

Petrol spill into Creek leads to \$80,000 Court Order

On 19 February 2010, SCOTT'S TRANSPORT INDUSTRIES PTY LTD ("Scott's") pleaded guilty in the Ringwood Magistrates' Court to 1 charge of water pollution laid by the Environment Protection Authority ("EPA"). The charge, under the Environmental Protection Act 1970, arose from a spill of 7,200 litres of unleaded petrol from one of Scott's petrol tankers at a Wantirna service station, in Melbourne's outer East, on 15 May 2008. The petrol flowed into a nearby stormwater drain and was ultimately discharged into the Dandenong Creek, resulting in the death of several fish and 9 ducks. Two police officers keeping people away from the bike path near the discharge were affected by petrol fumes and required treatment by ambulance officers.

The spill occurred at the service station, corner Wantirna and Boronia Roads, as a result of an undetected defect in the tanker. EPA's investigation revealed that the vehicle, as manufactured, failed to comply with the relevant Australian Standards. After the incident, the manufacturer promptly modified the delivery vehicle and similar vehicles in Scott's fleet to prevent further such incidents. Scott's was co-operative with EPA's investigation.

Without recording a conviction, the Court ordered Scott's to pay a total of \$80,000 to carry out the following 2 Environmental projects:

- (1) \$55,000 for a platypus habitat monitoring program in the Yarra River whereby the Australian Platypus Conservancy Inc can obtain data to guide habitat restoration in the Yarra, and ultimately other waterways, enabling platypus populations to be re-established in areas of decline or disappearance; and
- (2) \$25,000 for the construction of a portable classroom for use by the Darebin Creek Management Committee Inc in its education and habitat garden creation program, involving 65 schools within the Darebin Creek catchment.

Scott's agreed to pay EPA's costs of \$50,000.

The court also ordered publication of this notice.