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NEW LEARNING HUB TEACHES STUDENTS TO BE WATER SMART

The State Government will invest \$1.5 million in school water education programs over the next three years through the new SA Water Learning Centre.

Minister for Water Security Karlene Maywald and Minister for Education Jane Lomax-Smith today officially launched the centre – a new information, training and learning hub focused on sustainable water use.

Minister Maywald says the centre, located at SA Water’s new headquarters on Victoria Square, will build on existing water education in schools, communities and the broader South Australian community.

“Educating our communities on the importance of sustainability of our water supplies is vital, particularly in the face of the worst drought on record, and this innovative and interactive learning facility will play a key role,” she said.

The centre and learning program includes:

- State-of-the-art information technology, such as touch screen kiosks to display information.
- Digital broadcasting to regional and remote schools.
- Online resources and professional development for teachers.
- School visits by SA water experts on key topics such as desalination and water re-use.
- Free resources for classroom activities and a new school collection for library loans.
- An event venue for professional seminars, school education programs and exhibitions, seating up to 100 people.

Minister Maywald says South Australians are already making valuable water savings and the new learning centre will engage the next generation in long-term water security education.

“The centre is complemented by SA Water’s online interactive house and garden website – where anyone can log in and calculate their water use and work out ways to reduce consumption,” she said.

“Starting this month, SA Water will be working with the Department of Education to deliver a new curriculum linked to school education programs.

“This program includes school tours, activities and resources across a range of topics including water treatment, wastewater management, water conservation and Aboriginal education.

“The new programs will be delivered in collaboration with the 2009 Fringe Festival, Come Out, Botanic Gardens of Adelaide, Sciworld and Tandanya.”

Minister Lomax-Smith says the centre will be an invaluable education tool because young South Australians are more environmentally aware than ever before.

“Schools do a terrific job teaching children about sustainable use of energy and water and students often take those messages home to their families and communities.

“We invest \$1m annually in green school grants to schools and have sets targets for schools to reduce their use of water and energy.

“Our SA Solar Schools Program, which has installed solar panels in more than 100 schools so far, has helped to educate young people about sustainable energy sources.

“The new program being launched today is another way South Australian students can learn about the importance of conserving water in our State’s dry climate.”

SA Water Chief Executive Anne Howe says from March to November, SA Water will host a series of community water forums, averaging six per month.

“These forums will give community groups the opportunity to visit the centre, gain information and talk with our experts on issues in their local communities,” Ms Howe said.

“The new learning centre and a focus on water literacy is an exciting new chapter for our Corporation, and I look forward to South Australians taking advantage of this resource now and in the future.”