

# Wangaratta Organics Facility 12,000 Tonne Expansion Project.

On display until 22nd May 2023, 12:00 AM

Community input is sought on the proposed 'Wangaratta Organics Processing Facility 12,000 Tonne License Amendment'. The 'Organics Processing Facility' delivers important environmental benefits, including the recovery and conservation of resources and a reduction in the quantity of material going to landfills for the immediate Wangaratta municipality.

Originally constructed to have an operational capacity of 12,000 tonnes per annum (TPA) the initial commissioning phase saw an EPA license of 5200 TPA allocated. Since this time Wangaratta urban areas have expanded, additional state policy implemented, and regional interest from neighbouring councils increased. These factors have required further consideration to future service capacity of the 'Organics Processing Facility'.

Following the endorsement of an EPA works approvals in 2021, additional infrastructure and plant has been commissioned at the facility to demonstrate adequate operational capacity to support an application of a license amendment.

Community feedback is the final step in this process, inviting feedback on the proposed license amendment to help guide determination of operational conditions to be further reviewed by EPA in the license approvals process.

## Background

MRA Consulting Group (MRA) have been engaged to prepare an operating license amendment application on behalf of the Rural City of Wangaratta (RCoW) for the expansion of their existing organics processing facility at 64 Byawatha Road West, North Wangaratta, Victoria.

The facility is proposing two changes to the onsite organics waste treatment:

- Increase of the operating licence limit for waste treated onsite from 5,200 tonnes per annum (TPA) to 12,000 TPA.

In 2021 RCoW were successful in obtaining grants to fund new infrastructure and equipment to further expand operational capacity to support a future license amendment this includes:

- Maturation Pad Expansion: The area on which the pasteurised compost is placed in windrows to assist in maturing the material has been doubled in size (Commissioned October 2022)
- Picking (De-contamination) Station: Equipment to significantly remove contamination from material received (Scheduled commissioning June 2023)

- Trommel/Screen Equipment: Equipment to further refine and de-contaminate final compost product (Commissioned July 2022)

In addition to the existing established systems and processes used to actively manage risk to environment and amenity associated with operations, additional control measures have been implemented including:

- Leachate Pond Aeration System – This system forces oxygen into the leachate evaporation ponds, by maintaining oxygen levels this risk of stagnated leachate which produces odours is reduced.
- Motorised Cover Placement Equipment - In the processing phase of FOGO being received at the facility, material is required to be transported between certain areas in the license premises, this motorised equipment will significantly reduce the time material is exposed to open atmosphere further reducing risk of odours.
- Windssocks - Wind socks create a simple visual monitoring device that facility operators can assess local wind conditions and change/reduce operations as necessary, certain processing tasks at the facility involve shredding and windrow turning, risk of increasing dust and odour generation, this equipment provides a means of promptly adjusting operations as local conditions change.
- Air Quality, Odour & Noise Assessments – Specific analysis and field surveys have been conducted in relation to proposed increase in operations and material acceptance and potential impact to amenity.
- Ongoing Odour Monitoring & Response - RCoW actively engage with the community and relevant agencies (EPA) in identifying, verifying, and reporting odours, information is actively shared with all stakeholders on an ongoing basis.
- Community Education – RCoW have an appointed Waste Education Officer and regularly facilitate community tours of the Wangaratta Organics Processing Facility, providing an opportunity to demonstrate firsthand how control measures are actively implemented and utilised.

The compost produced from the facility has been used as topsoil additive in the rehabilitation of cells 2 and 8 the landfill. The intent of the throughput tonnage increase is to allow the Wangaratta Organics Processing Facility to become a regional facility to accept organics from neighbouring Councils and businesses.

The compost produced from the additional material processed will be sold back to the community, used in Council projects and as topsoil in the remediation of closed landfills.

This project is in line with the objectives set out in the:

- 10-year strategy of the Northeast Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan (June 2017)
- Rural City of Wangaratta Waste Management Strategy 2018-2023
- Rural City of Wangaratta Community Vision 2033
- Rural City of Wangaratta Council Plan 2021-2025

Between 2017 and 2023 Council has undertaken extensive community engagement in relation to planning, construction, operation and expansion of the 'Wangaratta Organics Processing Facility' including specific activities in relation to expansion and license amendment projects. These activities have been undertaken in the form of:

- Social Media/Webpage;
- Letter Drops;
- Community Meetings;
- Strategic Planning Projects;
- Site Tours;
- Council Forums.

What we need now is community input in relation to the 12,000-tonne license amendment to enable RCoW to meet community expectations in operation of the expanded facility.

This information will be used by the EPA in determining required operating conditions in to be demonstrated by RCoW in managing the facility, moving forward particularly in terms of the transparency of the facility performance.

## **Implications**

### **Policy Considerations**

- 10-year strategy of the North East Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Implementation Plan (June 2017)
- Rural City of Wangaratta Waste Management Strategy 2018-2023
- Rural City of Wangaratta Community Vision 2033
- Rural City of Wangaratta Council Plan 2021-2025

### **Financial/Economic Implications**

Additional infrastructure and equipment obtained to further demonstrate operational capacity to support application has been obtained through state funding and RCoW co-contribution.

Increase in operational costs will only be marginal and further offset by additional revenue opportunities in increased material acceptance from both internal and external sources.

### **Legal/Statutory**

Victorian Governments Circular Economy Reduction and Recycling Act 2021 (the Act).

Waste authority regulator (Recycle Victoria).

## **Social**

The 'Wangaratta Organics Processing Facility 12,000 Tonne License Amendment' will further reduce community impact of waste management within the municipality on the environment; raising community awareness and interest in the importance of sustainable waste management practices and circular economy.

## **Environmental/Sustainability Impacts**

The project delivers important environmental benefits, including the recovery and conservation of resources and a reduction in the quantity of material going to landfills for the immediate Wangaratta municipality.