



Media Release

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For immediate release

Safety steps up at Hunter Water

An innovative move from a Hunter Water maintenance crew member, has dramatically reduced the risk of staff being injured when using their trucks.

Details of the safety achievement were announced by Hunter Water today as part of National Safety Week. Every year 135,000 Australians are seriously injured at work and more than 260 die as a result of work related injuries.

When Hunter Water field workers needed equipment stored above their vehicles, they previously used the towbar as an improvised step, this risky procedure resulted in staff slipping and sustaining lost time injuries.

Hunter Water maintenance crew member Peter Rowett initially identified the risk and started work on finding a safer solution.

“At first we tried making a plastic platform to fit around the towball, making it larger and more stable to stand on, but after some trial and error, we found that a folding plastic step was a much better and safer alternative,” Mr Rowett said.

Hunter Water has now started retro-fitting the new plastic folding steps to eight maintenance utility trucks following the trial of a prototype over the past six weeks.

During the trial, there have been no injuries reported from staff using the new mini-ladders.

Mr Rowett said he was concerned about the injuries his fellow colleagues had sustained over the years from using a tow ball to reach up.

“In our line of work, wet slippery muddy boots combined with a round tow ball equals an accident waiting to happen. The new ladder slides under the ute tray and has a platform at the top making it easy to safely get equipment in and out of the truck,” Mr Rowett said.

As part of its commitment to ensuring One Safe Team, Hunter Water is holding a series of free events for staff during Safe Work Australia Week, including talks on breast cancer and prostate cancer awareness, free staff health checks and a vehicle maintenance workshop.

Safe Work Australia Week is being held from October 26-30.

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