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Record fine for illegal waste depot operator

A South Australian demolition and asbestos contractor has received a record fine in the Environment, Resources and Development Court for operating an illegal waste depot.

Port Adelaide Salvage SA Pty Ltd and its director Maurizio Corsaro were fined a total of \$72,000 plus costs for operating illegal waste depots at two sites in the northern Adelaide Hills.

EPA Manager, Investigations and Tactical Support, Stephen Barry said the first count related to activities at a Highbury quarry between August and November 2012.

“Port Adelaide Salvage was fined \$44,000 for this operation – the largest fine ever handed down in SA for operating an illegal waste depot,” Mr Barry said.

“Notably, the court sentenced on the basis that the company avoided \$30,000 of dumping fees through this illegal activity.

“Mr Corsaro was fined another \$10,000 as an individual, with the two parties sharing costs of \$3,850.”

A second business, EM Earthmovers, had already been found guilty of operating the unlawful waste depot at the quarry and was fined more than \$24,000 plus costs in August 2018.

Investigations estimated that between 64,000 and 137,000 m³ of construction and demolition waste had been dumped in the quarry at the corner of Lower North East and Churchett roads.

Mr Corsaro also pled guilty to a second count of operating an illegal waste depot later at a property at Range Road South, Houghton between January and August 2015, and was fined another \$18,000 plus \$3,350 in costs.

“This second offence is particularly disappointing, as Mr Corsaro was well aware of his environmental responsibilities, having already been the subject of an EPA investigation in 2012,” Mr Barry said.

“EPA authorised officers observed numerous tipper trucks entering and leaving the Houghton property.

“It was estimated that about 1,455 tonnes of waste was stockpiled, including metal, construction waste and green waste.”

Mr Barry said advice from the Country Fire Service during the Houghton investigation indicated the waste stockpiled on the site represented a significant fire risk because the waste was so close to native vegetation.

“Unlicensed operations like these don’t only pose a threat to the environment and the community,” he said.

“They also undermine the operation of legitimate waste and recycling businesses whose operators do the right thing.”

Both the Highbury and Houghton sites were the subject of environment protection orders, and have since been remediated at the defendants’ expense.