



**Australian Government**

**Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**6 February 2009**

### **BIG FINES FOR ENVIRONMENT LAW BREACH**

A company developing a site at Mission Beach and its project manager have been fined a total of \$45,000 for breaching the national environment law.

The company and the individual pleaded guilty in the Tully Magistrate's Court yesterday, 5 February 2009, to illegally clearing native vegetation.

Developer, Mission Beach Investments, referred to the department a proposal to build a residential development at Mission Beach on 30 October 2007.

The proposal was being assessed for its likely impact on the southern cassowary, a nationally protected species.

The department charged the company and the individual after an investigation found the company cleared land before a referral decision was made, an offence under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

The project manager was fined \$5000 and the company was fined \$40,000 for the s74AA offence.

The court noted that the cassowary was an iconic species in the Mission Beach area and that the sentence should ensure developers did not, in any way, endanger the survival of a unique species.

Departmental spokeswoman Rose Webb said the department took compliance matters seriously and reminded developers they needed to meet their obligations under the national environment law.

"These laws are in place to make sure development is carried out with minimal impact on our nationally protected matters, including our threatened species," Ms Webb said.

"Taking short cuts isn't going to speed up your process – more likely it's just going to land you in court.

"Developers need to make sure they refer any work that might impact on matters protected under the legislation and ensure all final approvals are in place before starting that work."

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