



MEDIA RELEASE

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THE DISAPPEARING CHICHESTER PIPELINE

Little by little, the Hunter's oldest, longest and most famous pipeline, is quite literally disappearing from sight.

Built more than 90 years ago, the Chichester Trunk Gravity Main (CTGM) stretches almost 90 kilometres from Chichester Dam north of Dungog, through Seaham before finally ending underground in Newcastle.

Hunter Water has been upgrading, replacing and burying sections of the ageing pipeline, with a \$7 million, 3 kilometre section from Tarro to Beresfield the latest to be removed and replaced underground.

Hunter Water Chief Operating Officer Darren Cleary said burying eliminated the risk of flood waters damaging the pipeline in flood prone areas.

"The CTGM was completed in 1924, just a year after construction started on the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

"The pipe was built as part of the Chichester Dam project and at the time the decision was made to lay it above ground because it was cheaper and easier to access for maintenance.

"Advances in technology and material mean it is now cost effective to bury the pipeline.

"The CTGM delivers around 65 million litres of drinking water every day, which is over a third of our region's total water supply.

"While most of the original pipeline has been replaced over the decades, Hunter Water's more recent renewal program has involved burying sections of the CTGM. Since 2009, around 14 kilometres of the CTGM has been buried, removing what was once a well-known sight in places like Shortland and Hexham," he said.

Mr Cleary said Hunter Water was putting the final touches on burying the Tarro to Beresfield section of CTGM, with the old above ground, lead jointed pipe removed and a new section buried away from properties.

"Since May, Hunter Water has been working to replace a 2.8 km section of the CTGM that runs from Tarro to Beresfield, cutting through suburban areas, through backyards and even a local school.

"This \$7 million project is near complete, with the last sections of old pipeline removed this week and a new section buried on the other side of the New England Highway, away from people's homes.

"Hunter Water has a long-term plan to continue replacing sections of the CTGM. We are now in the final stages of planning to remove 8 kilometre link running from Duckenfield to Tarro."

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ADDITIONAL CTGM INFORMATION

- Finished in 1924
- Length, including branches from Tarro to Waratah and Stoney Pinch, is 87 kilometres
- Some sections are 900 mm in diameter, others 1,200 mm
- 14 km of the original pipeline was made from brush-box timber wood staves due to a steel shortage following World War One
- Average daily water delivery of 65 million litres
- Travels under the Williams and Hunter Rivers
- Ends underground at the North Lambton and Stoney Pinch reservoirs
- Recently buried sections include Tarro to Shortland (9.3 km), Beresfield to Stoney Pinch (2.8 km) and Tarro to Beresfield (2.8 km)
- 5,000 Aboriginal artefacts discovered and managed with local stakeholders as part of the Tarro to Beresfield replacement
- Original pipeline was made from steel with lead joints. New sections are made of steel with welded joints or rubber-ringed joints.