



## MEDIA RELEASE

### ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

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#### Winter is upon us, time to clean up the hills and protect water quality

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Although the rainfall of winter months brings a sense of relief for most South Australians, and helps to flush our creeks there's a lot more than just water coming off the landscape and entering our creeks.

The EPA's Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed Protection Office (WPO), which protects the 1640 km<sup>2</sup> Mt Lofty Ranges watershed, has issued a reminder to residents living in watershed areas, saying that now is the time to reduce pollution of stormwater and local waterways.

WPO Manager Rachel Barratt said that the 50,000 people living and working in watershed communities needed to be particularly mindful of maintaining water quality at a local level.

"Contamination of stormwater, creeks and rivers not only impacts on neighbours and the general watershed community but it also impacts on the drinking water supply for over one million South Australians," Ms Barratt said.

"During winter, contamination of rivers and creeks happens easily due to the amount of run-off that occurs as a result of rainfall. In fact, 90% of run-off in the Mount Lofty Ranges watershed occurs from July to September."

According to the WPO, the significant pollutants affecting water quality in the Mount Lofty Ranges watershed fall into five categories;

1. Parasites that can cause disease such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*
2. Animal and human waste from septics, STEDS and animals in creeks
3. Chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides
4. Sediment from land clearing, cultivation, construction/developments and heavy rainfall events, especially once stream environments are eroded or degraded
5. Nutrients such as those in fertilizers leading to excessive algal growth.

"Maintaining the quality of water in our creeks and rivers is critical to our social, environmental and economic wellbeing and protecting and improving Adelaide's water supply requires a long-term commitment," Ms Barratt said.

The WPO advises that even the smallest actions taken by all individuals will help protect the quality of water in the watershed and these can include:

- Ensure your septic tank is working properly and is cleaned of sludge every three years.
- Prevent livestock accessing waterways especially in wet conditions (as they can pollute water with their waste and erode stream banks and creek beds).
- Pick up pet droppings and dispose of them responsibly.
- Ensure wastewater lagoons have enough room to accommodate winter rainfall so they don't overflow.
- Use garden fertilizers sparingly and never near stormwater drains, creeks or rivers. Also, avoid using them in windy conditions or when rain is forecast.
- Keep sand, building materials or piles of rubbish away from stormwater drains, creeks and rivers.

- Clean up green waste and any other stockpiles so they are not near stormwater drains, creeks or rivers.
- Don't throw cigarette butts or other litter on the roads or anywhere for that matter. Anything that floats ends up in our creeks and rivers.

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