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MEDIA RELEASE

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AUSTRALIA'S TOUGHEST ON THE SPOT FINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENCES NOW IN EFFECT

A ten-fold increase in on-the-spot penalties for environmental offences is now in effect across NSW.

Environment Minister Rob Stokes said the increased penalties will provide the Environment Protection Authority with greater regulatory powers to tackle environmental crime.

“An on-the-spot penalty of up to \$15,000 can now be issued by the EPA for the 10 most serious environmental offences such as, pollution of water, illegal disposal of asbestos or hazardous waste, and operating without a licence,” Mr Stokes said.

For these 10 most serious offences, amounts for penalty notices (on-the-spot fines) issued by the EPA will increase from:

- \$1,500 to \$15,000 for corporations; and
- \$750 to \$7,500 for individuals.

“Offenders are already on notice that they may be sentenced to up to 7 years in jail or be fined up to \$5 million.”

“These changes better reflect the community’s expectations and shift the power back in favour of the independent regulator rather than the polluter,” Mr Stokes said.

“For too long the EPA has been operating under conditions that make it difficult to effectively regulate operators who continually do the wrong thing with penalties that are simply not significant enough to change poor behaviour.”

CEO and Chair of the EPA Barry Buffier said the EPA strongly supported the changes.

“The community has made it clear that they believe the penalties being issued to companies after an environmental incident are too low,” Mr Buffier said.

“The EPA’s Compliance Policy will continue to guide decisions made by the EPA around when to issue penalty notices, ensuring its compliance activities and actions are consistent, fair and credible.”

For more information about the EPA’s regulatory tools and details about the penalty notice increases, visit www.epa.nsw.gov.au