



Department of
Environment and Conservation
Our environment, our future



Monday 23 February 2009

Media Statement

Community called to action to clean up Western Australia

Shopping trolleys, chairs and crates were among the dumped items and litter that were pulled from the Swan River and its banks near the Barrack Street Jetty today as Western Australians prepared for this year's Clean Up Australia Day.

More than 20 Keep Australia Beautiful (KAB) and Swan River Trust staff joined WA Police Divers in removing rubbish from the area to encourage others to hold community clean ups on Sunday 1 March.

In speaking at the launch, DEC Deputy Director General Robert Atkins said hundreds of thousands of Australians had removed more than 200,000 tonnes of rubbish or enough to fill 4.7 million wheelie bins on Clean Up Australia Days over the last 20 years.

"Last year's 'Keep Australia Beautiful National Litter Index' found that Western Australians are the worst in the country in terms of the amount of litter we produce," Mr Atkins said.

"Australians generate almost 32 million tones of rubbish each year. About 7 billion cigarette butts end up in our waterways, streets and parklands each year and about 80 million plastic bags are dumped, creating a serious threat to our precious marine life.

"Clean Up Australia Day is the perfect opportunity for everyone to come together and help clean up our local parks and waterways and think about how we can reduce our impact on the environment."

Swan River Trust general manager Rod Hughes said the agency had worked with the community for many years to clean up popular riverside sites on Clean Up Australia Day.

"At today's corporate clean up, KAB staff, Trust staff and Police divers collected more than 2000 cigarette butts and almost 20 bags of rubbish – half of which are recyclable," Mr Hughes said.

"Littering of our iconic waterways is obviously still a problem, and we encourage people to report damage to the Swan and Canning rivers by contacting the Trust.

"During patrols in 2007-08, Trust Riverpark officers removed more than 35 tonnes of rubbish, as well as tyres, shopping trolleys, signs, chairs and even fridges.

"We hope people will join us at our River Guardians community event co-hosted by the City of Bayswater on 1 March from 8 to 11am at Riverside Gardens in Bayswater, with free morning tea for volunteers.

In addition to Clean Up Australia Day on 1 March, Business Clean Up Day will be held tomorrow and a Schools Clean Up Day is scheduled for 27 February.

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