



## *Media Statement*

12 May 2008

### **Department of Water steps up compliance on the Ord**

The Department of Water has embarked on a campaign to encourage people not to interfere with the beds and banks of the Ord River.

The department's regional manager, Dave Munday, said that his office had unfortunately been forced to take action against a number of property owners adjacent to the Ord River who are in breach of legislation.

"Substantial penalties apply to offenders who breach legislation governing interference with the bed and banks of watercourses under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*," Mr Munday warned.

"People should not be complacent and think that they are above the law when they make what they consider are improvements to land adjacent to their properties.

"The Department of Water has recently secured the successful conviction of a Kununurra resident who pushed vegetation and soil down the bank into the river abutting his property on Riverfarm Road, and we are now following up on all instances of illegal activity.

"All riverside property owners will be surveyed prior to March 2009, to assess licensing and permit requirements."

The accused appeared in the Kununurra Magistrates Court on April 22, 2008 and pleaded guilty to unauthorised interference to the bed and banks along the Ord River, resulting in the issue of a \$1000 fine and \$400 court costs.

It was alleged in court that between 1 August 2006 and 23 October 2006, he was in breach of section 17(3) of the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*, causing unauthorised activities to occur on the banks of the Ord River.

Mr Munday said the Kimberley office of the Department of Water had been working with other government agencies this year to raise awareness of land holders and lessees regarding legislation under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914* and Acts administered by other agencies.

"Property owners with boundaries adjacent to unallocated crown land along the Ord River have received information about permits and licences that they require before they undertake any works on the river bank abutting their properties," he said.

"Land holders are encouraged to contact our office on 9166 4100 to discuss any development plans along watercourses that involve interference with the bed or banks, to ensure that all the relevant permits and approvals are in place."

**Media contact: Dianne Dixon (08) 6364 6983 / 041 991 0847**