



MEDIA RELEASE

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

More awareness needed about Adelaide's water supply

10 July 2006

While the River Murray continues to dominate the great water debate in South Australia, the Environment Protection Authority's Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed Protection Office is reminding hills residents to be mindful of our largest water supply – the Mt Lofty Ranges watershed, which lies in our own backyard.

The Mt Lofty Ranges watershed, also known as Adelaide's water supply catchment, provides 60% (in an average year) of Adelaide and the Fleurieu Peninsula's water supply – a fact that is sometimes lost in the struggle to save the Murray.

The EPA's Mt Lofty Ranges Watershed Protection Office (WPO) is responsible for protecting and improving this valuable resource, which covers 1640 km² from Myponga to Williamstown where rainfall and run-off water is captured and channelled through rivers and streams into reservoirs.

The WPO says more awareness about the origins of Adelaide's water supply is needed among all hills residents.

"More than two thirds of the State's population, including Adelaide's one million residents, depend on water from the watershed and rely on the actions of the 50 000 watershed residents to protect this resource," WPO Manager Rachel Barratt said.

"Due to increasing pressures on water resources and the declining health of the River Murray, it is now more essential to protect the quality and security of the water resource in the Mount Lofty Ranges watershed."

Ms Barratt said that ongoing works of the WPO included engaging the 50,000 residents living and working in the watershed area to become more aware of and practice their own watershed protection activities.

Ms Barratt explains that watershed protection activities include simple things like:

- Ensuring your septic tank is working properly and is cleaned of sludge every three years.
- Preventing livestock accessing waterways by fencing waterways or managing herds appropriately.
- Picking up pet droppings and disposing of them responsibly.
- Ensuring wastewater lagoons have enough room to accommodate winter rainfall so they don't overflow.
- Using garden fertilisers sparingly and never near stormwater drains, creeks or rivers. Also, avoiding using them in windy conditions or when rain is forecast.
- Keeping sand, building materials or piles of rubbish away from stormwater drains, creeks and rivers.
- Cleaning up green waste and any other stockpiles so they are not near stormwater drains, creeks or rivers.
- Not throwing cigarette butts or other litter onto roads or anywhere for that matter. Anything that floats ends up in our creeks and rivers.

“Everyone living and/or working in the watershed has a part to play in protecting water quality and reducing risks for themselves and other water users,” Rachel Barratt said.

“What happens at a local level has an impact on the quality of water at a State level so everyone has a responsibility to do the right thing.”

For more information about the Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed and water quality issues in the region visit www.epa.sa.gov.au/watershed or contact the WPO on 08 8139 9900.

Contact: Terry Clark 8204 9221 or 0420 100 395