

Report to the Environment Committee
from Andrew Jones, Resource Advisor

Resolution of Odour Problems at Taylor Preston Limited, Ngauranga Gorge

1. Purpose

At its last meeting on 25 March 1999 the Environment Committee requested an update on enforcement action taken against Taylor Preston Limited. This report summarises the extent of the odour problem and confirms that progress has been made with the company to resolve this issue.

2. Extent of the Problem

On 8 June 1998 Taylor Preston Limited was served an abatement notice requiring compliance with condition 7 of consent WGN 950150 by 9 June 1998. Condition 7 of this consent states:

There shall be no discharges to atmosphere resulting from the exercise of this consent which are noxious, dangerous, offensive or objectionable at or beyond the boundary of the consent holder's premises.

It is important to note that this condition does allow for some odour at the boundary of the plant. A breach of the consent condition only occurs if an odour is classified as noxious, dangerous, offensive or objectionable.

Since the abatement notice was served there have been 88 complaints about odour from the abattoir. Regional Council investigating officers have determined that 12 of these complaints related to offensive and objectionable odour beyond the company's boundary. In light of the ongoing, and in some cases confirmed complaints, we took legal advice on 18 February 1999 to confirm our enforcement options.

3. Meeting with Taylor Preston

On 23 March 1999 we agreed to meet Taylor Preston to discuss odour control at their plant. Such an approach is without prejudice to any formal action that we may wish to take in the future.

On 15 April 1999 Peter Work and Ivan Simock of Taylor Preston met with Stephanie Livick, Nigel Corry and myself to discuss the odour problem.

A key outcome of this meeting was Taylor Preston's acknowledgement of the odour problem associated with the plant. We advised Taylor Preston that we were considering formal enforcement action. In response to that advice, Taylor Preston stated that it had been working towards finding a solution to the problem and it was committed to continue doing so.

It was agreed that:

- Wellington Regional Council will prepare a summary, and breakdown of the complaints received;
- Taylor Preston will use this information to analyse its operation and further develop and document its odour control strategy;
- Wellington Regional Council will identify recent complainants and inquire whether they would be interested in a public meeting to discuss Taylor Preston's strategy; and
- some form of public meeting will be run depending on the number of people involved.

No timeframe was finalised. However, deadlines will be agreed to once the summary and breakdown of complaints has been completed. I anticipate that a public meeting will be held before the end of June 1999.

In addition, we agreed on an investigation and reporting procedure to ensure that the lines of communication are clearly defined in case of a complaint. Taylor Preston expressed an interest in attending any complaint that Wellington Regional Council investigating officers confirm.

In summary, Taylor Preston has expressed willingness to remedy the odour problem to the best of its ability. However, Taylor Preston expressed some caution because it wants to be sure that its approach to odour control will ensure a long-term and financially acceptable guarantee of consent compliance.

4. Recommendation

That the report be received and its contents noted.

Report prepared by:

Approved for submission:

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