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## Watkins Street car park reopens

Watkins Street car park will reopen tomorrow 17 December with stage-one works on the Merewether Beach Public Domain Plan wrapping up.

Improvements to the car park include new footpaths, accessible parking, lighting, drainage and water filtration systems, designed to prevent fine pollutants entering the stormwater system.

Project delivery Coordinator TIM ASKEW says the works also include the installation of a gross pollutant trap – a large filtration device to capture pollutants from the wider catchment area.

“This project was a joint venture between The City of Newcastle and Hunter Water and will significantly improve the quality of stormwater discharging onto Merewether Beach.”

“Approximately 95 per cent of pollutants down to 1mm in size will be captured, with the unit expected to collect up to 20 tonnes of waste per year.”

“This is a great outcome for both beach users and the environment.”

Hunter Water’s General Manager System Strategy and Sustainability PETER DENNIS says his organisation was pleased to partner with Council on this project.”

“The gross pollutant trap has the ability treat over 500 litres of stormwater every second – the equivalent of four bathtubs full of water.”

“This Aussie invention is the best of its kind in the world and is a demonstration of Hunter Water’s commitment to providing reliable water and wastewater services for our community – as well as keeping our local beaches clean.”

Monitoring, maintenance and cleaning of the unit will be undertaken by Hunter Water. It is expected to require cleaning twice a year.

The next stage of the public domain works is expected to start after the Christmas break and will include converting John Parade to one way traffic flow, widening the pedestrian promenade from Dixon Park to Watkins Street, and creating a dedicated cycleway.

Promenade works between Merewether Ocean Baths and the Surf Club are expected to begin soon after Surfest 2012.

**For more information and interviews call TIM ASKEW on 4974 2886.**