



Hunter Water Corporation Media Release

Monday 30 September 2013

AN EYE TO THE FUTURE

Hunter Water will in the next few weeks begin canvassing the opinions of the Paxton, Millfield and Ellalong communities, as it considers upgrading the Paxton Wastewater Treatment Plant.

While the plant was upgraded just 2 years ago at a cost of \$19 million, Hunter Water is considering a further upgrade to provide for population growth and further environmental improvements.

Hunter Water is working with the Environmental Protection Authority, and is also inviting feedback from the Catchment Management Authority, Council, community groups and residents about the Paxton Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Hunter Water's Manager Wastewater Emma Berry said the Corporation is focused on the Plant's performance today as well as in the future.

"In 2011 Hunter Water invested \$19 million upgrading the Paxton Plant.

"This investment involved converting the Plant to a membrane bioreactor to achieve a substantial lift in the Plant's environmental performance. Hunter Water is aware there will however need to be a further upgrade in preparation for 2030 when the population hits 5,000 people," she said.

An independent research organisation will be contacting local households by phone in mid October. Residents will also receive a letter inviting them to give feedback in writing or via Hunter Water's website.

"The community will be asked to prioritise options and comment on how cost would influence their choice.

"Options include further reducing the concentration of nutrients discharged to the environment, reducing total nutrient loads to the river, and reducing discharge by reusing effluent locally."

A recent study showed Hunter Water was responsible for only 1.6% of the total phosphorus and 3.3% of the total nitrogen loads to Congewai Creek, which is the receiving environment for wastewater from the Paxton plant. The major drivers for degraded water quality were identified to be limited riparian cover and agricultural practices.

"One option Hunter Water is seeking comment on is a Catchment Improvement Program to improve the ecological health of the wider catchment area. This would involve partnerships with the Catchment Management Authority, Council, local farmers and residents," Emma Berry said.