



Bottled water not better

8 July 2009

Premier Nathan Rees has today sought urgent advice from the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Environment and Climate Change on ways to significantly reduce the consumption of bottled water in the community.

This follows a report that the Bundanoon community is moving to a voluntary ban on the sale of bottled water.

As a first step, the Premier announced a ban on all NSW Government Departments and Agencies purchasing bottled water.

“This represents a saving for taxpayers and it makes sense for those who consume the water,” Mr Rees said.

“After all, our tap water is among the best in the world and tastes even better.”

Some initiatives may include a public information campaign to discourage the consumption of bottled water that will highlight:

- The high cost of purchasing the product
- The significant impact on the environment of both producing and disposing of bottled water.

“As Water Minister I conducted a survey of 300 people with Ian Kiernan from Clean Up Australia, which dispelled the myth that bottled water tastes better,” Mr Rees said.

“The reality is that the majority of people preferred tap water over spring or purified water in a blind taste test.

“Tap water isn’t just better for the environment, it’s better for your wallet - you can refill your drink bottle 1,350 times for the average cost of a bottle of spring water.”

Last year Australians spent about \$500 million on bottled water – a 10 percent increase on the previous year.

Mr Rees said he wants the Government to lead by example and will begin implementing the ban immediately.

“Obviously there will be a few exceptions including circumstances where there is no clean water supply available, in the event of an emergency or for other public health reasons,” Mr Rees said.

Mr Rees said people could save up to \$1,200 a year if they choose tap water over expensive bottled water.

“It costs around \$2.50 a litre for popular brands of bottled water, but Sydney-siders can fill their reusable drink bottle for less than one fifth of a cent a litre,” Mr Rees said.

It takes 141,666 barrels of oil just to make the resin for Australia’s plastic water bottles.

Another 314,465 barrels of oil are used to convert the PET to plastic bottles, bottle, transport and refrigerate the water.

This much oil adds up to over 60,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions with only 35% of bottles actually make it to a recycling depot (Plastics and Chemicals Industry Association 2005-06 report).