



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Off-road Motorcyclists Causing Unnecessary Soil Erosion

The Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA) is urging off-road motorcyclists to refrain from trespassing on central Australian pastoral properties and creating dirt tracks.

NRETA senior natural resource scientist Dave Waterson said he knew of at least one new 18,000 square metre dirt track resulting from off-road motorcyclists, which would have a detrimental impact on the natural environment and jeopardise the livelihoods of pastoralists.

"A pastoralist, whose land borders Alice Springs, is only 50 metres away from the Finke Desert Race track, yet off-road motorcyclists have created what is now a 6km dirt track," Mr Waterson said.

"This new track simply shouldn't be there.

"Our main concern is that such activities will inevitably lead to widespread soil erosion and long term destabilisation of the natural vegetation.

"Once the erosion process starts, it can be very difficult and costly to control.

"The new track is only a few weeks old, but has already started to erode after recent rains.

"The loss of vegetation leaves soil exposed to the elements, such as water and wind.

"Motorbike riding also creates a dust hazard which reduces visibility and can create health problems from reduced air quality."

Mr Waterson said the particular landholder who now has a new, albeit unwanted dirt track, is also concerned the illegal activity is reducing feed for livestock and that people could be seriously injured.

"The cost of rehabilitating, repairing and fencing off damaged pastoral roads is extremely high," Mr Waterson said.

"This is an added cost that pastoralists do not need.

"The landholder is concerned that not only are people are trespassing to do such activities, but they are leaving behind rubbish, such as 44 gallon drums and old tyres."

While the pastoralist has not reported these events to police, he has stated he will report any future breaches and provide information to police to assist in prosecuting the trespassers.

Ends

**Media Note – For more information contact Dave Waterson, Senior Natural Resource Scientist, Vegetation and Land Management on 8951 9208 (w) or 0427 971 308 (mobile).**

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