

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **New water compliance powers commence 1 Jan 2009**

Thursday 18 January 2008

NSW Water Minister Phil Costa today reminded water users to familiarise themselves with new compliance powers will come in to effect on 1 January 2009.

“If you pump or capture water from a NSW water source or live along a NSW water way, make sure you familiarise yourself with the new rules before they commence on 1 January,” he said.

“New offences and penalties will apply and there are improved powers for monitoring and enforcing compliance with NSW water laws.

“The maximum penalties for water theft will be increased from \$132,000 to \$1.1 million for individuals and from \$275,000 to \$2.2 million for corporations.

“For the first time water thieves could face up to two years in prison, in addition to a hefty fine.”

The Minister said that the new rules are designed to better protect NSW water sources from illegal activities, such as building a levee without a licence or pumping more water than allowed.

“Stealing water or damaging a NSW water source is a serious crime,” he said.

“Offenders are putting their community’s water supply at risk and could cause significant environmental damage.

“The new powers send a strong message to would-be offenders that the Rees Government will come down hard on people who intentionally break the law.”

Changes to the State’s water compliance powers were approved by the NSW Parliament in October as part of a suite of amendments to improve the *Water Management Act 2000* in response to drought and climate change.

People who live within a town boundary and rely solely on town water won’t be affected by the new rules, which mainly apply to NSW water licence holders, bore water users and landholders who live along a NSW water way.

Information explaining the changes is available on the Department of Water and Energy’s (DWE) website [www.dwe.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dwe.nsw.gov.au) or contact your local DWE office for advice.

Suspected illegal activities can be reported confidentially to the Department of Water and Energy on 1800 633 362 or send an email to: [watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au](mailto:watercompliance@dwe.nsw.gov.au).

*ENDS*

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