

**BOARD OF STUDIES**  
NEW SOUTH WALES

**SCHOOL  
CERTIFICATE  
EXTERNAL  
TEST**

**SPECIMEN  
OPTION A**

**ENGLISH-literacy**

**SECTION 2**

**STIMULUS  
BOOKLET**

## Directions to students

The Stimulus Booklet is used to answer questions in Section 2 Reading/Viewing.

# Conversations With . . . Tammy Van Wisse

*Lisa Santamaria profiles the champion marathon swimmer*

**How serious is the problem of water pollution on a global scale?**

Very serious due to ever increasing populations.

**Which country's water have you found to be particularly problematic in terms of pollution?**

Well I would have to say that the waterways around New York are not in great condition. Also the Bay of Naples in Italy is pretty filthy. We used to do a race from the beautiful island of Capri to Naples and it was like going from crystal clear blue water to brown! Yuk!

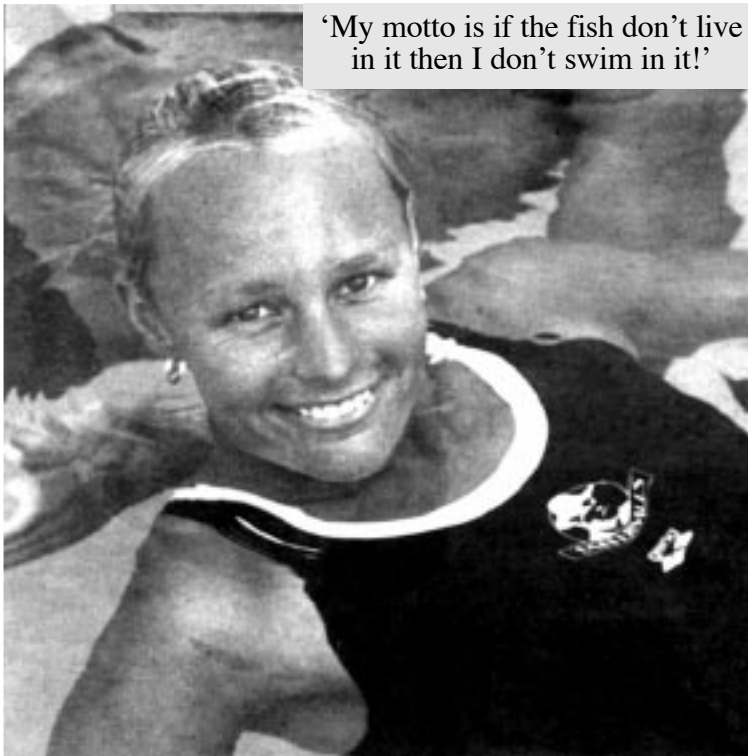
**How do Australian waters stand up internationally in terms of pollution?**

In terms of international standards, we have no pollution problems. However, we must aim to maintain and even improve our waterways—the time to do something is now before the problem develops.

**Has pollution from water ever hindered your health and fitness? What precautions do you take to guard against this happening?**

Pollution is a marathon swimmer's nightmare. If the water is dirty, then normally we get sick. It's an occupational hazard. I guess you could call us human pollution monitors—marathon swims such as the Manhattan race are often used to focus attention on the importance of clean waterways. I can only hope that people take notice, especially when I tell them that I spent two days in bed extremely sick after Manhattan as a direct result of poor water quality.

But I do take precautions against the really bad stuff—I make sure that my Hep A, B and tetanus injections are always up to date and my motto is: if the fish don't live in it then I don't swim in it!



'My motto is if the fish don't live in it then I don't swim in it!'

*Photo: Courtesy Lucy Di Paolo—The Examiner*

**How has marathon swimming changed the way you appreciate the environment?**

Marathon swimming has given me the opportunity to go where only ships dare and I feel a very strong affinity with the aquatic environment (probably because I spend more time in the water than I do on land!!)

I guess it has made me very protective of marine life (my friends!)—after all, I have experienced first hand how sick you can get from dirty water, imagine how the fish must feel.

**What is the best thing about swimming in natural bodies of water as opposed to indoor swimming pools?**

The best thing is watching the fish go by instead of the black line! Actually for me, the attraction is being in an uncontrollable environment—pitting yourself against mother nature. It offers a challenge that swimming pools just can't compete with. Also the chlorine is a real killer. Give me salt anytime.

**And the worst?**

Sharks with big teeth.

75 **What is the most memorable encounter you have had with a marine animal on a swim?**

In February 1996, I encountered a pod of dolphins in Bass Strait.

80 The water temperature was seven degrees and I had been swimming for 15 hours. I was looking pretty bad, close to hypothermia and my coach, Dawn Fraser, was considering pulling me out of the water.

85 But then, like magic, the dolphins came and played around me for about 20 minutes. I was in heaven.

90 About two hours later I completed my 97 km swim across Bass Strait. Sometimes I wonder if I would have made it without that special appearance from the dolphins.

95 **What do you consider to be the most serious environmental issue facing Australia at the moment?**

Reafforestation—the careless actions of the past need to be addressed. We should start strategically planting trees to reduce the further detrimental land effects such as

100 salinity and soil degradation. The trees are the key.

**What person do you admire most for their contributions to conserving the environment?**

105 David Attenborough—he has shown us all the delicate links between nature and the environment and made it extremely interesting.

110 **Where do you see yourself in ten years, still doing marathon swims?**

Swimming will always be a part of my life but I think in ten years time, it will purely be a couple of laps at the local pool—not marathons.

115 **Would you encourage young people interested in swimming to follow in your footsteps? (or should I say wake!)**

120 I hope there are young kids thinking of becoming marathon swimmers. It's a crazy life, but then who wants to be normal!

**What is the next swimming challenge you have in your sights?**

125 You'll have to wait and see. I'm still looking through the atlas for unswum waters.

### ITEM 3–POETRY

*Terry Whitebeach has written this poem about watching a science student who studies Fairy Penguins at Marion Bay. The science student's name is Rosemary and she has a pet wombat called Bear.*

#### **The Science Honours Student, Accompanied by Pet Wombat, Studies the Fairy Penguins at Marion Bay**

Rosemary is here again  
with Bear, and I wonder  
at the scientific  
method.

She processes blood samples,  
tickles the penguins' throats  
till they throw up  
so that she can examine  
the contents of their stomachs  
and learn their feeding habits.

Bear snuffles around  
while she writes up results.  
I am impressed  
by this young scientist  
who seems to know  
just what she's doing—  
increasing her knowledge  
of penguins.

I have long since  
given up such certainties . . .  
hear their chatter  
in the dunes at night,  
and see their tracks  
when I go down to the beach  
in the cold dawn,  
and wonder . . .

For me there is  
nothing knowable  
about penguins, as I stand  
on the outside of their world  
trying to see in.

*Terry Whitebeach.*



# SEA THINGS IN THEIR NATURAL STATE



## The Sea needs National Parks too!

Did you know that Marine National Parks act as insurance for our oceans against the threats of over-fishing, pollution and exploitation?

Less than 1% of Victoria's marine environment, a tiny 385 hectares (less than a quarter of the area of Tullamarine Airport) is currently protected from all forms of exploitation.

For further information on what you can do, contact the **Victorian National Parks Association**.  
10 Parliament Place, East Melbourne 3002 • tel (03) 9650 8296 • fax (03) 9654 6843



*The following acknowledgments are NOT part of the test items.*

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

*Article: 'Conversations with Tammy van Wisse', Lisa Santamaria. Conversation Gazette, November/December 1997, p4.*

*Extract from 'Time and Tide'. Written by Tim Winton and reprinted with kind permission from Good Weekend Magazine, Sydney Morning Herald, 8 November 1997.*

*Photograph: 'The last break', Frank Hurley. Kodak (Australasia) Pty Ltd Fund. Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.*

*'The Science Honours Student, Accompanied by Pet Wombat, Studies the Fairy Penguins at Marion Bay', Terry Whitebeach, from 'Four New Poets', Penguin Books Australia Ltd, 1993.*

*Photograph: wombat. 'Australia's Unique Animals', Viking O'Neil 1975, p17. Penguin Books Australia Ltd.*

*Photograph: fairy penguins. 'Australia's Birds', New Holland Publishers, 1997. Photographer Dave Watts.*

*Photograph: dolphin. Courtesy Australian Picture Library/Pacific Stock.*

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