



MEDIA RELEASE

9 December 2016

TOP RESEARCHERS IN NEWCASTLE TO LEAD UTILITY ROUNDTABLE

Some of the globe's brightest minds in public infrastructure have converged on Hunter Water to workshop how research and innovation can make for more sustainable water management and improved liveability.

The roundtable brings representatives from Australian and New Zealand water utilities together with academics from several local and international universities, with discussions aimed at challenging the status quo.

Hunter Water Managing Director Jim Bentley said the meeting was the first of its kind for Hunter Water, and gave utilities the chance to learn from one another and thought leaders from the world of research.

"Hunter Water is entering the next phase of long term water planning for the region and we have an opportunity to be truly innovative and forward thinking in our decision making.

"Our neighbours at Sydney Water and MidCoast Water are faced with many of the same challenges as us, with ageing infrastructure, population growth and the need to provide a secure and sustainable water supply into the future.

"Hunter Water is taking the opportunity to work with our neighbours in addressing these shared issues using what we know now, and what we can learn from those at the cutting edge of research into water system.

"This workshop is about breaking away from the preconceived ways of doing things to identify solutions that will not only work in the short term, but continue delivering benefits well into the future," he said.

Dr Bentley said the group was fortunate to hear from Professor Brian Collins, the Director of the United Kingdom's International Centre for Infrastructure Futures at University College London, and Professor Cynthia Mitchell, Deputy Director of the Institute of Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney.

"We're very lucky to have Professor Collins at the workshop. Brian has served as a chief scientific adviser to more than one department of the UK Government, and will help challenge how we do things and our ideas on what will be truly positive outcomes for our community, the environment and stakeholders.

"Professor Cynthia Mitchell is one of Australia's leading researchers with a 'better, not bigger' philosophy that is applied to future-orientated city and water planning, and provides independent advice to governments on water policy.

"This workshop is part of a new direction for a more collaborative, engaged and evidence led Hunter Water, which is focussed on not just short term needs, but long term opportunities.

Attendees will include representatives from Hunter Water, Sydney Water, MidCoast Water, Watercare Services (NZ), the UN CIFAL Institute at the University of Newcastle, Institute for Sustainable Futures (University of Technology Sydney), and the Centre for Infrastructure Research (University of Auckland).

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