

Grampians Regional Waste Management Group (GRWMG)

From Garbage to Grapes

This collaborative project diverts municipal and domestic green waste from landfill in the Grampians Region and has resulted in water conservation and business efficiencies for local grape growers as well as waste reduction outcomes for the community.

A trial conducted in 2001 by the Grampians Regional Waste Management Group (GRWMG) tested the feasibility of turning green organic waste collected at transfer stations into pasteurised mulch for application in agriculture. With the local council's assurance of regular good quality source material, the "Grampians Grapegrowers" association of vineyard operators in Great Western, Western Victoria – comprising Hyde Park, Bests and Glendhu Vineyards - pooled their resources to purchase a compost spreader. The spreader enables efficient spreading of the mulched material along the vine rows and is widely used by vineyards across the Region

The 30% reduction in water use resulting from applying the pasteurised mulch means growers can increase their plantings. Other vineyards including Summerfield, Kimbarra, Malakoff, Blue Pyrenees and Southcorp are now engaged in the program. While water retention is the fundamental objective in using the mulch, the long term benefit of adding organic matter to soil is improved soil structure which in turn leads to improved water and nutrient holding capacity, increased microbial activity and in some cases, suppression of diseases. The mulch also helps to suppress weeds.

30,000m³ of green waste has been diverted from landfill in the past 3 years. A comprehensive and ongoing education program is conducted across the Region, in which transfer station managers play an important role in ensuring the community delivers clean green waste to the Region's facilities.

Initial funding of \$12,000 was secured through a market development grant from Sustainability Victoria (formerly EcoRecycle Victoria) and \$12,000 was contributed by the Grampians Grapegrowers to finance the purchase of the spreader. The GRWMG manages the program. The spreader is available for use by grape growers across the Region, with concessional rates for those who have made a capital contribution to the project and commercial rates for all others.

In November 2005, GRWMG and stakeholders in the project were awarded a Regional Achievement and Community Award (Environment & Sustainability) for the program.

Mulch spreader - A machine to distribute mulch at the base of the vines was purchased as part of the project.



Education - Councils conducted a community education program to ensure green waste was not contaminated



Regional Achievement - Council representatives on the GRWMG were pleased to accept the community award.



Sustainability
victoria



For more information contact

Dory Russell
Acting Executive Officer
Grampians Regional Waste
Management Group
Tel (03) 5358 5680
Email dr-grwmg@netconnect.com.au

Bill Grant
Project Manager
Sustainability Victoria
Tel (03) 8626 8744
Email bill.grant@sustainability.vic.gov.au
www.sustainability.vic.gov.au