

Media Release

Monday, 1st December, 2008

CLIMATE CHANGE 2008 – NEW INSIGHTS BUT MORE CHALLENGES

Residents in northern Tasmania are today being given the rare opportunity to hear from world-renowned scientist, Professor Will Steffen, as part of Coastcare Week.

Professor Steffen is the Executive Director of the Australian National University Climate Change Institute and Science Adviser to the Australian Government Department of Climate Change.

He is the key speaker at the launch of Coastcare week and free public forum at the Tailrace Centre in Riverside starting at 1.30pm today.

His presentation is titled Climate Change 2008 – New Insights but More Challenges.

“The science of climate change is developing rapidly.” Professor Steffen said.

“For example, we know with a high degree of confidence that the Earth is warming rapidly and that human-driven emission of greenhouse gases is the main cause.

“However, large uncertainties still abound. We know that sea level will continue to rise for many centuries, but the rate at which it will rise is a crucial question about which there is much debate.” Professor Steffen said.

The Chief Executive Officer of NRM North, James McKee, said it was a coup for Tasmania to secure a visit from such a highly regarded scientist.

“Climate change is one of the greatest economic, social and environmental challenges of our time and to have Professor Steffen brief us on the latest science is quite a privilege.” Mr McKee said.

“Climate change is a challenge for all Tasmanians and I encourage residents to come to the free forum today to learn more about the issue and what they can do to reduce their carbon footprint.”

Professor Steffen’s presentation is one of the main activities planned to mark Coastcare Week in Tasmania between December 1st and 7th.

The theme of this year’s event is ‘Life on the Edge’ which aims to remind Australians about how much life there is on our coasts – from the creatures in the sand and water to the Coastcare volunteers and large number of Australians who live there.

The Launceston Coastcare event will also include the launch of a Sustainable Practices Assessment Tool for the Tasmanian Commercial Dive Fishery.

The tool was developed by Tasmanian Quality Assured in consultation with Ocean-Watch Australia with funding from the Federal Government.

The voluntary tool has been designed to help divers think about their current practices in regard to environmental issues.

It is made up of a series of questions covering a range of diving practices that can be self assessed including things such as marine pests and diseases and rubbish and pollution management.

Event details:

Coastcare week launch will be held at the Tailrace Centre, 1 Waterfront Drive, Riverside at 1.30pm today followed by a free public forum on climate change featuring Professor Will Steffen.

Ends

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