Facilities EIS Guideline. NSW Government Printing Service, Sydney, Australia.

Please also note that a draft New South Wales Environment Protection Authority environmental guideline for composting and other related facilities has been used as a guide to some sections of these Information Sheets.

- NSW EPA (2000). Environmental Guidelines: Composting and Related Facilities – Draft for Community Consultation. EPA, Chatswood, NSW.

The package of Information Sheets are organised into a step-by-step format that will assist developers and government authorities through the process of establishing and licensing a composting facility. It provides an overview of the entire establishing and licensing process, from preliminary planning of the facility right through to gaining approval and a license.

At each step, consultation required with local council, government authorities, special interest groups and the community is identified. Information regarding the selection of an appropriate composting technology, feedstock assessment, site selection and impact analysis, consideration of environmental planning instruments, determining the type of impact assessment required, site design, facility design and gaining development consent and a license is provided.

¹ This new regulation replaces the current Environment Planning and Assessment Regulation (1994) as of 1st January 2001.

² Note that parts of this document are out of date due to changes in the development assessment process, as documented in the updated version (#203, updated 14th June 2000) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979) and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation (2000) to commence on 1st January 2001. Only relevant sections of this document have been cited in the Information Sheets.

The handbook finishes with a case study that presents a company's recent experience with the process of applying for approval to develop a composting facility in coastal New South Wales.

5. Terminology

Terms used throughout this package of Information Sheets have been officially adopted by the NSW Waste Boards (now Resource NSW) in July 2000 in the form of the *RO Dictionary and Thesaurus: Standard terminology for the recycled organics industry*, produced by the Recycled Organics Unit. This document is freely downloadable from <http://www.rolibrary.com>

6. How to cite this publication

This publication consists of a series of Information Sheets that are compiled into a set. When citing information from this publication, the set of Information Sheets must be cited (not individual Information Sheets), as shown below:

Recycled Organics Unit (2002). *Establishing a Licensed Composting Facility: A guide to siting, designing, gaining approval and a licence to develop and operate a composting facility in New South Wales*. Third edition. Recycled Organics Unit, internet publication: <http://www.recycledorganics.com>

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- The committee of COMMPOST NSW.