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MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW INNER WEST SQUAD TO COMBAT ILLEGAL DUMPING

A new illegal dumping squad dedicated to investigating and identifying illegal dumpers in Sydney's Inner West will hit the streets later this month, Environment Minister Rob Stokes announced today in Drummoyne.

"The message to illegal dumpers in Sydney's Inner West is clear – you are in our sights," Rob Stokes said.

"Illegal dumping is a serious crime that has the potential to cause harm to both the environment and human health and it imposes unnecessary costs on land owners and local councils, with clean-up costs estimated at more than \$10 million dollars a year.

"The NSW Government is committed to reducing illegal dumping across the state and has allocated \$58 million to the Illegal Dumping Strategy, which includes more than \$8 million for illegal dumping squads and programs over the next four years.

Drummoyne MP John Sidoti said the Inner West RID Squad would work across the council areas of Bankstown, Strathfield, Canterbury, Canada Bay, Ashfield and Auburn to identify and patrol well-known illegal dumping sites.

"The new squad will work closely with the NSW Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) illegal dumping officers and will use a host of tools, including piloting CCTV monitoring of well-known illegal dumping hotspots," Mr Sidoti said.

Strathfield MP Charles Casuscelli said the Inner West RID Squad is funded as part of the NSW Government's \$465.7 million Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, with \$1.4million going to councils to purchase equipment and manpower.

"In areas like the Inner West where tightly populated urban blocks back onto parkland illegal dumping can be a real challenge for the local Councils. Teams of specialists, such as RID Squads, play an important role in these areas," Mr Casuscelli said.

The NSW Government recently announced a sweep of changes aimed at strengthening the EPA's powers as the state's environmental regulator. Importantly in the area of illegal dumping this means fines have increased ten-fold – Up from \$1,500 to \$15,000 for a company and from \$750 to \$7,500 for individuals.

The Chairman of the Inner West RID Squad Rod Sutcliffe said dumped rubbish continues to be one of the biggest concerns raised by local residents in the Inner West

"It remains a blight in our urban environment and undermines our efforts to beautify and keep our city clean," Mr Sutcliffe said.

"We are excited about the potential of the RID squad to be responsive in catching illegal dumpers and coordinate our efforts with our Council neighbors to keep our neighborhoods clean."

"People also have an important role to play in helping us put a stop to illegal dumping and I encourage anyone who sees someone dumping rubbish in their local area to contact the EPA's Environment Line on 131 555."

"Residents are encouraged to report vehicle registration, locations and time of day when they make their report."

New RID Squads are one of 21 actions in the EPA's Illegal Dumping Strategy designed to target illegal dumping across NSW over the next three years in partnership with councils, communities, public land managers and the waste industry.