TOUGH NEW MEASURES TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

Environment Minister Karl Hampton today announced further measures in the Territory Government’s multi-pronged crackdown on polluters, introducing a raft of initiatives to substantially improve environmental compliance arrangements.

“I have been extremely troubled by the apparent disregard for environmental laws evident in recent incidents at our ports in Darwin, Nhulunbuy and most recently Groote Eylandt,” said Mr Hampton.

“The health of our environment is of the highest importance to myself and the Henderson Government and I am determined to ensure a culture of disclosure and compliance with our environmental laws and regulations.

“Yesterday I announced that pollution fines will be doubled; today I am announcing further measures to protect our environment.”

The package includes:

- Licensing of additional high risk activities with particular attention paid to the Darwin Port.
- $400,000 for an audit and review of all Port operations across the territory to determine the adequacy of environmental controls and systems and to identify any necessary improvements,
- Provision of additional $800,000 to the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport for more environmental compliance officers to police the new licensing regime.

“From the moment I directed my department to investigate the copper sulphate spill at East Arm Wharf I have been adamant that we would use the lessons from this serious breach to tighten environmental protection across the Territory.

“This package delivers on this promise, and sees high risk activities around the Harbour such as Darwin Port brought under a strict licensing regime.

“Performance requirements will be clear and spelt out in licence conditions and they will be strictly enforced.

“Combined with the new penalties announced yesterday, these measures will put all industry on notice that our environmental laws must be complied with.

“If a company chooses to flout the law, they will be caught, and will be heavily penalised,” said Mr Hampton

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