



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## HUNTER WATER OFFERS SUPPORT FOR CUSTOMERS HURT BY RAAF CONTAMINATION

Hunter Water is offering customers financially affected by the RAAF's contamination of local waterways \$300 credit towards their water bill.

With a ban on commercial fishing in place until at least 30 June 2016, Hunter Water has written to local residents in the Port Stephens area outlining what support it can provide.

Hunter Water Interim CEO Jeremy Bath said while assistance was ultimately the responsibility of the Department of Defence, the utility wanted to minimise any distress the arrival of its water bill could cause for some customers.

"Hunter Water has written to our customers in Port Stephens offering to credit \$300 towards their latest water bill if they are experiencing genuine hardship.

"There aren't many of us who could afford to go 10 months without an income, which is the minimum length of the shutdown of the local commercial fishing industry.

"The impact of the RAAF's contamination is hurting the majority of the Port Stephens community, especially those in small business.

"Drive to Port Stephens and it's clear that visitor numbers have dropped. Whether it be running a dog kennel, the local golf club or a bed and breakfast, activity has all but dried up.

"People are about to receive their final water bill for the year and we need to ensure its arrival isn't going to cause added stress to the families affected by the RAAF contamination.

"The financial impact posed by the fishing bans in Tilligerry Creek and Fullerton Cove for local commercial fisherman can't be overstated. People who have been working on these waters for generations have in the blink of an eye had their livelihood put on hold," Jeremy Bath said.

The letter to customers has also reassured the public that its water supply is safe.

Hunter Water is not currently sourcing water from the Tomago Sandbeds due to the high water storage levels at Grahamstown and Chichester dams. When it next draws water from the Tomago Sandbeds, it will continue its testing procedure of sampling the water for PFOS/ PFOA at the point where it is drawn and then again when it reaches the raw water storage tank at the Grahamstown Water Treatment Plant.

Hunter Water has been testing for PFOS/ PFOA at the Tomago Sandbeds since 2012 and has had zero detects from any bore that has been used for water supply. Additionally there is an embargo on the use for water supply purposes of two bores that are considered at a higher risk of contamination of PFOS/ PFOA due to their close proximity to the RAAF base.

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