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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Plastic pellets are pollutants in the SW marine environment

Bunbury, WA, Tuesday, September 25, 2007: Long term volunteer Wally Smith has worked with beach clean up activities in the Capes region of the South West and he is concerned about the increased number of plastic pellets polluting the Marine Environment in the South West.

Plastic resin pellets which are two to four millimetres in size, are raw materials used in the production of other plastic materials. They are proven to absorb pollutants from seawater - these include PCB's, Dioxins and many insecticides including DDT and Dieldrin.

Billions of pellets find their way into the world's oceans annually from transport and manufacturing spillage. Many forms of sea life mistake pellets for fish eggs and accidentally ingest them.

'In high concentrations, the impact of these chemicals can include include thyroid dysfunction in birds and fish, shellfish, and mammals; decreased hatching success in birds, fish, and turtles; gross birth deformities in birds, fish, and turtles; metabolic abnormalities in birds; and compromised immune systems in birds and mammals.' Wally said.

Research is being conducted to find out how the plastic pellets are entering the marine environment and this information will be collected to develop strategies for its prevention.

For the last 4 years Heidi and Richard Taylor from Tangaroa Blue, with help from many community members have been collecting bags of debris and rubbish found on local beaches from Ellensbrook, Augusta and Yallingup Beaches.

It has been estimated that over 6 million tons of rubbish finds its way into the world's oceans, killing about 1 million seabirds and 300,000 marine mammals and turtles around the world every year.

Funding and support for these projects has come from, Coastwest, the Department of Environment and Conservation, the Australian and State Governments' initiative the Natural Heritage Trust via the South West Catchments Council, the Keep Australia Beautiful Council and hundreds of volunteers.

On October 13 & 14 Tangoroa Blue will be coordinating another beach clean up in the Capes region.

To register, fill out the registration form on the web-site at www.oceancare.org.au and email to heidi@tangaroablue.com or post to Heidi Taylor, PO Box 1063, Dunsborough, WA, 6281 Australia. For more information contact Heidi Taylor on heidi@tangaroablue.com or +61 (0)410 166 684

ENDS

SWCC is one of six *Natural Resource Management (NRM) Regions* in Western Australia and part of the larger group of 56 Regions across all of Australia; put in place by the State Government and the Australian Government to facilitate a community driven partnership between all three levels of government in the management and delivery of NRM programs and projects.

As part of this collaborative partnership, the Regions deliver the key jointly funded programs by the State and Australian governments of the Natural Heritage Trust and the National Action Plan (Water Quality and Salinity) through the “*Regional Delivery Model.*”

This unique, world first and recognised best practice model, places a greater level of autonomy and engagement for regional communities to determine what the main natural asset and environmental priorities are; and importantly then empowers the community through the Regional Group to research, develop management plans and also directly deliver and manage works and investment on-ground to sustain the environment and natural resources for the community good.

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