

# Clever compost

Flinders Bioremediation Pty Ltd (FB) was formed in 1999 out of a successful environmental biotechnology research program in the School of Biology at Flinders University. The company offers a wide range of services in contract research, consultancy and soil bioremediation.

Cleaning up by compost can be relatively slow, but very cost effective. FB operates two main divisions – Bioremediation and Organic Waste Management.

Close links with Flinders University gives FB access to extensive testing and analytical facilities. In partnership with Lucas Earthmovers, the company has a purpose built soil bioremediation plant located at the Southern Waste Depot, including an EPA-approved leachate drainage system. The adjacent engineered landfill site is the only facility in South Australia licensed to receive low-level contaminated soil.

Lab and pilot scale studies can be carried out to determine whether contaminated soil is suitable for bioremediation. A full-scale bioremediation service—on-site or off-site—is available for up to 10,000 tonnes of contaminated soil.

The company consults on a wide range of environmental issues including contaminated site analysis, recommendations on treatment alternatives for contaminated sites, regulatory issues, design of composting and remediation equipment, and scientific and technical aspects of bioremediation and composting processes.

FB designed, tested and implemented a

composting process to treat 4,000 tonnes of contaminated soil from a ex-wood treatment depot in South Australia. The soil was excavated and treated at a purpose-built facility south of Adelaide over 12 months, within projected timeframes and under budget.

For Sinclair, Knight Merz, FB designed and managed a major on-site biopile treatment process for treating 1,800 tonnes of diesel contaminated soil at an ex-railyard in South Australia.

For Peats Soil and Garden Supplies, FB carried out composting trials with three Langhorne Creek wineries to develop an efficient method of composting grapemarc waste on-site and reusing the products to enhance vineyard quality.

As well as these big ticket jobs, FB handles a great volume of rather less glamorous waste from Adelaide's restaurants. Clients are drawn by word of mouth, through the EPA or from industry bodies.

"Our two divisions of activity overlap to a certain degree because soil remediation and composting both involve dealing with bugs in their natural environment," says Operations Manager, Richard Stewart.

Richard recently replaced founder and managing director Dr Nick McClure, after Dr McClure's death.

"We are looking to move away from being predominantly a consultancy. We want to get involved in more 'hands-on' remediation and organic waste work," Richard says. "We see ourselves as the scientific experts to complement industry activities."

Flinders Bioremediation's Southern Waste Depot



"We don't want to compete with environmental engineering companies, but rather complement what they do."

FB will seek expansion funding through Government grants and other private investment sources to become a centre of excellence for bioremediation. Turnover is currently greater than 250,000 pa with plans to achieve 1,000,000 pa and to implement a substantial applied R&D program that feeds new technologies and ideas into core capabilities. Intellectual Property generation through innovative research programs is a key strategic aim, with long-term export possibilities to Asian countries with suitable waste streams.