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Media Statement

Monday 6 September 2010

Balickera Pumping Station

Please attribute to a *spokesperson from Hunter Water.*

Hunter Water is not prepared to gamble with the water supply for one of NSW's fastest growing regions.

The Hunter's storages are small for the population they serve and they are vulnerable to evaporation. While Grahamstown Dam is the Hunter's largest storage, it is particularly susceptible to evaporation due to its shallow depth and high surface area. Evaporation losses from Grahamstown Dam are estimated to be about 30,000 megalitres per year, which is about 40% of Hunter Water's total supply

The Hunter's dams fill up quickly, but they also deplete very rapidly. Pressure on our current systems will only increase with future population growth of 160,000 over the next 25 years and climate change uncertainties.

Hunter Water adheres to pumping rules at Balickera Pumping Station which take into account the volume of flows down the river, salinity, phosphorous, algae and other river water quality considerations.

When Grahamstown Dam levels are near capacity, Hunter Water does not pump from the Williams River to allow capacity to capture runoff from rainfall. Similarly, Hunter Water is unable to pump when water quality is poor (such as high algal levels in the Williams River) or at times of low river flow.

Hunter Water will take all opportunities, within its pumping rules associated with the transfer of flows from the Williams River, to ensure the region's storages are well maintained.

Balickera Pumping Station is an integral part of the Hunter's operations, which is why Hunter Water is completing a major \$14 million infrastructure upgrade to increase capacity for capturing high flows in the Williams River for transfer into Grahamstown Dam.

There is no substance to claims made in the media today about the operations of the Balickera Pumping Station – any suggestions that Hunter Water would deliberately run down its storage levels are wrong.

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