

Eclipse leads the way in clean mulch

The landscaping industry in NSW was rocked earlier this year with revelations that asbestos in mulch associated with one major supplier had been discovered in 45 sites across the State.

This was despite mulch in NSW being regulated under EPA rules forbidding mulch to contain asbestos and other contaminants such as metal, plastics, polystyrene and glass.

The company at the centre of the firestorm later revealed that the majority of its mulch was made from “separated waste timber products” including wooden pallets although no asbestos had been discovered in its product when tested over the previous two years.

The NSW Government has been forced to form a taskforce to oversee remediation and contact tracing to address the problem. However, the extent of the spread of the contaminated mulch means that it is highly unlikely that it will ever be completely remediated.

Western Australia’s premier distributor of soils and mulches, Eclipse Soils has for decades initiated its own rigorous guidelines to prevent any contamination of its products.

“Eclipse Soils works to a comprehensive Environmental Management System and Quality Control Plan to mitigate these risks and ensure all products meet environmental and health standards, as well as meeting Australian Standards for soils and mulches, and geotechnical standards for structural fill product,” said Eclipse Soils general manager, Sean Bennett.

At Eclipse Soils no mixed construction and demolition waste is accepted and screened to make any of its soil or mulch products.



Green waste being sorted for mulch at Eclipse

Also no organic waste is accepted in the form of animal wastes, food organics and garden organics (FOGO), verge collections or construction waste.

“Verge collections and construction waste poses the highest risk of asbestos in mulch,” said Mr Bennett.

In NSW the mulch company at the centre of the asbestos scare pointed out that it’s mulches could have been contaminated at other sites where construction waste was processed.

Mr Bennett said the process to ensure Eclipse mulch is free from asbestos covered a number of key steps.

Firstly, high risk inputs are excluded - no inputs resulting from processing of mixed construction and demolition waste and organics from verge collections and transfer stations are included in the mulch.

Secondly, only hardwood trees from clean sources are accepted for mulch production. Mulch inputs are heavily vetted through visual inspection and ‘belts and braces’ precautionary testing for asbestos. Composting and pasteurisation is conducted in a clean facility with no risk of any contact with physical contaminants.

Finally, the finished products are also visually inspected and tested for asbestos. This process is conducted over and above the Australian Standard for mulches and dieback testing Eclipse undertakes on all mulch products.

“Eclipse Soils understands the risks associated with asbestos in Western Australia and has a long-standing practice of excluding any activities that could result in asbestos in any of our soil and mulch products ,” said Mr Bennett.

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