

29th May, 2012

Mining & Industry Projects
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

RE Orange Waste Project Application 09_0025 MOD 1

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide further comment on the “minor” modification by the proponent on the above project and providing us with the proponent’s response to submissions.

Our objections to the modifications proposed include but are not limited to;

Inadequacy of drawings provided.

Detailed drawings have been provided for the Ophir Road site (Drawings EV01-EV12). They include detailed schematics to illustrate floor plans, dimensions, door locations and sizes, elevations from all directions, truck movement diagrams etc.

Conversely, the drawings provided for the Euchareena Road site (Drawings EV13-EV16) provide scant detail on all aspects of the proposed building layout. This is unacceptable given the potential impacts of the proposed modification to the composting building are almost indiscernible due to the diminutive scale of the drawings provided. The drawings do not show the open side of the building and where that side will be sited and this aspect in particular is critical to the objective assessment of any impacts. Similarly, no detail has been provided on the design of the enclosed composting tunnels, i.e. are they fully enclosed to prevent the escape of noise and odour?

For the purpose of our submission it is assumed that the open side of the composting building is that adjacent to the “organics drop-off zone” (as illustrated in the previously approved diagram), on the eastern side of the building.

Noise and Odour

By realigning the composting building the previous noise and odour assessments are altered. Having the open side of the building facing east has ramifications for the nearest residence, “The Shades” as;

- “The Shades” is 800m from the building in an easterly direction
- The open side of the building is in a direct line from the composting facility “The Shades”
- Prevailing winds for the majority of the year are in a general westerly direction,(towards “The Shades”)
- Any buffering effect from the wall at the eastern side of the building as previously approved has been removed.
- The previous noise assessment was based on the composting building being enclosed.
- The 2009 Odour Assessment was based on the approved building alignment, not that currently proposed.

- The use of front end loaders and other industrial equipment within the composting building, a large hard surfaced structure with one open side, would be prone to echo which has not been assessed with respect to the new building design (open on one side) and alignment.
- The conditions of approval (Approval, Operating Hours, Condition 27, p12) permit operation of the “indoor” composting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

It is noteworthy that the Noise Assessment (EA 2009, Volume 4, Appendix Q) refers to the Project Components (2.2 Project Components p9) at Euchareena Road include “***an enclosed composting plant***” (bold added for emphasis).

It would be unreasonable to expect that the prior assessment which excluded modelling on operations within an open sided composting building could be used as a basis for the assessment of noise impacts from the proposed modified building alignment.

Size and location of new dams

The impacts of the significant increase in water catchment and storage associated with the composting facility has not been assessed. Our concerns include that;

- An increase from 0.5ML to 10ML cannot be regarded as “minor”
- The approval of the EA for the project was granted with consideration of the water requirements for the composting component being, as stated, “*The annual water requirement for operation would be zero, in fact a small surplus of water may be generated*”.(EA C.4.2.4)
- The EA stated the storage of the collection dam (Dam C) would be “*about 0.5ML*”. The current proposal increases that storage to 10ML.
- The statement that “*Dam C has now been split to form 5 smaller dams*” is misleading as evidenced in drawing EV14.
- The approved water storage for the entire site was 13.5ML (and included 8.1ML for dust suppression) and was on the limit of the harvestable right for the site. An increase of 10ML to 23.5ML exceeds harvestable rights for the site and would therefore require a water licence.
- If the current estimated requirement of 8.1ML for dust suppression is exceeded due to an increased requirement for composting operations, then the indications are that the current Odour and Dust assessments would be rendered invalid, necessitating further assessment quantify those impacts.
- The quality and purpose of water stored in the new dams C1-C5 is unclear. Whilst it is stated that the function of these dams “*remains unchanged*”, the original purpose of Dam C was as capture and storage of leachate from the compost maturation pad. Does this mean that significantly more leachate is to be generated from the composting facility or are these dams to capture stormwater runoff, or both?

A separate issue to this modification, is Orange City Councils' current lodgement of a Development Application to subdivide a 4.97ha block surrounding the composting facility. Were this to be approved, the ramifications with respect to harvestable rights are significant. The harvestable rights for the subdivided lot would 0.3479ML, not 10ML as proposed. In either scenario, more information is required on the latest site water balance. This coupled with the long term management and monitoring of the site requires further rigorous assessment.

Apiary

Issues that remain of concern with respect apiary to the increased capacity of dams C1 to C5 include;

- As previously mentioned, the quality and purpose of water stored in the new dams (C1-C5) is unclear.
- Dam C was originally designed as the capture for stormwater runoff from the compost maturation pad (i.e "dirty" water or leachate), with water to be re-used within the composting process. If the function of these dams "*remains unchanged*", then the risks to biosecurity are potentially increased. Considerable emphasis has been placed throughout the various stages of this project on removing or reducing the potential risks to bees accessing leachate or contaminated water sources. Attention is drawn to the ARMP (Greenwaste p17), where minimisation of the risk to bees (foraging near the compost facility) could be achieved by "*ensuring there is sufficient permanent water close to any hives in the immediate vicinity of the facility*". Increasing the availability of permanent water in dams C1-C5 adjacent to the composting facility appears to contradict this recommendation.

Landscaping

We refer to the proponents Statement of Commitments where assurance is given that "*Selective landscaping would be positioned around the office, weighbridge and enclosed composting plant*". Our submission of March 2012 requested clarification on the apparent removal of the landscaping around the composting building, (not screening and bunding as in the proponent's response). We reiterate our concerns as their absence is again apparent in drawing EV14. This is of particular concern as;

- The proponents' decision to separate the composting functions from Council operations and potentially avoiding their commitment to landscape areas surrounding buildings on site to improve visual amenity.
- The change in colour of the building from light green hues to concrete and greys which obviously increases the visual impact of the composting building.
- Landscaping on the eastern side of the composting building would provide screening from nearby residences.

It would be disappointing were the Department to approve the modifications on the basis of the information provided. The inadequate detail, diminutive scale of the schematics, lack of clarity on the purpose of the new dams, assumptions and simplification of noise and odour issues and an overall unprofessional representation of these impacts preclude comprehensive and objective assessment.

Yours sincerely

D & A Trowbridge