

Rendering company found guilty for rotting carcass smell

25 Nov 2015

A Brooklyn meat rendering company that caused a 'rotting carcass' smell to impact on nearby residents to the point where they were too embarrassed to invite visitors to their homes was found guilty in court yesterday.

Australian Tallow Producers Pty Ltd (ATP) was found guilty in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court following an Environment Protection Authority Victoria (EPA) investigation that led to the company being charged with three counts of air pollution offences.

The company was found to be in contravention of the *Environment Protection Act 1970* after it polluted the atmosphere by allowing odours offensive to humans on three separate occasions in June 2011 and September 2011.

The court was told ATP operates a rendering facility and manufactures tallow from mixed abattoir material on Geelong Road, Brooklyn.

On 22 June 2011, EPA received 13 complaints from nearby residents complaining about offensive odours coming from the site.

Complainants described the odour as a "smell like sewerage, like rotting carcass...", a "very, very strong putrid dead animal smell..." which made one complainant say they felt like throwing up.

The odour also impacted on another resident who said they "had to lock all the doors and windows and could not have any fresh air in the house".

The next day, on 23 June 2011 and later on 21 September 2011, EPA received similar complaints.

The reports were backed up by an EPA officer who visited the area on 22 June 2011 and reported a strong offensive odour comprising of a mixture of 'manure, blood, bone and tallow' coming from ATP's premises.

Subsequent visits by EPA officers on 23 June 2011 and 21 September 2011 also confirmed this, with one officer reporting they "felt close to vomiting".

The company will be sentenced on 21 December, 2015.

EPA Chief Executive Officer, Nial Finegan said today's finding of guilt served as a strong reminder to businesses that must comply with their environmental obligations or be held to account.

“EPA called on 11 witnesses, two expert witnesses and nine environment protection officers to give sworn evidence during court proceedings against ATP,” he said.

“The outcome is a win for the Brooklyn community who have had to put up with localised pollution issues for too long.”

“No community should have to live with an odour so horrid that they can’t even have guests over, constantly feel nauseous and are forced to close their windows.”

“In addition to EPA’s investigation and today’s subsequent finding, since 2011 EPA has also issued ATP with four pollution abatement notices looking at their environment controls and requiring they fix issues to reduce odour impacts. They were also fined by EPA officers more than \$7000 over an odour incident in 2013.”

“EPA will continue to hold operators to account if they breach their environmental obligations.”

“We thank the local community for their perseverance and support in helping to achieve this outcome and we look forward to the final outcome in this matter.”

“The court’s judgement vindicates the community, upholds the law and reflects that EPA will persist with these matters until the very end.”