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Minister for the Environment and Energy

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MEDIA RELEASE

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ILLEGAL TRADE IN WILDLIFE WON'T BE TOLERATED

Those engaged in the illegal trafficking of wildlife were sent a clear message on World Wildlife Day that authorities are watching and their activities won't be tolerated by the Federal Government.

The message follows the arrest of a 28-year-old Sydney man for the alleged illegal trafficking of wildlife following a joint Australian Federal Police and Department of Environment and Energy investigation.

Minister for the Environment and Energy Josh Frydenberg said the arrest and investigation highlights the commitment of Commonwealth agencies in protecting Australian and international plants and animals, while targeting those seeking to exploit them for their own greed.

“Wildlife crime is a global phenomenon worth billions of dollars which is increasingly recognised as both a specialised area of organised crime and a significant threat to many plant and animal species,” Mr Frydenberg said.

“Our nation’s natural resources must be protected, not least from criminals who exploit them as nothing but a means to generate profit.

“The Australian Government remains resolute in its efforts to tackle illegal wildlife trade.”

Minister for Justice Michael Keenan commended the work of the AFP and its work in the joint operation.

“Organised crime gangs use their influence on Australia’s black-markets to support and protect their criminal business, trafficking drugs, firearms and wildlife,” Minister Keenan said.

“We must use every means to cut this off at the head, and stop these criminals from profiting from the misery of evil trades.

“The Coalition has invested heavily in our law enforcement and intelligence agencies to boost their efforts to detect, disrupt and undermine the business model of organised criminals.”

It will be alleged in court that between July and October 2016, six packages bound for Sweden containing more than 40 native Australian shingleback lizards were seized.

It will also be alleged the man was responsible for facilitating the importation of 16 packages from Thailand containing more than 200 animals, including Chinese soft shell turtles, alligator snapping turtles, snakehead fish, sugar gliders, veiled chameleons and freshwater stingrays.

The man is expected to appear before Parramatta Local Court today, 4 March 2017.

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