

Managed tourism no threat to colony

Tourists are not always a deterrent to Australian sea lions, according to data collected by National Parks and Wildlife South Australia rangers and guides at Seal Bay on Kangaroo Island and analysed by CSIRO scientist Dr Peter Shaughnessy.

The number of visitors to the sea lion breeding colony has been increasing steadily in recent years – from about 40 000 a year in 1988 to about 110 000 in 1996 – yet in that time there has been no decline in the numbers of sea lion pups born. Shaughnessy attributes this to the way tourists are managed at the site: all visitors must be accompanied by a guide and are not permitted to mingle closely with the sea lions.

‘Normally the worry with tourism is that you will kill the goose that laid the golden egg,’ Shaughnessy says. ‘But at Seal Bay it is so well managed that even a large volume of visitors doesn’t cause undue disturbance.’

The value of controlling human intrusions is also shown by the number of pups born on the beach at Seal Bay.

Before the introduction of crowd control, almost all pups were born on rocks beyond a headland and away from tourists. Now the number of pups born on the beach adjacent to tourist viewing areas is trending upwards. About 30 were born there in 1997 compared with only one in 1988, the year after tourist control measures were introduced.



Dr Peter Shaughnessy prepares to abseil down to a remote sea lion colony.

Games, hurricanes and innovations online

WORLD records in air quality, hurricanes in Hong Kong, and the search for sustainable urban water systems give an environmental flavour to the latest issue of CSIRO’s Building Innovations and Construction Technology magazine, now published on the World Wide Web.

Outlined in the magazine is the new Sustainable Urban Water Systems program of CSIRO’s Built Environment Sector.

Program director, Andrew Speers, says escalating costs and environmental impacts associated with existing water supply and wastewater services point to a pressing need for alternatives.

He says there is community resistance to the construction of new dams and alarm over degradation of waterways, but at the

same time, the water industry is seeking a greater return on investment. For example, the refurbishment of ageing assets is a multi-billion dollar problem for the water industry and the environmental impacts of these systems are significant in many cases.

The online magazine also reports on guidelines developed for the Sydney 2000 Olympics by CSIRO and Green Games Watch 2000 in conjunction with the Olympic Coordination Authority.

According to CSIRO’s Steve Brown, the Indoor Air Quality Guidelines for the Sydney Olympics aim to achieve world’s best practice standard for all Games facilities.

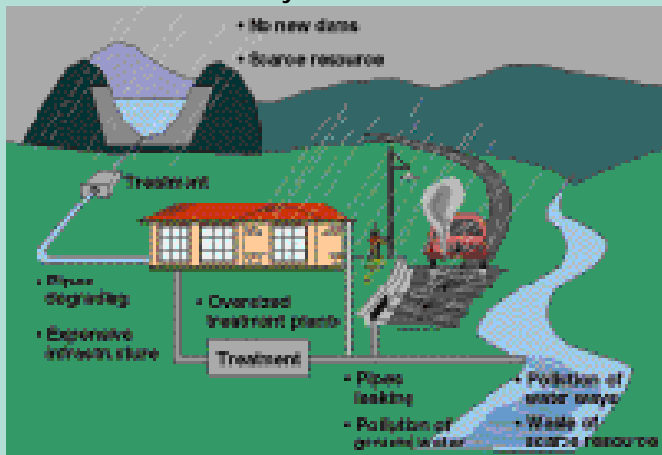
‘The aim of the guidelines is to ensure that all the materials, finishes and furnishings used in Games facilities do not

emit harmful vapours, are easy and safe to clean, resistant to mould and microbes, free of harmful radiation and are safe even under extreme conditions,’ he says. ‘They also recommend which plants to avoid in landscaping and which to grow indoors.’

Another story describes the development by CSIRO of a technique for testing the ability of a new 65-storey, stainless-steel clad tower in Hong Kong to withstand hurricane winds.

More information about all these stories is available at the Building Innovations and Construction Technology website, www.dbce.csiro.au. Online subscriptions are free and subscribers are notified by email when new issues are available.

Unsustainable water system



A vision of sustainability

