Media Information **6th May 2005**

Minister launches primary schools Energy Education Resource

Sustainable Energy Ireland targets pupils aged 5 to 8 with 'Guzzler's Big Book on Energy'

Minister for Communications, Marine & Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey T.D. has today launched a new energy education resource targeted at Ireland's primary school pupils. The resource, which takes the form of a Big Book on Energy, is part of Sustainable Energy Ireland's (SEI) energy education programme. It is designed to teach pupils in infant, 1st and 2nd classes about energy in a fun manner.

The book is based on SEI's 'Guzzler' character – a friendly monster who uses too much energy. Primary schools throughout Ireland have been sent 'Guzzler's Big Book on Energy' – an SEI publication in the popular children's A3 'Big Book' format in which Guzzler's friend, a young girl called Aoife, teaches him about ways of saving energy. Already over 1300 books have been distributed to teachers in primary schools.

SEI are also running special interactive 'Guzzler Workshops' in schools throughout the country. Here the character comes to life through expert science facilitators who educate pupils with the help of an interactive Guzzler puppet. Experiments and games are used as a means of teaching pupils how to be more energy aware in their everyday lives. Workshops commenced early in 2005 and will continue throughout the academic year at selected schools who have already received the Guzzler books.

Aoife Cannon, Education Executive, Sustainable Energy Ireland, said, "Pupils in the 5 - 8 age group are at a very important stage in terms of learning the behaviours and habits they will use in later life. Energy awareness issues can be quite difficult to communicate to such a young audience but with Guzzler we are confident that we have found a fun and effective way of doing so. Initial feedback from teachers has been very positive and we are hopeful that Guzzler will become a popular and enjoyable aspect of learning in classrooms throughout Ireland".

Guzzler was developed by SEI in consultation with a number of primary teachers in response to the introduction of the new science curriculum for primary schools in 2003, through which science became a mandatory subject for pupils of all ages. SEI addressed the need for an energy awareness aspect of the curriculum by developing new resources aimed at the junior level of primary schools. In September 2004 details were announced details of SEI's new resources for juniors, which are available to all schools free of charge.

To mark the launch of the initiative Minister Dempsey visited Rathmore National School, Athboy, Co Meath where an interactive Guzzler workshop was being hosted.

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Editors Notes

About Sustainable Energy Ireland
Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI) is the statutory authority charged with promoting and assisting the development of energy efficiency and renewable energy. SEI is funded by the Irish Government under the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 with programmes part-financed by the European Union.