



SOLVING NEIGHBOURHOOD PROBLEMS

Series: Solving Neighbourhood Problems

Part 4 of 12: Smoke, Smells and Garbage

The Environment Protection Act (Vic) 1970 regulates local and large - scale pollution problems.

Smoking chimneys, excessive car exhaust and rubbish dumped on the streets are matters usually handled by the local council.

Backyard burning using an incinerator was banned back in 1987. Your local council will also have regulations pertaining to burning garden waste etc. The Country Fire Authority of Victoria can provide advices regarding outdoor fires. These restrictions don't apply to open fires used for cooking or recreational purposes except on days of total fire ban when some restrictions may apply, e.g. barbeques in the open air.

In some areas, you will need to get approval for air conditioning units. There will also be standards about keeping the noise within acceptable limits and hours of operation.

Those living in apartments will be interested to know that the environmental legislation (typically in conjunction with the Local Government Act) regulates the omission levels of exhaust from motor vehicles as well as offensive smells from pets, small industrial plants and food outlets. This will help with hoons on internal roads as well as some of the complicated smell issues that arise in mixed-use developments with food outlets downstairs and apartments upstairs.

Referring complaints about smoke, smells and garbage to external bodies that have responsibility for the environment, is an appropriate and convenient way for owners corporations to avoid involvement in sensitive issues within strata communities. An external party, having experience in the field, can be seen as an objective arbiter avoiding possible allegations of arbitrary or unfair treatment.

Next Week: Part 5—Trees and other plants