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Filthy bakery fined \$60,000

Operators of a vermin-infested Marrickville bakery who ignored a trading ban by Food Authority inspectors have been ordered to pay \$60,000 in fines and costs, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said.

The Tuckerbag Bakery in Sydenham Road pleaded guilty to 11 food law offences, including having filthy premises, vermin infestation and breaching a prohibition order.

“This is a serious case where a food outlet was in such a disgraceful condition that the Food Authority shut it town, but the owner flouted the order,” Mr Macdonald said.

In May, the Chief Industrial Magistrate imposed a \$73,000 fine, but on appeal to the District Court the fine was reduced to \$45,000 plus \$15,000 costs against the defendant.

“I note Chief Industrial Magistrate Gregory Hart described the case as “a particularly grievous offence” where the bakery “remained in a filthy and unhygienic condition, infested with rats with large quantities of rat excrement visible...and the stench of rat urine obvious...”

It showed “a reprehensible attitude to public health,” Magistrate Hart said.

In the appeal proceedings, Judge Freeman echoed Magistrate Hart’s comments regarding the state of the premises, stating that the gross signs of rodent infestation and lack of cleanliness were “breathhtaking.”

Minister Macdonald said acting on complaints from the public, Food Authority inspectors visited the wholesale bakery in July 2007 to find rodent infestation and faeces, filthy walls and equipment and food stored in unhygienic condition.

Authority inspectors immediately closed the bakery down, but the owners deliberately ignored the order and continued trading.

Minister Macdonald said the court noted the owners “were fully aware that the premises...were in a filthy, unhygienic state, and infested with rodents, and therefore totally unfit for the purpose of producing food products for human consumption.”

“This fine reflects that food safety in NSW is of utmost importance and that the Government takes its responsibility towards consumers seriously,” he said.
