



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## HUNTER WATER SETS 12 MONTH DEADLINE FOR PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT

Hunter Water has informed its maintenance workforce that it must improve productivity by up to 18% over the next 12 months.

Hunter Water management delivered the challenge in person to the 140 employees who work in the field maintaining its water and sewer pipe networks, electrical assets and dams.

The challenge is based on the findings of a productivity review of Hunter Water's maintenance services by management consultants Third Horizon. The six week study reviewed work history and financial data, examined procedures and policies, interviewed employees and observed the field workforce as they went about their daily tasks.

The productivity review found that while Hunter Water was performing well when compared to other water utilities around Australia, significant improvements were obtainable.

With the support of management, the 12 month productivity strategy will focus on improving work practices and contractor management. The strategy will not involve any change to existing employment conditions.

Hunter Water Interim CEO Jeremy Bath said conversations with employees and the unions have commenced about how the required productivity gains will be measured.

"Improving productivity allows Hunter Water to contain costs and remain one of the lowest cost water utilities in the country.

"Hunter Water is one of the few utilities in Australia to undertake its own maintenance on its networks and assets rather than rely on specialists in the private sector. Hunter Water has a talented workforce, but it must be tuned to be competitive with the private sector.

"Each month senior management will update employees on how the workforce is responding to the productivity challenge we have clearly laid out.

"We are confident that the workforce will rise to the challenge.

"Rather than making staffing changes based on the results of the productivity review, we are giving our field workforce 12 months to demonstrate what they are capable of doing day in day out. I've seen how well they respond in a crisis or when our network suffers a critical break. What I'm asking for is a lift in typical daily performance towards this high standard," he said.

Hunter Water also confirmed that it would be introducing a minimum fitness standard for employees undertaking laborious tasks to better ensure their safety when working on the job. Commencing in February, field employees will be required to complete an independent fitness test to ensure that their level of fitness does not place them at unnecessary risk of serious injury while working in the field.

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