

POPULAR FISH AND CHIP SHOP COPS A WHOPPING FINE AFTER FILTHY KITCHEN WAS FOUND COVERED IN RAT POO

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Rat droppings were found all over the kitchen of a popular Brisbane fish and chip shop, among seven food safety breaches that resulted in a \$22,000 fine.

Council inspectors were shocked when they found rodent faeces next to a measuring spoon and butter and on a tea towel at Salty's Grill & Cafe, Ferny Grove, in March 2019.

The rat poo was also found in a storage box with takeaway cups and in other kitchen areas, The Courier-Mail reported.

The inspectors also found Salty's was not storing its food properly and had general 'uncleanliness'.

The fish and chip shop in the city's northwest had set baits and a trap, which indicated they knew about the rats but had not hired professional pest control services to get rid of them.

Their food license was immediately suspended but lifted again after three days when the business took quick action to fix the situation.

A follow-up inspection in May found no more evidence of pests.

The shop and its owner Joshika Sinha faced Brisbane Magistrates Court on Friday where they each pleaded guilty to a string of food safety code breaches.

Brisbane City Council prosecutor Jac Thong told the court that the amount of rat droppings showed a clear rodent infestation.

He said that increased the risk of the food being contaminated.

'Rodents have the potential to carry harmful bacteria which can be transmitted to humans when a rodent or faeces make contact with food items and food contact surfaces including those single use cups potentially,' he said.

Salty's Grill & Cafe, in Ferny Grove, pleaded guilty to seven counts of failing to comply with the Food Standards Code.

Joshika Sinha, as 'executive officer' pleaded guilty to seven counts of failing to ensure the corporation complied with the Act.

It is the first conviction for both the business and its owner - however no convictions were recorded.

Instead, Salty's was fined \$22,000 and Sinha was fined \$1000.

In the lead-up to the offences in March 2019, Sinha had been relying on a supervisor to manage the business, her lawyer Grant Young told the court.

She has since hired a consultancy business to inspect and train the staff, which has been running at a loss now due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Mr Young told the court that Sinha had learnt her lesson and has now shown a commitment to compliance.

The restaurant gets more rodent issues as it is near a creek and a train station, he said.

It was not the first adverse finding for the restaurant.

Salty's had previously earned a zero-star rating in Brisbane City council's Eat Safe scheme after an inspection in 2017 found major non-compliances.

The finding is likely to come as a shock to many who like its chips.

The Chip Advisor rating community on Facebook gave the restaurant five out of five back in 2016, noting the beer-battered irish fingers, and giving bonus points for free sauce refills, home made aoli and the all-day \$5 coffee and toastie deal.

Not everyone has left good reviews, however, with Trip Advisor hosting a one-out-of-five star stinker more recently in 2018 calling their chips 'half cooked soggy mush'.