



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Marine Waste Article**

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*In recent years, the discharge of land-derived water containing waste to the marine environment has been receiving increasing attention in many parts of the world due to the environmental sensitivity of the oceans and the cumulative impact of these discharges on the marine environment.*

Monitoring of data and information on what is being pumped into our oceans is not currently being uniformly monitored across the four coastal provinces in South Africa. Currently all municipal wastewater discharges to the offshore marine environment (i.e. marine outlets) receives preliminary treatment (i.e. coarse screens and fine screens) only, which is a very basic requirement.

Wastes or other matter may be considered for dumping, provided that material capable of creating floating debris or otherwise contributing to pollution of the marine environment has been removed to the maximum extent and provided that the material dumped poses no serious obstacle to fishing or navigation. The result of this monitoring has shown South Africa's coastal waters having very low levels of pollution by international standards.

Recently, the number of Blue Flag beaches in South Africa has been increased. The "Blue Flag" is a proud symbol that shows International visitors that the beaches and water is of outstanding quality, and South Africa was the first country outside of the EU to be awarded this privilege in 2001. There are now 41 countries that fly the Blue Flag.

Two of the most recognised beaches in the Western Cape are Camps bay and Clifton's no4 beach which have been awarded the Blue Flag. The Institute of Waste Management of Southern Africa (IWMSA) points out that these beaches are actually close to waste water outlets that pump out approximately 3850m<sup>3</sup>/day near Camps Bay and 35000m<sup>3</sup>/day into the Greenpoint area. With the monitoring of these outlets, the water quality is still clean enough to pass the tests posted by Blue Flag. Margate beach and San Lameer Marina on the Hibiscus coast have also been awarded Blue Flag status, even though a massive 140000m<sup>3</sup>/day of waste water is pumped into the Durban/South Coast area.

With the monitoring of waste water which includes storm drain runoff, abattoir and Industrial waste, Vincent Charnley, President of the IWMSA points out “With even a smaller increase in effort from the regions, more beaches could obtain Blue Flag status, thus increasing tourism, and job creations. Oil spills and tanker disasters are not influenced by the public, but what we pour and flush down the drains is. If toxic chemicals and oils are properly disposed of in the same way we now recycle bulbs and batteries, then the toxic risk can be minimalised. We at the IWMSA urge everyone to think clean”.

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