Tough new regulations have been introduced to the Northern Territory to protect our coastal waterways from pollution and ensure harsh penalties are placed on those caught illegally dumping prohibited waste.

The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Kon Vatskalis, said the NT Marine Pollution Act and Regulations recently came into effect, setting the Territory in line with similar legislation around Australia.

"The Act also provides for the adoption of the International Marine Pollution Convention (MARPOL) of which Australia is a signatory," Mr Vatskalis said.

"We have some of the best coastal waterways and marine life in the country, and we want to ensure they are protected for future generations.

"These new laws apply to Northern Territory coastal waterways, three miles to sea from the low tide mark, including the Beagle and Van Diemen Gulfs.

"The regulations apply to all vessels, with penalties up to $260,000 for individuals and $1.3 million for companies caught polluting our waterways."

Mr Vatskalis said the prohibited pollutants include:

- oil – including petroleum in any form, sludge or oil refuse;
- noxious liquid substances in bulk;
- packages harmful substances;
- garbage – including all kinds of victual, domestic and operational waste and plastic.

Not fresh fish and fish parts.

"The message is simple – don’t pollute our waterways and you won’t have a problem," said Mr Vatskalis.

"The harsh penalties reflect how seriously we take this matter and how determined we are to protect the health of the Territory’s marine environment."