



AORA Position Statement

Asbestos Contamination in Mulch

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The Australian Organics Recycling Association (AORA) understands the concerns about the recent incidents surrounding the detection of asbestos in mulch products in public spaces across NSW, QLD and VIC. As the peak industry body for the organics recycling industry we are alarmed with the growing number of sites affected and the impact this is having on the industry as a whole and confidence in recycled organics products.

There are important facts to be made in relation to asbestos contamination in mulch products:

1. The Australian Organics Recycling Industry will not knowingly accept asbestos contaminated feedstock however, detection of asbestos within feedstock is extremely difficult to make.
2. Asbestos is not used or added to the mulch production process.
3. The Australian Organics Recycling Industry supports all efforts by regulators to eliminate the risk of asbestos within all feedstock streams that are destined for recovery.
4. The Australian Organics Recycling Industry has been manufacturing and supplying high quality products in large volumes for decades.
5. A commercially viable, sustainable and safe Australian Organics Recycling Industry is fundamental to Australia achieving its circular economy ambitions.

Those carrying out resource recovery activities across Australia are particularly concerned about the increased level of risk that they now face in relation to the presence of potentially invisible asbestos in their input materials, which is an issue over which they often have minimal control.

The recycled organics industry remains committed to producing high-quality and high-performing compost and mulch products that are safe for application to land and to human health. Maintaining high product quality and regulatory compliance are key to protecting the livelihood of the recycling organics industry. AORA supports compliance action being taken against organisations that are shown to do the wrong thing, across the supply chain.

AORA has actively advocated for consistent policy and regulatory settings that promote the delivery of clean, source separated organic feedstock without plastics, chemicals and other contaminants to organics recycling facilities. AORA continues to advocate for the elimination of hazardous materials and contaminants from all feedstock streams, noting that this is one of the most significant threats to the future success of recycling and the circular economy.

AORA promotes quality assurance as a whole of value chain responsibility – from feedstock receipt, processing, transportation through to application of materials for end use. Through this approach, potential risk to human health and the environment is minimised and quality products prevail.

For further enquiries/media comment, please contact John McKew, AORA National Executive Officer on 0434 711 077

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