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**2008 / 2009 ANNUAL REPORT**  
To the SA Public & Environmental Health Council pursuant to Section 44 (1) of the  
**PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACT 1987**

## 1 PUBLIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE

### 1.1 Environmental Health Staff Numbers

Please provide a snapshot of council's environmental health workforce on **30 June 2009** by completing the tables below.

This information is requested to inform State and National environmental health workforce initiatives.

Permanent **full time** employed environmental health officers (approx 38 hours/week)  
**(30 June 2009)**

Full name	Qualifications	EHO experience (years/months)	Commenced working for council (date)
Stephen Saffin	Diploma Public Health	26 years	January 1994
Jack Darzanos	Diploma Public Health	20 years	11 May 2009
Ellena Clarke	Degree Environmental Health	8 years	January 2004
Dane Abbott	Degree Environmental Health	18 months	14 April 2008

Permanent **part time** employed environmental health officers **(30 June 2009)**

Full name	Qualifications	Average hours worked per week	EHO experience (years/months)	Commenced working for council (date)
Bill Lucas	Diploma Royal Society of Health	18.75	32 years	February 1998

Deborah Hemmes	Degree Environmental Health	18.75	8.5 years	11 June 2002

Temporary <b>contract employed</b> environmental health officers ( <b>30 June 2009</b> )				
Full name	Qualifications	Average contracted hours worked per week	EHO experience (years/months)	Contract start/finish dates
Arch Pottage	Diploma Royal Society of Health	15	31	December 2009
Susan Bourne	Degree Environmental Health	37.5	3	May 2008 - 4 May 2009

<b>Contracted non-employee</b> environmental health officers ( <b>30 June 2009</b> )				
Full name	Qualifications	Average contracted hours worked per week	EHO experience (years/months)	Contract start/finish dates

Environmental health officer <b>positions vacant</b> ( <b>30 June 2009</b> )				
Position type (fulltime/ part time/ contract)	Position hours/week	When the position was first advertised (date)?	Number of suitably qualified applicants (at 30/6/09)	Comments regarding this position.

Number (FTE) of Ancillary Staff that assist council to fulfil its responsibilities under the <i>Public &amp; Environmental Health Act, 1987</i> ( <b>30 June 2009</b> )	
Immunisation Nurses	1
Administration	1.2
Other (please specify) NASA Nurse	0.2

## 1.2 Staff Training

- Emergency Management Course for Environmental Health Practitioners
- Environmental Health Emergency Management Planning Seminar
- Food Safety Auditors Course
- Legionella Risk Management & Water Minimisation Seminar
- Immunisation Workshop
- Attendance at the Zero Waste Conference
- Review of the SRF Act
- Attendance at EHA Food Safety Special Interest Group Meetings
- Attendance at EHA Disease Control Special Interest Group Meetings
- EHA State Conference
- Food Safety and Enforcement Seminar
- Clandestine Drug Lab Seminar

## PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ACT & REGULATIONS

Section No.	Type	No. of complaints received	No. of notices served	No. of court / appeals / expiations
<b>Public &amp; Environmental Health Act, Part III</b>				
15 & 16	Prevention / offences re insanitary conditions on premises	40	3	1
17	Control of offensive activities	24	0	0
18	Discharge of wastes in a public place	2	0	0
19	Private thoroughfare	0	0	0
20	Provision of adequate sanitation	1	0	0
21	Pollution of water	29	0	0
22	Closure of water supplies	0	0	0
<b>Regulations 1995 - Waste Control</b>				
Reg. 19	Maintenance orders			
Reg. 24	Connect to STEDS			

## 2.1 Monitoring and management of Insanitary Conditions

2.1.1 Please briefly describe the chief causes of insanitary conditions reported (eg hoarded materials, pest infestation).

- Hoarded materials – excess materials stored on properties that the resident has difficulties parting with and is opposed to disposing of.
- Animal keeping – either large number of animals (eg cats) or failure to keep animal shelters clean creating a problem with rats/odours.
- Vegetation overgrowth – excessive overgrowth



*“Hoarding within private residence”*

2.1.2 Please briefly describe the properties most implicated in the insanitary conditions reported (eg rental properties, privately owned).

- Privately owned properties tend to be the most prevalent. In many instances properties have been inherited from deceased family members.

2.1.3 Please briefly describe the primary impediments to resolving the insanitary conditions reported.

Council’s environmental health officers often find themselves liaising with many agencies to gain expert opinion, advice or assistance when dealing with insanitary conditions. Insanitary conditions on private residential properties are often complex and sensitive in nature. Most of these cases identify a lack of any family/carer support provided to people living in these conditions and thus make it difficult when Council intervenes to remedy the insanitary condition.

Some of the issues faced by EHO’s include;

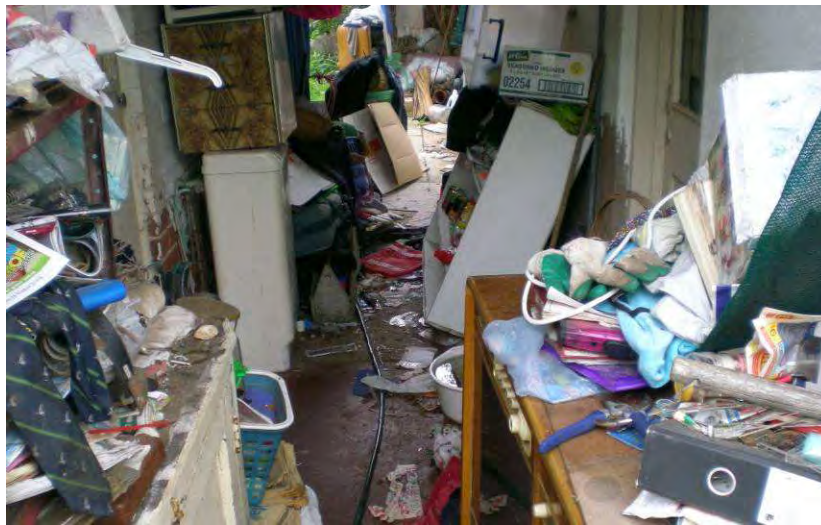
- Obtaining external contractors that are prepared to do clean-up work
- Management of compulsive disorders of residents
- Financial status (asset rich, money poor) of property owner/resident
- Lack of family intervention
- Costs associated with engaging appropriate service providers to clean up the property.
- Resident’s inability to recognise the need to remedy the situation in a timely manner.
- Expectation by some agencies to be more lenient because of other circumstances (competing priorities).

Council also deals with external agencies and support providers such as the following;

- Domiciliary care workers
- Mental health agencies/advocates
- Aged care services (ACAT)
- Certified pest control agencies (contracted to assess premises & provide service on council’s behalf)
- Local Churches
- Lawyers/solicitors

- Community service workers
- Social workers
- External contractors
- Respite service agencies (SRFs)
- Animal welfare agencies
- Animal management units
- Public Trustee

As can be seen from the above list the broad range of services and agencies that may become involved in any one particular case(s) is extensive. This complex matrix of involvement and association with a person, family or property results in an EHO being faced with being less of a regulator and more of a social support assistance co-ordinator.



*“Hoarding” in residential properties*

## **2.2 Monitoring and management of Offensive Activities**

2.2.1 Please briefly describe the offensive activities requiring the action described in the table above under the Public and Environmental Health Act 1987.

- The majority of offensive activities observed by Council were odour related. The complaints related to odours from animal keeping, rubbish on private properties, failing waste water systems or smoke from wood heaters.
- Identifying sources of odours is one of the most challenging aspects of managing these complaints. Council continues to seek community interaction and ongoing communication.



*"Accumulated rubbish" on private property*

### **3 PRIORITY OF PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**

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#### **3.1 List the more significant environmental health issues currently facing the local community and what is being done to address them**

During the financial year 2008/09 there has been a number of incidences requiring Council intervention in managing insanitary living conditions. These have been directly responsible for creating situations of ill-health and poor safety for the residents and their neighbours.

These problems have arisen from poorly maintained and unkempt premises and have included defective sanitation (plumbing), hoarding (vermin infestation) and overgrown vegetation (fire risk). Often the owners are not in a position to upgrade facilities due to their financial situations. These situations can be difficult to resolve and often take considerable time and resources to achieve an amicable solution for both the property owner and the complainant.

The rise in these types of incidents sees Council placing greater emphasis on maintaining amenity and meeting legislative standards. By undertaking a thorough investigation it is anticipated that to achieve a satisfactory outcome impacts to resources such as staff time, clean up costs, legal advice/costs, litigation and Council's willingness to carry costs placed against the property until they can be recovered by the property owner are increasing.

#### **3.2 Prioritisation process**

##### **3.2.1 How was council made aware of these priority issues (eg investigation, research, complaint)?**

Insanitary conditions are often brought to Council's attention through direct contact by residents, neighbours and notification from other sources such as the Police, Council staff such as Community Services and the general public. Hospital support staff, occupational therapists, family members and relatives provide services in the home following hospital discharge.

##### **3.2.2 How were these issues prioritised (number of people affected, risk and politics)?**

Environmental Health Services is one of the main areas driving Council's Strategic Plan. The Environmental Health Management Plan (EHMP) sets environmental health objectives and provides strategic guidance for the Units operations including emergency management and

housing conditions/amenity. The main purpose the EHMP is to adopt a pro-active, strategic approach to managing environmental health issues in the Council area and to provide clear business direction for EHOs.

Council's Environmental Health Unit has a range of Service Standards outlining the aim, performance measure and standard actions (including flow charts) for various activities including the investigation of insanitary conditions.

### 3.3 Detail any programs specifically aimed at dealing with public health issues related to vulnerable groups in your community (eg aboriginal, migrants, and the aged).

The City of Mitcham provides assistance to those in the community who are elderly, disabled and for the families that care for them through the Home and Community Care programme (HACC). The service includes home and garden maintenance, home security/safety, cleaning and respite care. Where public health issues arise with residents eligible for this service, Environmental Health Officers liaise and work closely with Community Services to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

Other services provided include:

- Social programs – a variety of activities such as guest speakers, bus trips, concerts, crafts and quiz games.
- Community Bus Service – weekly door to door shopping service to Blackwood, Mitcham and Castle Plaza Shopping Centres, plus monthly or bi-monthly trips to Westfield Marion and the Central Markets.
- Personal Transport Service – residents are taken to medical appointments, hospital to visit friends or family and to local shopping centres.
- Advocacy – residents have the right to have a person of their choice to act on their behalf.

Council continues to promote and be involved with the LifeLinks Project. LifeLinks is a collaborative project with the Cities of Unley, Mitcham, Marion and Holdfast Bay funded through Home and Community Care. It assists men or women living in Supported Residential Facilities to participate in their wider community in ways they desire, with the support of volunteers. This enables them to:

- Extend their social networks and supports.
- Link into socially and culturally appropriate recreational and social groups and/or to pursue their individual social interests.
- Continue these links as part of their life.

## 4 DISEASE CONTROL

### 4.1 Monitoring of Pools & Spas (public aquatic facilities) to minimise the incidence of water-borne illness (please complete the table below and provide details of any special activities, eg, training etc.)

Type of Pool	Number in area	Number of routine inspections	Number of complaints	Number of Inspections related to complaints/investigations	Total number of inspections
Swimming	12	13	0	0	13
Spa	4	5	0	0	5
Hydrotherapy	6	12	3	3	15
Waterslide	0	-	-	-	
Other	0	-	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>

## Additional Comments

In accordance with the Public and Environmental Health Regulations, Council regularly conducts assessments of 22 public swimming pools and spas located at 18 facilities. During the reporting period, 1 swimming pool and 2 spa pools closed to the public and have been removed from our register. A standard inspection form is used to ensure consistency between EHOs and a register is maintained to record pool and spa information, assessment outcomes and complaints. All EHOs have completed a Nationally Accredited Training Course on monitoring pool water quality.

In the reporting period, 3 complaints were received and related to poor water quality and cleanliness of pool facilities. On all occasions, inspections were conducted and remedial action completed to Councils satisfaction.

Development applications are reviewed and no new swimming pool or spa facilities were constructed during the reporting period.

*\* Number of routine inspections includes follow up inspections. Follow up inspections are conducted to ensure remedial action is carried out satisfactorily.*

### **4.2 Monitoring & investigation to minimise the incidence of Legionnaires Disease** *(please complete the table below and provide details of any special activities, eg, training, investigations etc)*

Type of System	Number registered in area	Number of routine inspections	Number of complaints	Number of Inspections related to complaints/investigations	Total number of inspections
Cooling Water System	42	44*	0	0	44
Warm Water System	11	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>			<b>44</b>

*\*Number includes follow-up inspections*

## Additional Comments

During the reporting period, at least one routine inspection was conducted for each cooling tower. Follow up inspections were conducted in response to high total bacterial counts, Legionella detection and inadequate cleaning procedures. Council inspections involve taking a water sample for analysis by IMVS, a visual inspection of the tower structure and reviewing microbiological, maintenance and water treatment records.

Two cooling towers were decommissioned and dismantled during the reporting period and will be replaced with new towers.

Businesses were advised of the new Legionella Regulations during routine inspections along with a subsequent mail out which included a copy of the Guidelines for the Control of Legionella. Reminder letters were sent to those businesses that were yet to register their towers and all registrations have now been received.

Council received a considerable number of telephone enquires from businesses regarding the new Legionella Regulations. Most of the queries related to the registration requirement, the definition of a warm water system, fees and future inspection regimes.

No complaints regarding manufactured warm water systems were received in the reporting period and there were no reported cases of Legionnaires Disease in the Council area.

**4.3 Monitoring and control of Waste Control Systems** (eg. septic tanks, STEDS, CEDS)

Type of System	Number of applications	Number of routine inspections	Number of complaints
Septic Tank	0	3	3
Aerobic System	3	2	2
Other (name)	0	12	0
	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>

**Additional Comments**

A small portion of the Council area remains un-sewered and a total of three applications were received and approved this year for aerobic systems. Five complaints related to surface waste water discharge from failing existing systems. Inspections were conducted and remedial action included pumping out, relaying soakage trenches and one system required replacing.

The 12 'others' are inspections resulting from reports from maintenance contractors servicing waste water treatment systems. These were investigated and remedial action taken.



*"Overflowing septic tank"*

#### 4.4 Immunisation programs

Please provide details on the number of clinics conducted during the reporting period

<i>Clinic Type</i>	<i>Number of Clinics</i>
Number of Council Operated Public Clinics	48
Number of School Clinics	30
Number of Internal (Council Staff) Influenza Clinics	1
Number of External Influenza Workplace Clinics	-
Number of Other Workplace Clinics	-
<i>Total</i>	<i>79</i>



*"School Immunisation Program"*

#### 4.5 Notifiable Disease Follow Up

Notifiable disease follow ups were referred to Council by the Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB) for further investigation. For the year 2008/09 Council investigated two incidents of confirmed food borne illness. Three suspected food poisoning cases were also investigated. In instances where a food business within the Council area was implicated, Environmental Health Officers conducted an inspection of the premises and investigated the food handling practices of the business.

#### 4.6 Monitoring of Hairdressing, Beauty & Skin Penetration businesses

Type of Facility	Number in area	Number of routine inspections	Number of complaints	Inspections related to complaints/investigations	Total number of inspections
Tattoo Parlours & Body Piercing	0	0	0	0	0
Hairdressing & Beauty Salons (including those that undertake skin penetration)	85	8	0	0	8
Other	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>

#### Additional Comments

There are no known tattoo parlours or body piercing facilities within the Mitcham area. During this reporting period onsite inspections were conducted at 10% of hair and beauty salons, and Councils business records and inspection program was reviewed. An assessment program will be implemented in the next reporting period and will include a combination of onsite inspections and self assessment methods. There were no complaints received during this reporting period. In the event that a complaint regarding hair and beauty facilities is received, an onsite inspection would be conducted and an assessment made in relation to the Department of Health guidelines. (For skin penetration, hairdressing)

#### 4.7 Monitoring and control of Vectors and Other Pests (include level of activity, control measures, number/regularity of complaints, education programs etc)

Vector or Pest	Number of Complaints	Control Program (Y/N) (Please provide further details below)
Mosquitoes	7	N
Rodents	27	N
Head Lice	0	N
Flies	0	Y
Pigeons	2	N
Scabies	0	N
Cockroaches	0	N
Bees	41	Y
European Wasps	472	Y
Other – Spiders	1	N

Description of control program (identifying vector/pest and activity undertaken)

#### **Mosquitoes**

The complaints received during this reporting period related to mosquito breeding in poorly maintained domestic swimming pools. Whilst complaints are most common in summer

months, a small number were received during cooler weather periods. Complaints are investigated by conducting inspections and providing advice on the control of mosquitoes. Information on maintaining pool water quality is also provided in order to minimise future mosquito activity.

### **Rodents**

Vermin complaints during this reporting period related to insanitary conditions, accumulated materials and composting bins located on residential properties. Council responds to complaints by posting educational material to high vermin activity areas and by conducting inspections. Information is also provided on Council's website and through Community News articles. Enforcement action is taken where necessary, for example, where a potential insanitary condition exists.

### **Flies**

There were no fly complaints received during this reporting period. In the past, complaints related to fly sightings in food businesses and such complaints are investigated under the *Food Act 2001*.

### **Bees & Wasps**

During this reporting period Council investigated 472 European Wasp and 41 bee hive complaints which is an increase of 265 complaints compared to last year. Subsequently Council destroyed 216 European Wasp nests throughout the Mitcham area. Council has a pest control contractor to treat beehives on Council land and wasp nests on Council land and private property. Community education is provided during peak wasp season through local newspaper articles and specific advice is provided to residents as requested.

Council is also a participant in the Local Government Association European Wasp Equalisation Fund program, which provides a subsidy for the eradication of European Wasps.

## **4.8 Monitoring & control of Animal Keeping Facilities (eg. domestic animals, petting zoos, kennels)**

Environmental Health and Compliance (Animal Management) take a collaborative approach when investigating complaints regarding domestic animals. The issues commonly raised by residents include odour, noise (such as roosters and barking dogs), vermin and poorly maintained domestic animal keeping shelters. Residents are encouraged to discuss issues with their neighbours prior to Council undertaking an inspection of the property and advice is provided on how this may be done to maintain good neighbour relationships. Information and advice is also provided when responding to animal keeping queries such as keeping poultry.

## **4.9 Outline any preparation work done for Pandemic Flu**

In response to the Swine Flu Outbreak, Council made available the 'Wash Wipe Cover' information and brochures provided by SA Health, in particular, at public gatherings such as immunisation clinics.

Information was displayed throughout Council buildings and staff were also reminded of common sense hygiene practices such as thorough hand washing and sneezing etiquette.

Council also placed adds in the Mitcham Community News, provided immunisation to at risk staff and training to outdoor staff on reducing disease transmission. Senior management identified critical function and succession.

#### 4.10 Other

- Food safety and environmental health presentations given to Flinders University Students, high school and primary school students & community groups. Presentations cover a range of environmental health issues such as the role of Local Government in protecting public health, role of an EHO, food safety, pollution prevention, immunisation, waste & recycling, pool and cooling tower monitoring.
- Environmental Health Unit had hand washing stickers designed and made as a promotional/educational resource. Stickers are handed out during school presentations and school visits to the Council Offices.
- Articles included in the Community News – these are generally seasonal issues such as mosquitoes and pools in summer, wood heaters in winter, food business notification reminders, and food safety in summer etc.
- Council subscribes to SAFHU (South Australia Food Handler Update) and distributes approximately 350 newsletters to food businesses within the Mitcham area. (This generally comes out quarterly)

Council website provides comprehensive environmental health information and links to external sites, updated regularly. The web site may be found at the following URL:

<http://www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=1101>

## 5 PUBLIC & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

### 5.1 Does Council have a current Public & Environmental Health Management Plan or Strategic/ Corporate Plan that forward plans the environmental health activities of Council?

**YES**

**IF NO**

Does Council expect to produce one within the next 2 years?

**N/A**

**IF YES**

Date commenced - 2005-2010

Have details of the plan been provided in previous reports?

**YES**

(If Yes, go to next item)

In June 2007, an annual review for the Environmental Health Management Plan was endorsed by Council. Each of the thirteen headings were reviewed, along with their objectives and actions, and each action was reported against. The minor changes highlighted in the review were Food Safety Programs and the National Immunisation Schedule.

## 6. HEALTH EDUCATION / PROMOTION & COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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The City of Mitcham subscribes to the South Australian Food Handler Update (SAFHU) which is a food safety newsletter developed by Environmental Health Australia. SAFHU is produced on a quarterly basis and is distributed to all food businesses within the Council area.

Council's website has a range of information available for residents, including topics under Environmental Health, Environment and Compliance. Tracking of these sites show that the public view the information regularly. Environmental Health Officers update the site as required.

Mitcham Community News is a newspaper produced by the City of Mitcham on a bi-monthly basis. This is delivered to every household and business within the Council area and contains up to date information on the latest news from Council, local services and events happening within the community. The Environmental Health Services unit contribute a variety of articles for information and education to the local community. Topics that were incorporated in Mitcham Community News during the reporting period include:

- Domestic hard rubbish collection
- Bio-bin food waste trial
- Flooding in the City of Mitcham – how to prevent flooding and what to do before, after and during a flood event
- Bushfire prevention
- Reminder on dog registration
- Planning for the Bushfire season
- Get your swimming pool ready for summer – keeping the water safe to swim in, backwash discharge and mosquito prevention
- Preventing food poisoning
- Preparing safe food at picnics and barbeques
- Public Immunisation Clinics
- How to correctly use the household waste 3-bin system
- European wasps
- Mitcham Matters – relevant information is placed in the Mitcham Matters column to highlight aspects of Environmental Health e.g. waste management issues, immunisation clinics and hard garbage service.

Other health promotion activities include:

- Food safety and environmental health presentations to Flinders University students, high school and primary school students and other community groups. The presentations cover a range of environmental health issues such as the role of Local Government in protecting public health, the role of an EHO, food safety, pollution prevention, immunisation, Council's waste collection and recycling program, swimming pool and cooling tower monitoring.
- Hand washing stickers were designed by the EHOs and made as an educational resource. These stickers are handed out during presentations and school visits to the Council Offices.

## **7. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT & SUSTAINABILITY**

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### **7.1 Monitoring to ensure Potable Water (eg. rainwater tanks, bores)**

Mitcham Council area is serviced with reticulated mains water supplied through SA Water.

Environmental Health Officers provide advice to residents on the correct use of rainwater tanks and how to effectively maintain tanks to ensure a safer water quality.

An investigation was also carried out on a local aquifer storage and recharge (ASR) program following receipt of a complaint alleging foreign matter/pollution being present in the creek. At

the time the creek was observed to be flowing and no foreign matter or pollution was detected.



*“Water being taken from Brown Hill Creek as part of local Aquifer Storage & Recharge Program”  
(ASR)*

## **7.2 Monitoring to ensure Water Quality / Protection of Waterways and Catchments**

Councils Environment Officer continued to work with the building and construction industry to promote best practice in the areas of waste minimisation, sustainable activities, storm water management and general environmental responsibilities. Site assessments were conducted across the Council area focusing on industry practices.

A key initiative has seen the City of Mitcham working in conjunction with KESAB and Adelaide Development Company to create a clean, environmental friendly housing development at Blackwood Park, known as the ‘Clean Site’ program. This has meant working with all builders in the development and asking them to please help protect the environment by implementing the following measures:

- Removing mud on road - sweep up (don't wash up!).
- Recycle or re-use building materials.
- Use sediment fences, hay bales or bunds to reduce waterway pollution.
- Use a single gravel exit/entry point to sites.

Council street sweepers collect and remove leaf litter and other pollutants from the street gutters. Areas with a greater autumn leaf drop are also identified and included in the City of Mitcham’s Gutter Guardian Program. The program requires the assistance of residents to pile leaf litter on the street verge, which is then collected on a weekly basis by a Council Contractor and recycled into mulch.



“Discharge from development site”

### 7.3 Waste Management Practices (domestic waste, landfills, green waste, recycling, solid waste, hazardous waste) (eg. types and regularity of services)

#### *Waste Management*

Council continued to review its strategic direction in waste management in response to Zero Waste SA’s expectation of 75% of all domestic waste being diverted from land fill disposal by 2010.

#### *Waste Dumping Costs*

Council continues to monitor disposal costs and regularly evaluated the methods of disposal through constant assessment of transport, transfer and land filling systems.

#### *Waste Management*

Year	Domestic Waste to landfill (tonnes)	Recyclables (tonnes)	Green recyclables	Hard refuse (tonnes)
2003/2004	19,688	3,063	n/a	1,564
2004/2005	18,697	5,186	n/a	1,508
2005/2006	10,685	7,112	7,757	1,985
2006/2007	10,910	7,330	6,509	1,395
2007/2008	11473	7521	3157	1427
2008/2009	11543	7417	6174	1343

#### *Domestic Waste Collection*

The City of Mitcham continues to focus on reducing waste to land fill by encouraging waste minimisation and greater participation rates in recycling programs.

Mitcham is very committed to reducing waste through its waste and recycling collection service, encouragement of composting and worm farms, its Green Organics Depot and hard rubbish collection.

Kerbside recycling has been extremely successful in Mitcham in 2008/2009 the City of Mitcham collected a total of 7,417 tonnes of recyclables and mixed papers and 6,174 tonnes

of green material. Council encourages all residents to participate in the worthwhile environmental initiative.

It should be noted that Council's Environmental Health Unit had continued involvement with PIRSA to manage and help eradicate fruit fly from identified suburbs within Mitcham. The fruit fly eradication and monitoring program concluded in December 2008 resulting in the diversion of 1340.76 tonnes of green waste from the recycling program to landfill due to their potential contamination.

#### *Bio-bin Food Waste Trial*

On 15 June 2008 the Minister for Environment and Conservation, Ms Gail Gago, announced that Mitcham had been successful in gaining funding support from the State government through Zero Waste SA to pilot the food waste recycling system for 12 months.

The trial involved 1000 households in Mitcham, participating households were provided with a small basket and a year's supply of compostable corn starch 'plastic bags' along with instruction material. They were also given the opportunity to attend briefing sessions before the commencement of the pilot.

The pilot involves the trial collection of food waste separated from the general waste stream and collected fortnightly by the green organics collection.



*Bio-basket & information brochure provided to householder*

#### **7.4 Monitoring of Contaminated Land**

Assessment of new developments includes the identification of potentially contaminated sites. A potentially contaminated site register has been developed for Council's purpose and is used by the Development team when assessing development applications. Environmental Health Officers comment on potentially contaminated site applications when necessary.

#### **7.5 Monitoring and Control of Hazardous Substances (eg. asbestos, medical waste)**

Council provides residents with a free sharps container and disposal service for used needles and syringes. This service is not available for commercial operators, they are advised to dispose of their sharps through an appropriate contractor.

General advice is provided to residents who enquire about the removal and disposal of asbestos material from residential properties. Information sheets are made available and

residents are encouraged to contact Safe Work SA and the EPA for additional advice on asbestos related matters.

### **7.6 Monitoring of Air Quality**

Council responded to 15 odour complaints including smoke from combustion heaters and offensive odours from nearby properties.

Information sheets and handout materials produced by the EPA addressing smoke from wood heaters were also provided to residents as an informative tool to manage complaints regarding wood heaters.

### **7.7 Noise Complaint Investigations**

Noise complaints are referred onto the EPA or local Police. Residents are encouraged to discuss noise issues with their neighbours before seeking regulator intervention.

### **7.8 Monitoring and Control of Recreation Facilities (eg. risk assessment of playgrounds, inspections of camping areas etc.)**

Council has conducted 100 inspections of playgrounds during the reporting period and all safety and maintenance problems were repaired. The majority of problems were due to damage to spring animals, swing seats and climbing structures.

### **7.9 Emergency Planning Activities (eg. disaster recovery / business continuity plans)**

#### *Bushfire Risk Management Plan & Bushfire Community Engagement Package*

Mitcham Council's Bushfire Risk Management Plan makes Council residents aware of the risks of living in a high fire risk area so that they can be adequately prepared to respond. The plan recognises that due to factors such as steep topography, high fuel loads and limited egress, the Mitcham Hills area is amongst the most vulnerable fire risk areas in Australia.

#### *Working together to manage emergencies – Community Flood Awareness*

The City of Mitcham's community flood awareness and preparedness program aims to increase community awareness of potential flood risk and promote self reliance amongst residents and businesses to minimise risk to personal safety.

#### *Sturt Community Emergency Risk Management Project*

The Sturt Local Government Emergency Management advisory group was set up by Council to regularly meet to discuss emergency issues across the involved Council areas of Unley, Mitcham, Marion and Holdfast. The project provides a framework to review local emergency management arrangements.

The group also contributed \$15,000.00 to the SES community flood safe program. Community consultation is an important part of the Sturt Community Emergency Risk Management Project.

The SES Community Flood Safe Program volunteers in 2008/09 financial year held 4 community meetings to distribute information, carried out kindergarten and school information visits and developed displays in libraries and civic centre foyers to disseminate flood awareness and preparedness information in the Mitcham area.

### 7.10 Rural and Urban Planning Activities (eg. number of development applications assessed by EHOs)

1877 applications were received for Development approval. Applications involving public health or environmental issues, such a new food premises or contaminated sites, are forwarded to Environmental Heath Officers for comment.

### 7.11 Other

No Report

## 8. OTHER

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### *Environmental Health Cadetship*

The City of Mitcham continues to offer an Environmental Health Cadetship program for the Flinders University Bachelor of Environmental Health graduates and students. The cadetship aims to address key issues identified in the Environmental Health Officer Workforce Review. The cadet is involved with all aspects of Environmental Health by assisting experienced Officers in their duties as well as managing small projects.

### *Strategic Planning*

Councils Environmental Health Unit continues to play its part in ensuring the well being of the Mitcham Community as it relates to environmental health matters. This is carried out through direction from the Environmental Health Management Plan and Council Strategic Plan.

Council is currently reviewing the Strategic Plan to formalise the links with Council's functional plans, including the Public and Environmental Health Plan. The Strategic Plan will be developed to include aspects of Environmental Health that were not previously included, such as routine duties.

### *Food Safety Auditing*

In response to legislative change, Council elected to provide a food safety auditing service for high risk food businesses captured by the new Food Safety Standard. The Standard requires hospitals, aged care facilities and child care centres to develop and implement a food safety program. The documented program must be audited by a SA Health approved auditor and Council is providing an auditing service for businesses within the Mitcham area.

A total of 25 businesses consisting of 2 private hospitals, 11 aged care facilities and 12 child care centres required an audit. These facilities have completed first round audits and second audits are currently being conducted at a six monthly frequency. Support and advice was provided to businesses through letters, fact sheets, templates and on-site visits.

Food safety auditing has been a considerable time commitment for EHOs during this reporting period. This has meant businesses were able to meet their legislative requirements which improve food safety and ultimately the health of the community.

**This report is to be submitted by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 in soft copy emailed to:**

**[andrew.vickers@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:andrew.vickers@health.sa.gov.au)**

**Please note that hard copies are no longer required to be sent to the Public and Environmental Health Council.**