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Diverting stormwater investigated for irrigating Newcastle Racecourse and City of Newcastle sports fields

Hunter Water, Newcastle Jockey Club and City of Newcastle have signed an historic three-party Memorandum of Understanding to further explore and investigate capturing stormwater to irrigate the Newcastle Racecourse and nearby sporting fields.

The opportunity offers the potential to save on average, 55 million litres of drinking water each year, the equivalent annual use of 365 households and could also mean the community benefits from cooler, greener public open spaces and playing fields using a local, sustainable water source.

Minister for Lands and Water, Hospitality and Racing, Kevin Anderson, said the MoU signing is a key milestone for investigating the project, which is in line with Hunter Water's transition to a more circular economy.

"We know what can be achieved when different organisations come together to improve life for their community. The work that Hunter Water is doing with the support of the NSW Government, will give the people of Newcastle access to world class facilities as well as fit-for-purpose solutions to secure water for the future.

"The work that will be possible through this MoU will include a top quality race course and improved playing fields for football and soccer," said Mr Anderson.

Newcastle Lord Mayor, Nuatali Nelmes, said the stormwater harvesting project complements the direction of the City of Newcastle's new Environment Strategy.

"As one of Australia's most environmentally progressive councils, City of Newcastle is committed to exploring opportunities to create a more sustainable future for our city.

"Through drought and COVID, we have all gained a new appreciation of the immense value of our green public open spaces. This MoU and the ongoing investigations into the feasibility of this stormwater harvesting project supports our aim to create long-term water efficiency initiatives and reduce the use of drinking water for irrigation purposes in favour of alternate water sources.

"I look forward to working collaboratively with Hunter Water and the Newcastle Jockey Club to further explore the potential of this fantastic water-saving initiative," said Cr Nelmes.

Hunter Water Managing Director, Darren Cleary, explained the MoU outlined the next steps the parties would take together to develop the scheme.

"As a collaborative, the three parties will now work through the scheme's design and potential funding streams. The MoU reaffirms Hunter Water's intent to take an integrated approach to reducing demand on our drinking water supply, while meeting our community's water needs and improving the resilience of our region," said Mr Cleary.

Newcastle Jockey Club CEO, Duane Dowell, said the NJC was proud to showcase the opportunity of innovative water solutions to Newcastle and the region.



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“As the three parties to the MoU investigate this project further and work through the complexities of design and funding arrangements, Newcastle Jockey Club is excited at the prospect of a sustainable, long-term water supply initiative to irrigate our tracks while also supporting the local community to help irrigate soccer fields and cricket ovals.

“Chairman Geoffrey Barnett with the NJC Board and I are very excited by this MoU along with the opportunity to develop our stables complex into a leading facility for thoroughbred horse training,” said Mr Dowell.

For more information, visit www.hunterwater.com.au/news

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