



Damien Tudehope
Minister for Finance and Small Business

Melinda Pavey
Minister for Water, Property and Housing

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 13 January 2020

HUNTER BUSINESSES HELPING CONSERVATION EFFORT

Small businesses in the Hunter are being encouraged to play their part in the region's water conservation efforts ahead of Level 2 water restrictions, which come into effect next week.

Small Business Minister Damien Tudehope today visited Newcastle to meet with small business and discuss their water-saving measures.

"Water is crucial to enable community life and economic activity. With the next phase of water restrictions commencing on January 20, I would like to urge small businesses to do their bit in saving this most valuable and precious resource," he said.

Level 1 restrictions were introduced in the Hunter in September, with Hunter Water partnering with businesses to achieve more than 420 million litres of water savings – the equivalent of 168 Olympic swimming pools – by finding and fixing leaks on their properties.

"With the region experiencing severe drought conditions, Hunter Water has been supporting businesses to ensure they are as water efficient and sustainable as possible, while maintaining continuity of their operations," Mr Tudehope said.

Minister for Water, Property and Housing Melinda Pavey said the levels of the region's dams had fallen to their lowest in 40 years.

"The Lower Hunter's dams are declining at a rapid rate of about one per cent each week due to a lack of decent rainfall and high evaporation caused by the very warm, dry and windy conditions," Mrs Pavey said.

"We need to do everything we can to save our precious resource and preserve the region's supplies if this drought continues."

Hunter Water's Acting CEO Graham Wood said businesses using less than 10 million litres of water a year would need to start developing a Water Efficiency Management Plan (WEMP) under Level 2 water restrictions.

“While our focus has been on working with our large business customers, we acknowledge that many small businesses have been playing their part to save water. As we head into the next stage of restrictions, we are now asking small businesses to identify more ways they can be efficient.

“Businesses who save water may also find they save money on usage charges and energy costs as well, helping drive more sustainable operations. By developing a plan now, they’ll be well prepared if the dry conditions continue, which could trigger Level 3 restrictions by mid-year,” he said.

Hunter Water has a range of water saving resources to help small businesses, including an online template. For more information visit, www.hunterwater.com.au/restrictions