



29 October 2018

### **Dungog properties connected to the CTGM**

Hunter Water categorically rejects claims in today's *Newcastle Herald* that it has bullied customers north of Dungog, who are directly connected to the Chichester Trunk Gravity Main (CTGM).

Hunter Water understands that some customers do not believe that drinking untreated water could pose a risk to their health and we are doing everything we can to address this public health risk with these residents.

The water in the CTGM between Chichester Dam and the Dungog Water Treatment Plant has always been raw untreated water.

Raw untreated water is not safe for drinking under the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, as it may carry pathogens such as bacteria, cryptosporidium and giardia that could be harmful to human health. The current Guidelines were updated in 2011 by the Commonwealth Government's National Health and Medical Research Council. The most recent detection of giardia in the raw untreated water was in October 2018.

Since November 2016, Hunter Water has been regularly engaging with 71 properties which are directly connected to the CTGM, north of the Dungog Water Treatment Plant. These customers have always had a non-standard connection for raw untreated water and have been paying a discounted rate since July 2000, reflecting that it is untreated.

Hunter Water is not obliged to provide treated water to these properties, however we have offered to provide a rainwater tank or an onsite treatment option, to ensure they have a safe drinking water supply. On average, Hunter Water estimates the value it is providing is \$30,000 per property.

To date, 19 properties who have accepted this offer now have a solution in place. For customers who have not yet agreed to receiving a drinking water solution, we continue to work with them.

Rainwater tanks and onsite treatment solutions are common for rural and remote properties that cannot feasibly be connected to the reticulated network, including in Hunter Water's area of operations. Drinking water and waste water are the responsibility of the property owner in these cases.

In regards to the Agreement, Hunter Water continues to engage with these customers to understand and resolve any issues. Additionally, we have offered to provide financial support to enable customers to seek independent legal advice on the Agreement, where requested.

Hunter Water intends to supply raw untreated water for irrigation and other non-potable purposes, providing that customers give a written acknowledgement (via an Agreement) that they will not use the water for drinking purposes.