

12th May 2009

Waste Policy Taskforce
Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

RE: Submission to National Waste Policy Consultation

To whom it may concern,

This submission is in specific response to *Section 9* of the *National Waste Policy Consultation Paper* and Consultation Question 14; *reducing the amount of organic waste sent to landfill has the potential to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions as well as other potential environmental and economic benefits. What are the benefits and opportunities, costs and disadvantages, of increased diversion and/or recycling of organic wastes?*

Value of End Products

A key driver for Jeffries and the South Australian organic waste management activities to date has been the fact that the soils in this state are severely depleted in all nutrients and especially organic carbon often containing less than 0.5%. This jeopardises:

- The nutritional value of our produce
- Productivity of land
- Ability of soil to hold water in the driest state of the driest continent in the world

The approach adopted has been to return organic matter which has been taken from the soil (in the form of green organics, food organics, etc.) back to the soil in the form of compost and mulches. This will help reduce the continual depletion of our soils and instead enable them to be sustainable in their production of plant life.

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To achieve this Jeffries has had a focus on end market development and producing composts and mulches which meet specific customer needs and demands and best achieve results for growers. This needs to remain the primary focus for South Australia to ensure we have the best quality, sustainable soils we can achieve so as to support our agricultural and landscaping industries which provide our food, exports, local jobs and amenity. Also, so that we can be as efficient in our water use on soils as possible.

Any other goals i.e. such as alternative energy, should not compromise the best quality soil inputs, organic carbon will return to the atmosphere in its natural cycle as CO₂ and it should always be ensured that it is not as methane (as in the case of landfills). We should not speed this natural process up via combustion of organics lightly as this has the opportunity cost that the organic carbon may have spent a few more years in the soil as a compost holding more water, returning nutrients to plant life and increasing the productivity of our soil.

Source Separation

Jeffries has always aligned with South Australian objectives to ensure as much source separation of both Municipal and Commercial and Industrial organic wastes occur as possible. Source separation enables the following:

- Costs to be shared amongst the waste *generator* and the *end users*
 - Labour to separate resources is expensive and hence can be done by the *generator*
- Best ultimate use of the resources separated out and hence best end market price
 - Separated resources have less restrictions and costs in processing and hence can better target end market demands

Separated organics enable the most cost efficient recycling model to be produced via the employment of waste *generator* labour, the application of cheaper production due to the fact that materials do not have to be sorted and enables the best quality end products to be produced, hence obtaining the best end market price. This is critical as it ensures the recycle loop is evenly paid for by *generator* and *end user* and not one completely subsidising the other.

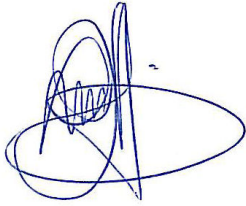
Community Engagement

The importance of both waste *generator* and *end user* needs in closed loop organics recycling affects but also relies on every person in society. Critical to its success as a sustainable option is the ability to engage with all levels of the community, educate and make them aware of the importance of identifying resources and separating them out as well as the benefits of the end products these resources make.

For organics specifically, community engagement will reduce the amount of visual contamination experienced as people will better source separate and have a broader understanding of the environmental benefits of composting. Not only to prevent methane production in landfills but to keep our soils sustainable and our land more productive without as much water demand and offset chemical derived fertilisers which have enormous carbon footprints in their own manufacture.

If any further information or clarification on any points in this submission is required please do not hesitate to contact me on the numbers listed below.

Regards,



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Brief Background to Jeffries Group

Jeffries is a South Australian owned and operated company currently composting over 100,000 tonnes of organics into quality assured composts, mulches and soils for reuse onto agricultural and landscaping soils.

Please note: This document was sent via email wastepolicy@environment.gov.au