

# Media Release



17 December 2009

## Western Water takes legal swipe at “water purity” sellers’ dodgy quality tests

Western Water is taking direct action against the shonky door-to-door selling practices of a Sunbury based water appliance seller.

General Manager Customer Relations Peter Donlon said a letter has been sent to the company reminding them of their obligations under Victoria’s Fair Trading Act and Australia’s Trade Practices Act not to engage in “predatory conduct” in their business practices.

“This company is targeting Western Water customers and trying to trick them into believing their tap water is harmful to them by using an improperly carried out water test,” Mr Donlon said.

“Several customers have reported to us that when this test invariably turns their tap water pink, company representatives have claimed this shows their tap water contains poisons.

“This is an outrageous claim by shysters trying to incite fear with shonky pop science,” he said.

Mr Donlon said the company’s false claims were inevitably followed up by a hard sell for the household water treatment and filtration devices they have available for purchase, claiming these devices will “remove” poisons.

He said Western Water understands that some customers may wish to carry out further point of use water treatment for their own purposes.

“But this should be carried out for the right reasons and not due to fear and concern about water quality,” he said. “Our water quality scientists can advise customers about these systems.

Mr Donlon said “Western Water has long campaigned against these types of door-to-door sellers, urging customers to demand full identification, including contact details and an official photograph, of door-to-door callers trying to sell water quality testing or “purification” equipment and appliances.

“Western Water has issued warnings regularly over recent years especially when these sorts of companies start turning up on doorsteps, often after normal business hours, claiming to be from “your local water authority,” he said.

“This has become is an industry-wide problem for water retailers around Melbourne but this latest hard sell also breaches Victoria’s consumer protection laws and can lead to prosecution, while trade practices breaches can incur fines in excess of \$60,000.”

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### About Western Water

Western Water is one of Victoria’s 13 regional urban water corporations. We provide water, recycled water and sewerage services to over 53,000 properties and 134,810 people in an area of 3,000 square kilometres. Our region extends from Lancefield in the north to Melton and Rockbank in the south and from Myrning in the west to Bulla in the east. We incorporate parts of Hume City Council and Melton, Moorabool and Macedon Ranges Shire Councils.

### Media contacts

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Mr Donlon said tap water supplied throughout the Western Water region meets all Australian drinking water standards, which are among the highest in the world.

“If customers are approached by companies making claims about the quality of their tap water, I urge them to contact a Western Water customer service advisors directly on 1300 650 422.”

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