Waste-to-compost trial given go-ahead

By JON BASSETT

UNEATEN food, paper and organic waste from public hospitals will be sent to the Western Metropolitan Regional Council’s (WMRC) DICOM compost plant in Sheraton Park.

From March, it is proposed that 3200 tonnes will be processed in an $89,600 year-long trial comprising 10 per cent of the plant’s capacity.

It will be the first time the State Government has supported a DICOM-type trial in WA.

In a June 5 letter to the WMRC, Environment Minister Bill Marmion told the WA Waste Authority to budget $89,600 for the trial.

The order reverses his refusal of an eight-month-old proposal for the plant to take waste from Royal Perth, Princess Margaret and Sir Charles Gairdner hospitals.

Mr Marmion instead wanted to spend $50,000 on improved recycling rates among hospital staff.

“The proposed contract is not fundamental to the plant’s success, but it was important to have a solid demonstration of political support that mattered to us more,” WMRC chief executive Adam Johnson said.

Mr Johnson said it appeared Mr Marmion thought the proposal was for a larger four-year contract costing $1.5 million and that the Government would subsidise the $163/tonne cost to process the waste.

On May 18, DICOM process inventor AnaeeCo agreed to a $10 million loan from the trust of Sydney-based technology inventor Ian Campbell in return for 49.7 per cent of the company’s votes.

As a result of the deal, Mr Campbell now owns 16 per cent of DICOM, while construction company Monadelphous has 10 per cent.

WMRC chairman Ron Norris said emergence of major shareholders in DICOM demonstrated faith in bio-conversion of waste to compost that would avoid landfill.

Australia in great shape: Professor

ECONOMICS Professor Lawrence H White recently gave Year 12 Presbyterian Ladies’ College economics students his perspective on the global financial crisis in the US and Europe.

The visiting professor from George Mason University, Virginia, US, was sponsored by Mannekal Economics Education Foundation and was in Perth to speak to the Freedom and Prosperity Club and Business faculty at the University of WA.

Prof White said Australia was in great shape and he was impressed with how the country recovered from the economic crisis.

“Economists generally refer to Australia as an oasis in the world economy,” he said.

Professor Lawrence White at PLC with Year 12 economics students Joanna Akehurst, Emily Mantle and Yixiao Zhao.