



MEDIA RELEASE

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY

15 March 2007

Thursday March 22nd is “World Day for Water” and the EPA is encouraging everyone to do their bit to help protect it.

World Day for Water is a great opportunity for the Environment Protection Authority’s Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed Protection Office (WPO) to remind everyone where their drinking water comes from and what they can do to help protect it.

On average 60% of Adelaide’s drinking water comes from the Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed (the Watershed). The remainder is from the River Murray which is transferred through the rivers and creeks in the Watershed to storage reservoirs. In dry years, such as this year as much as 90% of Adelaide’s water is transferred from the River Murray through the Watershed.

The Watershed is a 1640 square kilometer water catchment area that extends from Williamstown in the north to Myponga in the south.

Manager of the WPO Rachel Barratt said, “The majority of South Australians understand the importance of the River Murray, but it is important to also understand that the Watershed is a vital part of the picture as it also provides us with significant water and is the major system transferring River Murray water from the river to the reservoirs.”

With over 50 000 residents and an array of multiple uses including industry, business, tourism, townships and farming land, the Watershed is unique when compared to most major Australian watersheds, which are usually located away from metropolitan cities and consist primarily of pristine vegetation.

In Melbourne, the major watersheds are ‘closed’ catchments where only 10 per cent is used for human activities.

In contrast, Ms Barratt said Adelaide’s Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed was mostly ‘open’ to a diverse range of land uses.

“In fact more than 90 per cent of the watershed is used for human activities,” she said.

Ongoing efforts are being made to protect and improve the water in the watershed. With assistance from the WPO, farmers are fencing watercourses and removing stock. Residents are upgrading septic tanks and local businesses and industries are improving practices to prevent and minimise pollution.

The WPO encourages those living in, working in and visiting the Mount Lofty Ranges Watershed to:

- 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.

Even the smallest actions taken by all individuals will help protect the quality of water in the Watershed.

For more information visit www.epa.sa.gov.au/watershed.html

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