

Rodents force two Wellington restaurants to close over health concerns

By Micheal Forbes, November 21 2016, Wellington, New Zealand

Rodents and cockroaches were the main problem with 21 Wellington food premises that received cleaning and improvement notices this past year, two of which were forced to close.

Stuff has obtained the list of restaurants and cafes that drew the ire of Wellington City Council health inspectors during the 2015-16 financial year.

The council said eight cleaning notices and two closure notices were issued in that time, which was better than 2014-15, when 17 cleaning notices were handed out, and two restaurants were closed for less than 24 hours.

One of the cleaning notices this past year was given to Capital Market in Willis St after cleanliness issues – predominantly rodent-related – were discovered in 14 of the 22 premises in its food court.

The rodent problem was not serious enough to close the market, but it took the total number of actual businesses served with notices by council inspectors up to 21.

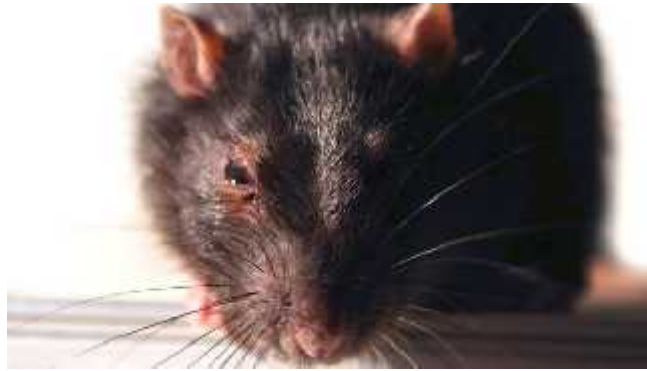


Capital Market, in Willis St, was given a cleaning notice after rodent-related problems in 14 of the 22 premises in its food court.

The two eateries where inspectors deemed the health problems serious enough to warrant closure were Jeff Cafe on The Terrace in central Wellington and Leo's Seafoods in the suburb of Newtown.

In both cases, the problem was rodent droppings. But the managers of both establishments told *Stuff* they got on to the problem straight away, sorted it quickly and have not seen any sign of mice since.

The closure noticed for Jeff Cafe was lifted the same day it was issued, while Leo's Seafoods had its notice lifted three days later.



Rodents were largely to blame for 21 Wellington eateries getting in trouble with city council inspectors.

City council public health team leader Andrew Taylor confirmed that both owners acknowledged the problem and dealt with it swiftly. The difference between a cleaning notice and a closure notice is that, when the latter is issued, inspectors consider the state of the problem to be so great that the premises needs to be closed and dealt with immediately.

At Capital Market, an inspector found mouse droppings, which prompted him to look in other stalls where similar issues with cleanliness and cockroach carcasses were discovered.

But, again, the market's management was quick to clean the entire premises, and had been working with council inspectors to put a more stringent pest control and monitoring programme in place, Taylor said.



Unfortunately for Capital Market, it was "behind the 8-ball to start with" when it came to rodents and cockroaches, because its open-air design allowed them greater access, he said.

The capital has 1175 active health licences that cover food

Cockroaches also caused plenty of headaches for Wellington eateries.

premises such as restaurants, cafes, takeaways, caterers, butchers, delicatessens and fishmongers. Of these, 514 held an excellent grade this past financial year.

"I think the standards are really high across the region. We're not seeing high levels of closure notices being issued that often," Taylor said.

The premises that were issued with just a cleaning notice – which indicates a less severe level of substandard cleanliness – all experienced either a cockroach or a rodent problem.

Pest proof director Paul Chapman said a warmer summer and a milder winter had seen the rodent population increase a little in Wellington, but rodents and cockroaches have always been a problem.

Food premises were sometimes a bit hard done by when it came to health inspectors, because even if they had dealt with their infestations quickly, the signs – such as droppings – could be found later on and lead to a cleaning notice.

"The more they [health inspectors] do inspections, the more they will catch people," he said. "It's not the job of the health inspector to tell whether it's a new dropping or an old one."

CLOSURE NOTICES

Jeff Cafe

Closed: September 24, 2015

Reopened: Same day

Manager Tansy Ye said: Mouse droppings were found in the kitchen so an exterminator was called to set traps and plug the holes where they were getting in. The exterminator came in every week for three weeks, and then started paying monthly visits. "We haven't seen any mice for quite a long time now. We've still got traps, just in case ... and we do check regularly."

Leo's Seafoods

Closed: September 4, 2015

Reopened: September 7, 2015

Manager Sam Li said: Mouse droppings were found in a garage attached to the fish and chip shop. An exterminator was called in and the entire place was given a "deep clean", which now happens every two weeks. The building landlord is also doing everything he can to fix the wear-and-tear holes where the mice got in. "This building is, I think, about 80 years old already ... old buildings are especially at high risk of having mice."

THE FULL LIST

Southern Cross Garden Bar and restaurant, 39 Abel Smith St - Issued cleaning notice for "cockroach activity and cleaning" (Issued: 10/9/15; lifted: 18/9/15)

BB's Orient Express Cafe, 29 Brandon St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cleaning" (Issued: 18/2/16; lifted: 25/2/16)

Pizza Hut, 66 Adelaide Rd - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cleaning" (Issued: 3/9/15; lifted: 7/9/15)

Loong Fong, 386-388 Broadway - Issued cleaning notice for "cockroaches, flies and cleaning" (Issued: 28/4/16; lifted: 5/5/16)

Viet Food, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cockroaches" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Armenia on a Plate, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

La Buca, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cleaning" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

KL Malaysian, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cockroaches" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Ceylon Hut, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Noodle Man, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cleaning" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Auntie Mei, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cleaning" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Satay Delights, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cleaning" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Miss Kangsta, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

One Sushi, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents and cleaning" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Kangsta, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Kebab on Capital, 151 Willis St - Issued cleaning notice for "rodents" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Panda's Kitchen, 151 Willis St - Issued improvement notice for "cockroaches and cleaning" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Zaika, 151 Willis St - Issued improvement notice for "rodents" (Issued: 18/5/16; lifted: 19/5/16)

Zaika, 160 Willis St - Issued improvement notice for "rodents and cleaning" (Issued: 15/4/16; lifted: 22/4/16)

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