



MEDIA RELEASE

9 February 2016

HUNTER WATER MOVES TO LEARN LESSONS FROM APRIL 2015 SUPER STORM

Hunter Water will require the 71 properties north of Dungog that draw water directly from the Chichester Trunk Gravity Main (CTGM) to renew their water contracts. The move is an effort to avoid a repeat of the impact of the April Super Storm last year when it came to light that dozens of properties were entirely reliant on Hunter Water for their water supply.

Some properties north and south of Dungog receive water directly from the CTGM under a 'non-standard agreement' with Hunter Water, where water is sold at a discounted rate in recognition that supply isn't guaranteed and water upstream of Dungog Treatment Plant is untreated.

Built in 1926, the CTGM is a 90 kilometre pipe that delivers around 65 million litres of water from Chichester Dam to Maitland, Newcastle and surrounding areas every day.

Hunter Water Interim CEO Jeremy Bath said the majority of the non-standard agreements had been in place for decades.

"The CTGM was designed to deliver bulk water from Chichester Dam, not as a standard water supply main, which means Hunter Water can't guarantee continuous supply to those drawing directly from it.

"Water from the CTGM is also untreated between Chichester Dam and Dungog Water Treatment Plant, dosed only with chlorine, which means it is not suitable for drinking.

"Hunter Water writes to its non-standard customers on the CTGM annually as a reminder that they need to have a second source of water rather than relying only on the pipeline. These agreements however in many cases have been in place for generations, so it's important they are renewed and current property owners aware of the details.

"Last year a 50 metre section of the CTGM washed away in the April Super Storm, which meant the entire pipeline had to be shut down for three weeks while it was repaired. Although some of the non-standard CTGM customers had rainwater tanks in place, many properties didn't and required Hunter Water to deliver crates of bottled water at a time when our efforts should have been on responding to urgent storm damage.

"Hunter Water has written to each of the 71 non-standard customers to renew their agreements, and in instances where we haven't heard back will follow up with more correspondence, phone calls and a site visit. Ultimately for a property to continue to receive water direct from the CTGM, they will have to have a current contract with Hunter Water," he said.

Customers on a non-standard agreement to draw water directly from the CTGM pay \$1.74 per kilolitre for water, which is a 20% discount on the price paid by all other Hunter Water customers.

Nick Kaiser | 0411 485 204 | nick.kaiser@hunterwater.com.au