

**MEDIA RELEASE
12 November 2007**

Tackling climate change starts with breaking bad habits

Deep-seated bad habits may be limiting our water and energy saving potential, according to a leading Australian environmental psychologist.

Commenting during the Australian Psychological Association's (APS) National Psychology Week, environmental psychologist Dr Susie Burke said that habitual actions such as turning on the light when you enter a room and the comfort of long hot showers could be countering environmental messages.

"With summer starting, water and energy savings should be a top priority, but we have to realise that we are battling against bad habits that have been developed over years and sometimes decades," she said.

Dr Burke advises there are two stages that people need to go through if they wish to break bad habits.

"The first is recognising that you have a responsibility," said Dr Burke.

"Environmental inaction comes from thinking that one person cannot make a difference. Get informed, do some research to educate yourself on how big the problem really is and what you can do about it."

She suggests there are a number of websites that can help individuals calculate their individual water and energy use and see the difference a change can make.

The final step is to take action to break the bad habit, a step that Dr Burke advises should be broken into several smaller goals or milestones.

"A common mistake that people make is to make a change in one big leap, such as moving from a ten-minute shower one day to a four-minute shower the next," she said.

"This shocks the body and often results in relapsing back into the bad habits."

Dr Burke recommends setting targets to reach your final goal. "Reduce your showers by a couple of minutes every week and allow your body to adjust."

Prompts and props, such as notes to remind you of water restriction rules or shower timers, can also be useful, as can convincing your friends and family to become greener too.

"Peer pressure in this instance can be a positive force as peer groups share useful information and congratulate each other when they reach milestones," says Dr Burke.

<ends>

To schedule an interview please contact:

Elaine Grant on 03 8662 3363 / 0412 683 068

David Micallef on 03 9600 0006 / 0430 090 224 Email – david@fenton.com.au