



USE AND DISPOSAL OF
BIOSOLIDS PRODUCTS

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Environmental Guidelines: Use and Disposal of Biosolids Products was prepared by Chye Ang, Environmental Policy, and John Sparkes, Operations Division, of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA), with the assistance of the Biosolids Subcommittee of the Hazardous Chemical Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from:

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Preface

Over recent years the NSW Government has been re-evaluating how sewage should be treated and disposed of so that improvements to both environmental and public health can be assured. The overriding concern has been to try to move away from the traditional and unsustainable disposal of sewage to waterways, and to recognise that sewage contains a number of natural qualities which can, when managed judiciously, be utilised as a resource.

Not only does raw sewage include a plentiful supply of water, but the solids component is rich in essential nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and organic matter; and these are in a form that is highly suitable for assimilation by plants. As a result, there has been an increased interest in finding ways to reuse both the water and solids components of sewage in a manner that is cost effective, environmentally sustainable and safe from a public health perspective.

The Environment Protection Authority of NSW has worked closely with other government bodies and with industry to identify how both solids, commonly known as biosolids, and effluent can best be reused in NSW. This has resulted in the development of a process by which biosolids can be classified for reuse purposes, and which also encourages and facilitates their application to land.

These guidelines, if followed by those industries that use biosolids, provide a means by which a sewage treatment plant can increase its ability to market the biosolids it produces, while ensuring that a high level of protection for both the environment and public health is maintained. The guidelines also provide an incentive for the operator to identify the sources of offensive chemicals that pollute the raw sewage, and to eliminate them from the system.

The guidelines focus on biosolids from human raw sewage, though the principles outlined could apply equally to animal wastes, if the material were to be properly characterised. The guidelines include an outline of the statutory requirements throughout NSW for reusing biosolids, and replace the following publications:

Guidelines for the Use of Sewage Sludge on Agricultural Land (NSW Agriculture 1991)

Draft Guidelines for the Treatment and Use of Sewage Sludge on Non-agricultural Land (NSW Health Department 1991).



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