

Friday, 3 April 2009

### **WASTE COMPANY GETS RECORD FINE FOR POLLUTING ENVIRONMENT**

A waste company has been hit with the largest fine for breaching the Environment Protection Act in the State's history over an oil spill at Largs North.

Mulhern's Waste Oil Removal Pty Ltd was this week fined \$460,000 in the Environment, Resources and Development Court.

The company was convicted and fined after pleading guilty to one count of polluting the environment causing serious environmental harm and nine counts of contravening conditions.

In July 2007, used motor oil was discharged on the company's land and spread onto an 1100m<sup>2</sup> adjoining area of land on Elder Rd, Largs North.

The company also was receiving materials it was not authorised to receive, such as wastewater from spray paint booths and wastewater slurry from stone cutting. It disposed of the material on site by digging a pit and placing the material into it.

The company failed to properly identify the tank containing the waste oil which subsequently spilled, failed to ensure the tank was banded and failed to ensure an employee was aware of the company's environmental authorisations.

Environment and Conservation Minister Jay Weatherill said while the Environment Protection Authority aimed to work with industry on protecting the environment, tough penalties applied to those companies that caused harm.

"The EPA works closely with industry to ensure it follows best environmental practices," Mr Weatherill said.

"However, this shows that when a business causes environmental harm, the EPA will come down strongly."

EPA Presiding Member Cheryl Bart said "this prosecution sends a clear message to industry and the community that breaches of the Environment Protection Act are taken very seriously and can attract significant penalties to those who do the wrong thing".