

Product of the Year

An innovative greywater collection device that makes re-using water easy has been named our first Product of the Year Award winner.

The Hughie Sink fits into an average sink to collect water used to clean hands or wash vegetables. It holds up to seven litres of water, which can then be easily used on pot plants or the garden.

Smart Approved WaterMark's independent expert panel selected four products as finalists for the Award from those approved by the scheme between 2004 and 2007. The other three finalists were:

- Planter Technology, a 'smart' self-watering planting container
- Nature Flow household treatment system for black and grey water, and
- The Water Watch programmable shower timer.

Ian Alexander of Hughie Products says "Since the Hughie Sink received Smart WaterMark approval we've seen increased interest in our product from media, retailers and consumers. In fact, a large order was recently brought forward following a radio interview about the Hughie Sink and its approval by the scheme."



THE HUGHIE SINK MAKES RE-USING WATER EASY

Campaign to consumers kicks off

In October 2007 we launched a campaign to raise consumer awareness of the logo and a new web site: www.smartwatermark.org

The new site features listings of all approved products and services (including price and 'where to buy' information), tips on saving water and links to rebating authorities around Australia.

Since then we've been busy working with media outlets, exhibiting at events such as the Queensland Home Garden Expo, Going Green Expo and HIA Sydney Home Show, and securing promotional opportunities through our partners' communication channels.

And we haven't stopped at promoting the scheme to consumers. We've also been promoting the label to retailers, water utilities and rebating authorities as



well as representatives of all three levels of government.

Our promotional campaign will continue throughout 2008/09 with activities such as launching a 'Pledge Tool' on the new consumer web site, exhibiting at the Save Water Save Energy and GreenTech expos, placing advertising in targeted publications and continuing to work with key print, radio and TV media outlets.

Making claims in the age of 'greenwash'

Green, eco, environmentally friendly.

There are lots of great products that really do live up to their marketing claims because they are better: they will help reduce waste, energy and water use, and chemical load. But how do consumers choose between these genuinely helpful products and those that make misleading claims? Greenwashing, as the use of misleading claims has become known, is being targeted by the consumer watchdog.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has started taking legal action against companies that make misleading environmental claims, while consumer association CHOICE has launched a campaign to raise consumer awareness of greenwashing.

The Smart Approved WaterMark logo can only be used on products and services that have verified the amount of water they save, so it's a clear sign to consumers that they can trust the water-saving claims made by a manufacturer or service provider. It all adds up to good news for consumers as well as those products and services approved by the scheme.

Want to find out more?

- *Green marketing and the Trade Practices Act*, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, www.accc.gov.au
- *Green claims on supermarket labels*, CHOICE/Australian Consumers' Association, www.choice.com.au

Expert assessment

How does the Smart Approved WaterMark scheme decide which products and services can use the logo? The simple answer has been to call in a team of experts.

All seven expert panel members bring with them considerable experience in water conservation, horticulture, irrigation, education or retail. Angie Thomas from Yates (Australia and New Zealand) is one panel member that has worked with the scheme since it was set up in 2004. She says, "The panel takes a scientific approach to all the applications we review. We expect to see clear, independent evidence of how a product or service saves water, and that it meets health, environmental or other relevant regulations. That's the very least you would expect from a label that has been built on the trust of consumers."

The panel members meet four times each year to consider the applications submitted to the scheme. "There's often healthy debate among the panelists on whether to approve an application and we regularly follow up with referees. This rigorous approach is what brings value to manufacturers, retailers and consumers," says Angie.

A truly national scheme

Richgro Garden Products was among the first applicants to the scheme for one of their products, EZI WET Premium Soil Wetter.

Evelyne Laure, Richgro's National Marketing Executive, says "We were looking for a national water-saving accreditation scheme which could be applied to our water-saving products, since we're a national company with products distributed across Australia."

The application process included submitting independent test results to demonstrate EZI WET's water-saving capacity and, once assessed by the scheme's expert panel, the product was approved. "EZI WET is an amazing product with strong water-saving properties but the Smart Approved WaterMark gives it further credibility in the customer's eyes. The scheme also has an independent expert panel and strong backing which made it very appealing to us," says Evelyne.

Following the launch of PRO MULCH on the Australian market Richgro applied to the scheme for this new product. "Having been happy with the interest generated by EZI WET's approval, we applied for PRO MULCH. We are very pleased to

have the only mulch in Australia that bears the Smart Approved WaterMark," says Evelyne.

"We use the logo on EZI WET and PRO MULCH packaging, promotional materials, signage, print advertising, on our website, in our newsletter and also at gardening shows. It gives us independent support to our water-saving statements," continues Evelyne.



RICHGRO'S EVELYNE LAURE



THE PUMPPOD HAS RECENTLY BEEN APPROVED

Mark reaches a milestone

The scheme has reached a significant milestone: more than 150 water-saving products and services now have approval to use the logo that helps consumers make water-wise choices.

The diverse range of products and services approved to date include:

- Wetting agents and soil enhancers
- Sub-surface irrigation driplines
- Greywater treatment and irrigation systems
- Rainwater harvesting systems
- Swimming pool covers
- Waterless car washes
- High pressure/low flow cleaners
- Training run by Sustainable Gardening Australia and GreenPlumbers
- Sydney Water's 'Love Your Garden' advice program
- Mobile bin cleaning, irrigation and pool water recycling services

While the focus of the scheme is on outdoor water-saving, there are also several indoor products* that have been approved by the scheme's expert panel, such as hot water recirculation devices and a shower timer.

* those indoor water-saving products that don't fit in the Water Efficiency Labelling Standards scheme (www.waterrating.gov.au) are eligible to apply to Smart Approved WaterMark.