



# Rutherford Odour Investigation

## Project Update Number 3, August 2016

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This information sheet provides an update on the NSW Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) regulatory actions and community complaints received regarding the Rutherford Industrial Estate, for the period of March 2015 to June 2016.

Odour complaints to the EPA fell significantly from winter 2015 to June 2016.

The EPA's actions include:

- ongoing inspections of licensed industries within the Rutherford Industrial Estate
- reviewing complaints received by the EPA about odours in Rutherford
- reviewing monitoring data to determine the effectiveness of pollution control equipment
- conducting a focused campaign to identify specific odour issues during June 2016.

### Introduction

The Rutherford Industrial Estate consists of a mixture of small to medium scale industries that are regulated by either Maitland City Council or the EPA. The Estate has been the focus of community complaints for a number of years.

Between 2008 and 2015, the EPA received over 700 complaints from residents in areas surrounding the Estate, including Rutherford, Aberglasslyn, Farley, Windella and Telarah.

In response to community concern, the EPA has conducted a number of odour investigation and sampling campaigns. This regulatory work resulted in additional odour control works being installed at a number of industries within the industrial estate.

In September 2011, the Minister for the Environment established the Rutherford Air Quality Liaison Committee to provide a direct point of contact between the local community, industry and the EPA on matters specifically related to air quality in Rutherford, including odour and air quality monitoring.

### Odour Studies carried out in the Rutherford Industrial Estate

In 2012, 2013 and 2014, assessments of industry odour sources, odour sampling, modelling and olfactometry studies were carried out in consultation with the Rutherford Air Quality Liaison Committee. Reports as well as Information Sheets for these studies are available at the [Rutherford Air Quality Liaison Committee](#) web page.

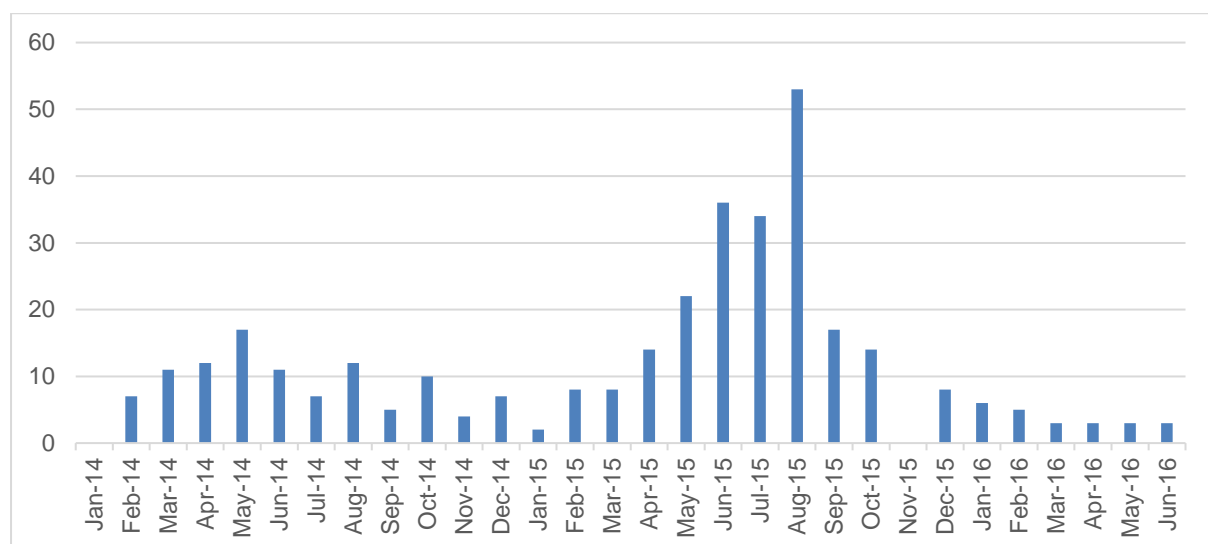
## EPA Regulatory Action Update

Since the last update in March 2015, the EPA has undertaken a number of regulatory actions:

- The EPA continued inspections of Australian Waste Oil Pty Ltd (Truegain), requiring ongoing actions to reduce fugitive emissions from the plant and to improve oily water management at the site.
- The EPA issued a number of penalty notices to Truegain, for failure to comply with the conditions of its Environment Protection Licence.
- The EPA suspended Truegain's Environment Protection Licence, requiring the company to cease all activities relating to receiving and treating oily wastes.
- The EPA required further odour emission monitoring by the operators of the Fulton Hogan asphalt plant. The monitoring demonstrated clearly that the installation of an activated carbon filter significantly reduced odours from the main odour source on the site.
- Wax Converters Textiles Australia conducted air emissions monitoring which demonstrated that its pollution control equipment optimises the dispersion of emissions to the atmosphere. The number of complaints attributed to this site continues to fall.
- The EPA received three odour complaints during June 2016, in a campaign targeting odours in the Rutherford Industrial Estate. In each case, the odour reported was evident for a very short period of time (minutes) and the EPA could not verify potential sources.
- The EPA undertook an odour survey in the Rutherford Industrial Estate after normal business hours (7.00pm–9.00pm) and no odours were detected during the survey.

## Odour Report Trend Analysis

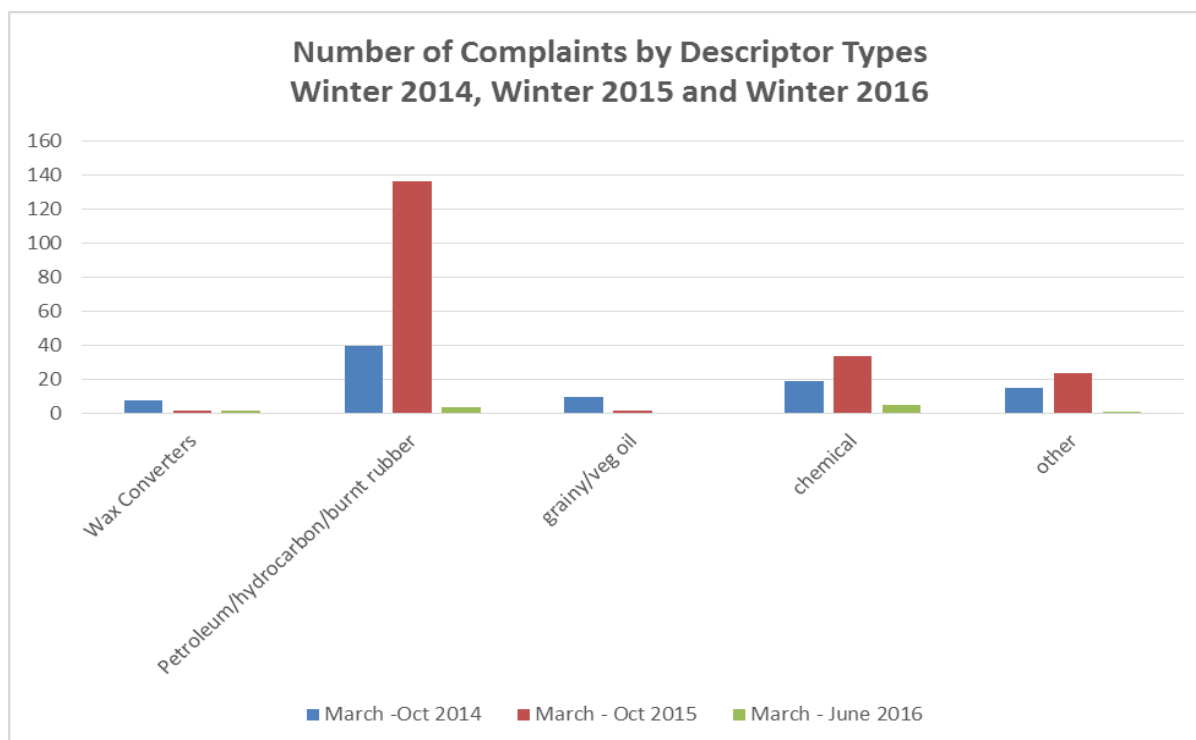
### Trends in the number of odour reports to the EPA from January 2014 to June 2016



**Figure 1: The number of Rutherford odour reports received by Environment Line per month from January 2014 to June 2016.**

Figure 1 shows a fall in the number of Rutherford odour complaints reported to the EPA's Environment Line, from August 2015. The EPA cannot attribute the decrease in odour reports to any one specific action. However, it is important to note that the Hunter Water Corporation disconnected Truegain's trade waste sewer connection on 25 February 2016, effectively preventing the processing of oily wastewater. On 1 April 2016, the EPA suspended Truegain's Environment Protection Licence, preventing the premises from receiving and processing waste oil.

The number of odour complaints, by descriptive types, fell significantly in 2016, compared to previous years.



**Figure 2: The number of complaints by descriptor types for March to October 2014, March to October 2015 and March to June 2016**

Figure 2 shows the number of complaints about odours emitted by Wax Converters Textiles during 2016 fell compared to the corresponding periods in 2015 and 2014. General improvements in pollution control equipment at the premises may have helped to improve odour generation and dispersion from the site. The main improvement allowed the plant to maintain the design velocity of fumes emitted from the primary stack, optimising dispersion to the atmosphere.

The number of complaints reporting a 'grainy/vegetable oil' odour also fell in the 2016 and 2015 periods. This may be related to lower production rates and reduced operating hours at the vegetable oil manufacturing site, 100% Bottling Company, formerly Atlantic Pacific Foods, during this time.

Despite a significant rise in the number of complaints reporting 'petroleum/hydrocarbon/burnt rubber' in 2015, this number fell to almost nil in the corresponding period in 2016. The EPA continues to work with industries such as Fulton Hogan, Cleanaway Refiners and Truegain to improve site practices and minimise odour generation from these facilities.

The numbers of complaints of 'chemical' odours and 'other' odours also fell in 2016. The EPA attributed the fall to the continued work of relevant industries to reduce odour emissions.

## Where to from here?

As the EPA continues to work to improve odours from the Rutherford Industrial Estate, community feedback is vital. The EPA encourages anyone who experiences an offensive odour to call the EPA's Environment Line on 131555, to report their experiences. This will help the EPA to evaluate the success of regulatory actions and to determine whether more work needs to be done.

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