



The Fountain

Your community update
from Hunter Water

Inside

How we're working together
to Love Water

Enabling our future with
investments across the
region

Protecting water quality



love water

Showing the love



We love water and we know you do, too.

But why is water so valuable? In the Hunter, the value of water is linked to its availability, which varies depending on the weather: If it rains a lot in the right places, our water storages go up; but on a sunny day our storages can lose more than 160 million litres, just to evaporation, almost as much water as the Lower Hunter region consumes in a day!

As a community, we all have a role to play in ensuring water is used wisely, so we have enough water to support the region's growth and respond to droughts.

Making savings is easier than you might think. For example, if the whole Hunter community takes four-minute showers (do you really need to be in there any longer?)

"Small tweaks at home can go a very long way in water conservation when we all work together." and is mindful when watering lawns and gardens, we can reduce our consumption by around 10 per cent which would buy us time in considering major water supply upgrades.

On our part, we've already started. In the last year we have inspected nearly half of our 5,000 kilometre water network for leaks and reduced water loss by 800 million litres, and we'll inspect the other half by the end of 2018. We don't only survey, but fix every leak we find and those our customers tell us about and will continue to survey half of our water network each year for leaks. We have also relined Black Hill Reservoir to reduce leakage, saving 215 million litres of water each year. We have also been working with customers to use water more efficiently and find and fix leaks on their properties through programs like the Hunter Water Savers Business Program, Leakages in Schools and Essential Plumbing Assistance. These programs have helped customers save more than 450 million litres each year so far.

Ready to show how much you Love Water? Head to hunterwater.com.au/savewater for water saving tips, and follow us on Facebook.



Water provides so much joy! Here is an entry submitted by Jodie in our recent Love Water Facebook competition.



Challenge yourself

55 litres

of water is used in the average shower

Goal: 36 litres

That's four minutes which, for those who enjoy exercising their vocal chords in the shower, is the average length of a song on the radio.

Be kind, rewindcycle

Have you ever thought about what happens after you flush the toilet, rinse the dishes, finish your shower or the laundry is done?

You've finished your business and that's it. However, there are several ways your wastewater could benefit our community, the environment and the region's economy.

Take biosolids, for example. These are the by-products of our wastewater treatment processes. They might not sound (and certainly don't look) pretty, but Hunter Water's biosolids are used as fertiliser for farming and rehabilitating mine sites. Biosolids can also generate biogas that can be used as fuel to generate electricity.

Recycled water can be used for industrial processes, replacing precious drinking water for uses such as cooling down machinery.

Hunter Water supplied 5,384 million litres of recycled water in 2016-17

Recycled water can also be used to water parks or ovals, keeping our neighbourhoods green, and can irrigate farms, saving huge amounts of water that we could better use at home. Hunter Water is taking the initiative in investigating different options for the use of biosolids and recycled water that will benefit the whole of the Lower Hunter region. Read more at hunterwater.com.au/recycledwater



Opinion: the true value of water

After a hot, dry summer drawing to a close with the refreshing rains of late March, many Novocastrians will be familiar with the 'save water' messages from providers like Hunter Water. While these messages are important, are we doing enough to promote the true value of water?

Conserving water has a tremendous knock-on effect to other benefits, including improved environmental sustainability as more water flows to the environment, reduced energy consumption due to less pumping and treatment, and cheaper bills thanks to reduced investment in meeting demand. If we value these benefits, we should also value water.

When it comes to water, we need our communities to value it to avoid scarcity. The World Bank recently reported that water scarcity, exacerbated by climate change, could cost some regions up to 6 per cent of their gross domestic product. In our daily lives, the impact of water scarcity can include disruption to local businesses reliant on water, degradation of community assets such as playing fields and compromised drinking water quality. There is no way that Hunter Water would allow us to risk water scarcity in our region, but that doesn't mean that we should rush into building big costly infrastructure.

While we can't control the weather, as a community we can control our water consumption, and work together to explore all options to achieve water security with the lowest impact on water bills and the least environmental harm.

While we can't control the weather, we can control our water consumption.

Water demand in the Hunter has trended down over the past few decades thanks in part to the community adopting water wise behaviours, and significant users ceasing operations. Today Hunter Water supplies almost 200 million litres of water per day, with household usage averaging 172 thousand litres per property each year, which is above the nationwide average and 10 per cent higher than best practice in states like Victoria.

Despite significant population growth in our region, our overall water use has declined by 16 per cent since the 1980s due to user pay pricing, the closure of heavy industry, and water efficient technology such as dual flush toilets and shower heads. That downward trend has stopped and water demand has plateaued. With the local population expected to increase by 20 per cent over the next 20 years, local demand is expected to surpass what we can supply by 2036. Without intervention, that means we'd need to be prepared for a major new water source before then. Traditional water sources like dams are expensive to build, can have environmental impacts, and lock us, and future generations, into a particular water future.

I don't want our region to be rushing into decisions about source augmentation. By working with our communities to reduce demand, and therefore extending the time between now and when we'd need the next water source, future technologies will help us save more water, and could indefinitely delay the need for a new water source. The value of this is lower water bills, greater investment in innovation and technology, and a more sustainable water future.

So don't expect to simply hear Hunter Water telling you how you can or can't use water. While we'll still give tips to remind everyone to be water wise, we'll also go a step further by working with our communities to Love Water and understand the true value of this precious resource.

Jim Bentley
Managing Director

Investment in the region

There are cranes in the sky, and construction is underway right across Greater Newcastle and the Lower Hunter.



In the last three years, Hunter Water has assessed more than 6,000 development applications, with another record year predicted for 2018.

Beyond this record private investment, Hunter Water's own capital works program is more than \$490 million in value over the next four years, with a rolling investment plan of more than \$1.2 billion over the next decade into local infrastructure. Our major projects focus on improving our operations, making our system more resilient, and delivering better services to our community.

To support continued investment across our region, Hunter Water's annual Growth Plan, developed in consultation with local councils and the broader community, is helping to make investment in the region easier,

providing developers and our community certainty for planning, avoiding unnecessary duplication and helping to make housing more affordable. The plan also supports Hunter Water's commitment to enabling good development, which makes use of water wise technology, and enhances urban amenity and sustainability.

The plan builds on recent changes to Hunter Water's developer works certification process, which provides accredited parties with greater freedom on the delivery of routine works, while ensuring increased oversight on the delivery of major assets.

The plan, and new growth infrastructure delivery maps which show Hunter Water's development sequencing proposals, are available on the Hunter Water website at hunterwater.com.au/growth

Hunter Water asset works

Project update

Hunter Water has started the process to obtain planning approval for a temporary desalination plant at Belmont.

The process includes community consultation and an environmental assessment. Having planning approval forms part of the Hunter's 'insurance policy' to protect businesses and residents in case of severe drought.

Once planning approvals are in place, the temporary desalination plant will only be built if water storage levels fall below 35 per cent, and Hunter Water has implemented all other water efficiency measures.

The temporary desalination plant will ensure the Hunter's water security until adequate rainfall replenishes our dam storages.

More information is available at hunterwater.com.au/tempdesal



Collaborating for improved services

Partnership: Hunter Water Chairman Terry Lawler AO and Lake Macquarie Mayor Cr Kay Fraser

A proud partner

Streamlining services for the benefit of our community

We have entered into a new Partnership Agreement with Lake Macquarie City Council to improve the delivery of services for people in Lake Macquarie. It's the first step towards a new integrated approach to doing business and will be a catalyst for change across the region.

We will collaborate by sharing resources and information to ensure key

infrastructure projects and services are delivered more efficiently.

Signing the agreement marks a turning point in ensuring that we not only have improved coordination when maintaining or upgrading infrastructure, but also when delivering service improvements and efficiencies to the Lake Macquarie community.

Fixing leaks

Hunter Water supplies nearly 200 million litres of drinking water each day to homes and businesses. That's 80 Olympic sized swimming pools of high quality, safe water every day of the year.

But, like all utilities around the world, our water network is prone to leaks and breaks due to factors such as the pipe material, how it was installed, soil conditions, traffic and importantly, weather. That is why we're constantly exploring and creating new and better ways of managing and predicting faults within our system.

Last year we surveyed 2,300 kilometres of our water network with the remainder to be surveyed this year. Further resources are being put in place to improve the distance surveyed each week to ensure we're finding leaks quickly before they become a bigger problem. We fix every leak we find in these surveys and every leak our customers tell us about. In the future, we will continue to survey half of the network each year.

We've implemented a dedicated water loss project team, which has been looking at ways to improve the forecasting



Our crews repairing a suburban water main

of failure and prioritisation of repair, remediation and replacement, as well as improving the speed and effectiveness of our operational response for significant breaks.

We're also investing in technology and digital innovation, such as intelligent networks, to provide us valuable real-time data that can help prevent leaks and breaks.

How can you help?

Our community is the eyes and ears of our network and your quick reporting of a leak can help save water loss, but also stop a potential break which can impact many.

If you do come across a leaking pipe, or notice an unusual, persistent puddle on a road or grass verge please call us on 1300 657 000. We can then organise an inspection by one of our technicians and schedule a repair.

Q&A

Delivering safe water

We are committed to providing high quality, safe water for our customers, everyday.

How does Hunter Water protect water quality?

Hunter Water provides safe and reliable drinking water to more than half a million customers in the region. Given the importance of maintaining water quality to ensure the public's health, our drinking water is protected using a 'multi-barrier' management approach. This means the water is protected within the catchment, treated to remove impurities and routinely sampled and analysed.

How does Hunter Water ensure the drinking water is safe?

The safety of Hunter Water's drinking water is our main priority and is confirmed through an extensive monitoring program. We have 68 sampling locations across our drinking water network. We routinely test for a wide range of physical, chemical and biological characteristics at all stages of the supply system. Hunter Water is also able to manage and respond quickly in the event of unplanned incidents, with a dedicated team monitoring the network around-the-clock.

What is Hunter Water doing to ensure its water supplies are safe from PFAS contamination?

The community can be confident our region's water supply is safe to drink. Along with our extensive monitoring program, we also test for PFAS chemicals at six drinking water locations in the area local to Williamstown every month. To date, there have been no detections of the chemicals above the Government's Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) guidelines. These guidelines have been set based on exposure to the chemicals over a person's lifetime. Our water quality testing reports are made publicly available on our website at hunterwater.com.au/waterquality

Hunter Water also has confidence in the safety of its drinking water because it is hydrologically impossible for groundwater from the Williamstown Management Area to enter Grahamstown Dam. This is because water from the RAAF Base would need to flow uphill to enter the dam, even in wet conditions. This assessment is based on decades of ongoing hydrological testing and modelling.

Out and about



Virtual reality tours of our wastewater and water treatment processes were a big hit at Kurri Kurri Nostalgia Festival.



Hunter Water is a proud sponsor of Light up Newcastle supporting Rotary and the Mission to Seafarers.



We co-hosted Bring Your Bills Day at Belmont and Maitland, along with EWON, to answer questions about water bills and our services.

Say hello!

We love supporting community events. Visit us at NAIDOC Day Pelican Beach on 20 July, or Wallsend Winter Fair on 12 August. Check our Facebook for more details of events near you.

Account assistance

We understand that finding the money to pay bills can be difficult at times.

If you are a residential customer having difficulty paying your bill or are concerned about meeting a payment on time, we will help you identify solutions for paying your bill before the next one is due. This can include a short extension of time to pay, a payment plan to pay the account in regular instalments over an agreed timeframe, access to our Payment Assistance Scheme which may include financial

assistance and free financial counselling. Tenants who pay for water usage may also be eligible for assistance.

Hunter Water's Payment Assistance Scheme is administered through local community service partners, including The Salvation Army, Samaritans and local neighbourhood centres.

Call us on 1300 657 657 to speak with our Account Assistance Team who can help you manage your account.

For more information visit hunterwater.com.au or call 1300 657 657.

Live
Chat

Web chat is now available on our website, so you can easily ask any questions you may have. Just look out for the Live Chat icon on our website.

Be part of the conversation

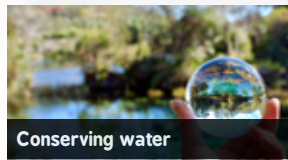
Your Voice makes it easier than ever for you to help shape the Hunter's water future.

We take our responsibilities to provide high quality, safe drinking water, and to remove waste, very seriously. We also know our customers feel as passionately about supporting our growing region as we do! So we've launched new ways to listen and converse directly with you.

Your Voice makes it easier than ever to share your ideas with us. It's a new web-based platform that allows you to participate in our planning and decision-making so that we can work together to determine our water future.

We look forward to hearing from you through this new initiative. Thank you for your input into how we can shape our business and our community, and Love Water together.

Join the conversation today at yourvoice.hunterwater.com.au



Get in touch

We're here for you when you need us.

1300 657 657 (9am - 5pm)
1300 657 000 (Emergency 24/7)

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