
26 April 2023

Penalty for SA dry cleaner

A dry cleaning company and its sole director have been convicted for failing to comply with an Environment Protection Authority (EPA) order.

Karl Investments Pty Ltd and its sole director, Karl Stephen Chehade, agreed in the Environment, Resources and Development Court that they had breached the Site Contamination Assessment Order for their dry cleaning site at 433 Brighton Road, Brighton, which they have owned since 1981.

Both were convicted and handed a penalty in the form of a bond, which includes conditions for addressing the site contamination. The bond also requires both parties to repay the EPA \$82,996 for site contamination work it carried out, plus EPA legal costs of \$2,996.

In 2017 the EPA was notified of tetrachloroethene vapour identified during a site investigation at a nearby premises. In August 2018 the EPA issued a Site Contamination Assessment Order to Karl Investments Pty Ltd.

It was agreed during court proceedings that the company breached the order in eight ways, including not preparing a site investigation report, not undertaking a vapour intrusion risk assessment, and not undertaking a human health and environment risk assessment.

The conditions of the bond include engaging a certified site contamination practitioner to assess the site to determine the nature and extent of site contamination, including any risks to human health and the environment. This must include soils, soil vapour and groundwater.

A site contamination audit report must be provided to the EPA by 22 March 2024.

EPA Director Operations Andrew Pruszinski said the court outcome sent an important message about the risks of contravening the *Environment Protection Act 1993* and failing to comply with EPA orders.

“Site contamination can pose a significant risk to human health and the environment if it is not recognised and addressed,” he said.

“Some chemicals can be transported in groundwater and have a greater impact than just on the site of origin.

“The EPA has been working to resolve this matter since 2018 and is pleased that a resolution has been reached.”