

Something 'rotten' in Dandenong South industry zone

By Cam Lucadou-Wells

A liquid organic waste company in Ordish Road, Dandenong South is taking on a state pollution order against alleged "rotten egg" smells wafting from its site.

Argus Recycling has been at the site next to Dandenong Creek since 1967. It sits just inside the border of Dandenong's increasingly notorious industrial 2 zone.

But the open-air compost yard has apparently got on the nose of its neighbours.

Nearby manufacturers and a shopfitting company are backing the Environment Protection Authority Victoria, which recently issued a Pollution Abatement Notice.

Argus Recycling is seeking a review of the PAN at an upcoming VCAT hearing.

The PAN states that Argus's activities caused or were likely to cause air pollution that was harmful or potentially harmful to human health, welfare, safety or property.

On inspection, EPA officers allegedly encountered "offensive odours" at the site.

A nearby business owner, who did not wish to be named, described the daily smell as "terrible" "rotten egg gases".

After decades of operation, Argus should update with new technologies to mitigate its pollution, the owner said.

"They're dumping rotten foods on the ground and letting it rot down. We've seen black plumes of smoke coming off.

"It's a daily occurrence. How bad it is depends on what way the wind is blowing."

The neighbour said Argus argues it has been carrying on without issues for decades until other businesses moved nearby.

"They say why should they change their process because people have moved closer?

"They're saying it's an organic plant. But plenty of organic products can kill you - methane gas that comes off rubbish tips can kill you."



Argus Recycling in Ordish Road, Dandenong South is fighting an EPA Pollution Abatement Notice. 228758

The industry two zone - home to the state's most offensive industries such as the Lyndhurst toxic waste dump - was established in 1976.

It has been steadily encroached by light industry, housing estates, sports fields and schools in Keysborough and Dandenong South.

Some homes are within the zone's supposed 1.5-kilometre buffer zone.

Thelma Wakelam is a member of Residents Against Toxic Waste in the South East (RATWISE), which opposed the Lyndhurst tip as well as a capped and lined mound (CaLM) of untreated polluted sludge on the corner of Greens Road and Eastlink.



SUEZ toxic waste dump in Lyndhurst is part of the industry 2 zone. Pictures: GARY SISSONS 228738

She blames the council for not "speaking out" against homes and businesses creeping close to heavy industry.

"It's just been so wrong for so long.

"Everybody has a human right to live in an area free from contamination. It's not a big ask."

Greater Dandenong Council city planning director Jody Bosman said the council was involved in "significant strategic work with the State Government and other authorities regarding the various developments surrounding this area to ensure they met the relevant legislation at the time of their development."

In the wake of a public outcry against an

approved waste-to-energy plant in Ordish Road, the council is exploring the possible rezoning of the area to light industry use.

Mr Bosman said the council was preparing a report on "current options".

Councillor Jim Memeti, who called for the report, recently said residents were "sick and tired" of living near toxic industries but were powerless to stop them due to the industrial 2 zone.

In July, a Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning spokesperson said there were "no plans to change the industrial zoning in Dandenong South".

Argus Recycling was contacted for comment.