

Clever composting proves a winner for Flinders Bioremediation

Flinders Bioremediation, the University company dedicated to the development of organic waste recycling methods and the rehabilitation of contaminated soils, has won a major award for one of its projects.

The company's innovative composting methods for treating silt trap material from Adelaide's Patawalonga catchment basins won the "Studies, Plans and Investigations Category", earning it one of the five awards made by the Australian Water Association (A W A) at its recent annual dinner.

The AWA Awards were established in 1996 to recognise outstanding recent contributions related to water in South Australia.

Flinders Bioremediation director Dr Richard Stewart said the project had won against stiff competition: other organisations nominated in the category included REM, GHD, CSIRO, Australian Groundwater Technologies, Hydro Tasmania and Parsons Brinkerhoff.

"Because the event was attended by water industry heavyweights such as Kellogg Brown and Root, URS Australia, Parsons Brinkerhoff, SA Water, GHD, Tokin Consulting and CSIRO Land and Water, the award is invaluable as a profile raiser," Dr Stewart said.

"It adds to our credentials for securing future work in this area, as well as further strengthening our relationship with the Patawalonga Catchment Water Management Board."

The Flinders Bioremediation project for the Patawalonga Catchment Water Management Board was completed in July this year, and comprised a trial of composting methods to treat material from silt traps containing hydrocarbons and metals from road runoff.

The project successfully demonstrated composting to be a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable alternative to landfill.

The project was managed by Ms Raya Giffard, who also gave the required presentation on the project's outcome to the award selection committee.

Ms Giffard, who joined Flinders Bioremediation in 2003, was previously the environmental manager of Wingfield Waste Management Centre, Adelaide's major landfill, which is due for closure in December this year.

"In a way, my own career runs parallel with the growing interest in, and need for, the development and application of clever,



An earthmover removes material from one of the silt traps in the Potowolonga catchment.

alternative methods of waste disposal, as landfilling becomes less attractive as a disposal option, in terms of sustainability as well as cost," she said.

"The Patawalonga project is a good example of an innovative application of composting methods to create a valuable product from a material which would otherwise be landfilled. The project is also an interesting example of the waste and water industries crossing paths."

The Patawalonga Catchment Board has recently awarded a tender for composting 3,000 tonnes of silt trap material to a consortium consisting of Flinders Bioremediation, Lucas Earthmovers and the Jeffries Group.

Lucas Earthmovers will be responsible for the excavation, dewatering and transport of the silt trap material from Brownhill Creek, the Jeffries Group will process the material at their new Buckland Park facility and Flinders Bioremediation will carry out the environmental monitoring throughout the entire process.

The project is scheduled to begin this month.