



MEDIA RELEASE

24 November 2016

LOCAL WATER USAGE NOW BELOW GREAT DEPRESSION TIMES

Annual water usage in the Lower Hunter has dropped by 5,000 litres per person since Water Wise Rules were introduced in 2014, with the average resident now using less water than locals did during the Great Depression.

Water Wise Rules are legally enforceable rules about outdoor water use, which were introduced in July 2014 as part of the NSW Government's Lower Hunter Water Plan. The Rules include no hosing of hard surfaces, all hoses must have a trigger nozzle attached, and you can only water your lawn or garden before 10am and after 4pm, with repeat offenders risking a \$220 fine.

Hunter Water Managing Director Jim Bentley said although weather conditions had the most effect on water consumption, the downward trend in water usage over the past two years suggested residents were saving water.

"Around a quarter of the average Lower Hunter resident's water usage occurs outdoors, with most of that going towards watering lawns and gardens.

"Water Wise Rules were introduced as part of the Lower Hunter Water Plan in 2014 as common sense rules around using water outdoors, regardless of the season.

"Lower Hunter residents are well known for being sustainability minded and have enthusiastically added the Rules to their daily water and energy saving habits.

"Annual water usage has dropped from 70,000 litres per person in 2014 to 65,000 litres in 2016, which is the same amount Hunter Water customers were using in the early 1930s.

"This is great effort by locals, who have been gradually reducing their water consumption over the past three decades by installing water efficient fixtures and appliances, and making saving water part of their daily lives.

Mr Bentley said although Grahamstown and Chichester dams were almost 90% full and residents were being water wise, there was no time to be complacent when it came to water use.

"This time two years ago the temperature soared above 40 degrees and local water usage for the day was 275 million litres, which is 90 million litres above average. The spikes in temperature have a double whammy effect on our water supply, with Hunter Water losing as much from evaporation as what we do in water usage, which can total more than 600 million litres a day.

"Knowing the hot, dry weather can quickly drain our dams, it's important to remind residents to be conscious of their water use all year round, whether if that means following the Water Wise Rules, taking shorter showers, or fixing leaks around the house.

"The Hunter is not immune from drought. Thirty five years ago the Hunter was in dire straits, with our dams dropping to 31% and Stage 4 water restrictions in place," he said.

Nick Kaiser | 0411 485 204 | nick.kaiser@hunterwater.com.au

Historical Water Usage in the Hunter

Year	Water usage per person, per year (litres)
1900	35,700
1930	66,000
1950	131,500
1980	244,600*
2016	65,000

* Highest ever water usage per person recorded by Hunter Water