

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



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Earthmoving boss convicted for EPA threats

The director of an earthmoving business has been convicted and fined \$20,000 in the Environment, Resources and Development Court for threatening and abusing Environment Protection Authority (EPA) officers during inspections of a site in 2013.

In February this year, Ron Papillo, 53, pleaded guilty in court to making threats and using abusive language towards the officers when they visited his Angle Vale property and during a conversation over the phone.

The court heard that Mr Papillo told an EPA officer during a site visit that, "I don't like being messed with, I have guns," among his threats.

One of these confrontations was recorded by an EPA SA Officer, permitted under S87 of the Environment Protection Act and was submitted as evidence to the court.

In his sentencing remarks Judge Stevens said that Mr Papillo's behaviour was unacceptable and should not be faced by anyone doing their job.

In addition to the fine he imposed a two year good behaviour bond and ordered Mr Papillo to pay the EPA \$1,500 in costs.

EPA Acting Executive Director Operations Stephen Barry said he hopes that this sentence will send the right signal that EPA officers should not feel threatened or intimidated when they are doing their job.

"This is a difficult job and our officers never know what they will face at any moment," he said.

"When you hear that there might be guns involved, this clearly makes our staff very worried and fearful which is unacceptable and has been clearly reflected in this sentence.

Mr Barry said this was a rare case for the EPA and hopes there won't be others like it again.

"This was not an environmental case but about protecting our officers from abuse and threatening behaviour," he said.

"Our staff are out protecting the community and investigating potentially illegal activities but this case was about obstruction, abuse and hindering our staff while doing their job."

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