



ALL-ROUND WINNER: Ben Dearman and Richard Stewart with the RemBall.

Picture: TAIT SCHMAAL

Ziltek founders on the ball to turn bad soil into good

ALEXANDRA ECONOMOU

A VISIT to a golf shop led Adelaide company Ziltek to create a biodegradable ball which helps expedite composting and soil remediation practices.

Ziltek co-founders Richard Stewart and Ben Dearman are awaiting worldwide patents for its RemBall product, which it plans to market and sell both here and overseas.

The Kent Town-based business, started in late 2006, develops new technologies and methods of managing hazardous waste from industry and contaminated sites.

“A lot of the waste still goes to landfill which is unsustainable from a space point of view and a human point of view,” Dr Stewart said. “When you are either composting or bioremediating soil, when you are using bugs to clean up the soil and waste, the main factor is to get enough air into the waste to get the bugs to do their thing.

“Traditionally, we turn the soil or pump air through with pumps and perforated pipes, but both of these are inefficient and costly.”

The RemBall, made from corn starch and modelled on a plastic practice golf ball, eliminates the need

for pumps or pipes and lets continual air flow through soil or waste.

Dr Stewart said using the RemBall could save \$10 per tonne of soil.

Ziltek is currently going through a capital raising exercise and is looking to raise \$1.5 million to develop its product range.

It has already received more than \$300,000 in grants from organisations including Bio Innovation SA, HazWaste Fund in Victoria and a \$64,000 AusIndustry Commercialising Emerging Technologies grant.

Dr Stewart said Ziltek planned to employ 10 people within the next two years. It has six technologies in its portfolio, including RemBall.