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COMCARE COURT ACTION OVER ALLEGED UNSAFE POSTIE BIKES

Australia's federal safety regulator Comcare, has launched federal court proceedings against Australia Post over allegedly unroadworthy postie bikes discovered at the Northern Territory's Palmerston Delivery Centre.

Comcare launched its investigation after a postal contractor was killed in a road crash in 2008.

Comcare CEO Paul O'Connor said its investigation uncovered that six of the bikes at the Centre, including the one ridden by the killed worker, were unroadworthy and unsafe.

The investigation also found the death was not caused by the condition of the bike.

Comcare's civil proceedings will allege that Australia Post breached its duties under federal law to protect its workers and contractors, by not maintaining roadworthy and safe bikes.

Mr O'Connor said this was the first time court proceedings had been lodged against Australia Post alleging this type of breach of work, health and safety laws.

"Comcare acknowledges that Australia Post has since taken steps to improve and monitor its bike inspection and maintenance procedures."

"However, this court action will help underline the importance of ensuring that all motorbikes used to deliver the mail are safe and roadworthy every single time they are used."

Mr O'Connor said the investigation had been conducted while keeping Northern Territory WorkSafe informed.

The collaboration was an example of increased levels of cooperation and liaison between state and federal work, health and safety regulators.

* The proceedings are being taken under s16(1) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991*. The maximum civil penalty for a breach is \$242,000.

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