



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY  
12<sup>th</sup> Assembly

**Petition**

Registration No.	52
Title	Secondary wastewater treatment system at the Livingstone Beef Processing Abattoir
Presented on	16 September 2015
Presented by	Ms Purick, Member for Goyder
Referred to	Environment (Hon Gary Higgins MLA)
Date referred	16 September 2015
Response due	5 <sup>th</sup> sitting day 2016
Response received	22 October 2015
Response presented	17 November 2015

**Petition**

To the Honourable The Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory:

We the undersigned respectfully showeth this petition against the continued adverse impact on the wellbeing, health and lives of the people who reside within proximity of the AACo Livingstone Beef Processing Facility (Abattoir) as a result of unacceptable odours, noise and light pollution directly attributable to the day to day operations of the facility.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that:

*the Environmental Protection Licence for AACo's abattoir at Livingstone be revoked if the secondary wastewater treatment system is not commissioned and operational by the end of December 2015. AACo have consistently failed to meet the requirements specified in the Environmental Protection Licence, including wastewater management, noise and odour pollution mitigation and open community engagement obligations.*

*This request should set a precedent for companies wanting to work with the Northern Territory Government and community in developing Northern Australia and best practice standards need to be implemented from conception and not as an afterthought.*

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

**Response**

The Livingstone Beef Processing Abattoir, which is operated by Northern Australian Beef Limited (NABL) but commonly known as the 'AACo abattoir', was developed under an exceptional development permit granted under section 40 of the *Planning Act*.

The NT EPA is responsible for regulating the abattoir under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act*. In October 2012 the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority (NT EPA) issued NABL with an environmental protection licence (EPL 131) under that Act. EPL 131 authorises the treatment and disposal of listed waste (being animal effluent and residues) at the abattoir subject to a number of conditions. It is a condition of EPL 131 that NABL maintains and implements a Consultation and Communication Plan. In accordance with the Consultation and Communication Plan, NABL hosts a Community Reference Group (CRG) consisting of members of the community and relevant stakeholders. The CRG meets on a regular basis.

The NT EPA monitors NABL's compliance with EPL 131 and responds to complaints made by the local community about the abattoir. The NT EPA has received and investigated complaints relating to odours, concerns about surface and ground waters, and noise emanating from abattoir.

The NT EPA is in ongoing discussions with NABL regarding concerns with the abattoir's compliance with EPL 131 and concerns raised by local residents.

In March 2015 NABL submitted a two-part action plan to the NT EPA offering a pathway to achieving sustainable treatment and disposal of wastewater aimed at reducing offensive odours from the facility.

The first part of the action plan involves the expansion and relocation of areas used for irrigation of wastewater and the installation of an aeration pond. The second part of the action plan involves the installation of biological wastewater treatment plant to augment the existing treatment system and will include the construction of a Covered Anaerobic Lagoon (CAL) and an activated sludge Biological Nitrogen Removal (BNR) plant.

Construction of the aeration pond, the CAL and the BNR plant requires approval under the *Planning Act* (issued by the Development Consent Authority) and the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* (issued by the NT EPA).

The Development Consent Authority has issued the approval required under the *Planning Act*. The NT EPA is currently assessing an application under the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act*.

Relocation of the irrigation has already occurred. Construction of the aeration pond is likely to take approximately three months from the date NABL received approval from the NT EPA. Finalisation of the second part of the action plan is expected to take approximately 15-18 months from the date of approval.

In April 2015 the NT EPA issued NABL with a direction to reduce odour and to carry out a comprehensive environmental odour audit, including the development of an operational odour management plan by 31 October 2015.

The NT EPA will assess the effectiveness of the odour management plan actions in reducing the impact of odour on neighbouring residents by the end of December 2015. The NT EPA will assess the effectiveness of the action plan ponds in reducing odours and improving irrigation water quality once the plan has been implemented.

The NT EPA has received very few noise complaints. To address noise concerns from residents, NABL has undertaken a comprehensive noise investigation to determine the levels of noise emanating from the site. This will enable NABL to develop strategies to minimise noise in areas of concern. The noise investigation report will be made available to the local community via the CRG. The NT EPA has not received any formal complaints about light pollution.

It is appropriate that NABL continue to develop and deliver relevant information to the community around the expected timeframes for installing the components of the action plan. The NT EPA has provided recommendations to NABL for improving its Consultation and Communication Plan and the delivery of information to the community.

The NT EPA is an independent authority and its decisions are not directed by the Government. The NT EPA advises that it would not be possible to complete installation and commissioning works for part two of the action plan by 31 December 2015 as requested by the petitioners.