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TRUSTED LEADERSHIP IN
SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

Water is Everyone's Responsibility, says National Water Week Organiser

Do you know where your drinking water comes from, how it's treated, or what happens to it after it goes down the plug? This is one of the questions the Australian Water Association (AWA) is calling on all Australians to ask during this National Water Week, officially being launched on Monday 20 October with guest speakers Tammy van Wisse, Dr. Christobel Ferguson and Julian Gray in Sydney.

This year's National Water Week theme – *Clean Water: Essential for Life!* - draws community attention to the importance of clean water to our health and quality of life. 2008 is the United Nations *International Year of Sanitation*. In Australia, we are fortunate to have one of the highest standards of sanitation in the world, with most Australians having readily available clean water at our fingertips. But according to UN statistics, 40% of the world's population still does not have access to the most basic sanitation, and a child dies every 20 seconds as a result of lack of sanitation; that's 1.5 million children a year.

Clean and healthy water supplies, waterways and wetlands are essential for life, and according to the Australian Water Association, it's everyone's responsibility to preserve and enhance our local water environments. Tom Mollenkopf, Chief Executive of the not-for-profit group stated "Communities, government and the water sector need to work together to ensure a clean and secure water future. Water management is everyone's responsibility, and we all have important roles to play. It's not enough to say it's someone's problem, because clean reliable water really is essential for life."

But the good news, according to the Association, is that everyone can make a difference. Domestic water use is the 2nd biggest user of water across Australia, after agriculture, with households using more water than the mining, manufacturing, electricity and gas industries combined. The average Australian household consumes 280 kL (or 280,000 litres) of water every year (ABS 2004-05).

To this end, National Water Week supporters Smart Approved WaterMark are launching the new 'Every Bucket Counts' campaign, and in doing so are challenging the nation to save one million buckets of water. The campaign, and three

online calculators, is being officially launched during National Water Week. According to Julian Gray, CEO of Smart Approved WaterMark, “Small changes to daily routines can combine to make a significant difference. Our drinking water is too good to waste. Let’s see if, together, we can save one million buckets of water and really make every bucket we do use count.”

The AWA encourages school, community, environmental and business groups to participate in National Water Week activities. It can be as easy as taking part in cleaning-up a local waterway, inviting a water educator to talk to your group or organising an excursion to your local wastewater treatment plant. These activities are just some of the options included on the National Water Week 2008 calendar, accessible from the National Water Week portal at www.nationalwaterweek.org.au

While National Water Week it the perfect time to focus on water protection and conservation, the lessons should be ongoing. Tammy van Wisse, champion marathon swimmer and ‘human water quality tester’ is an avid supporter of National Water Week. “National Water Week is the perfect time to focus on water protection and conservation, but the lessons should be ongoing. I encourage everyone to get involved in learning about, and protecting, our precious water resources.”

“I’m thrilled to support National Water Week 2008,” said Ms van Wisse.

National Water Week 2008 is proudly supported by Sydney Water and Smart Approved WaterMark, and is organised by the Australian Water Association.

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Tom Mollenkopf, Tammy van Wisse, Dr Christobel Ferguson and Julian Gray are available for interview on request.

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The Australian Water Association (AWA) is an independent, not-for-profit association for water professionals and organisations, with a mission to promote the sustainable management of water. AWA is Australia’s peak water industry association, being the largest and most broadly based, integrating knowledge among people involved in regulation, consultancy, research, management and operations, drinking water, wastewater and stormwater disciplines. The AWA has over 5,000 individual and 650 corporate members nationally.