



MEDIA RELEASE

8 November 2017

NEW PIPELINE DEEP BELOW SWANSEA CHANNEL DELIVERS WATER SECURITY FOR THOUSANDS

Hunter Water is drilling a 300 metre long, 20 metre deep tunnel beneath Swansea Channel as part of a \$3 million project to improve water security for residents in the Swansea area.

Around 4,500 properties south of Swansea Bridge in suburbs including Swansea, Caves Beach and Nords Wharf receive their water from a single watermain laid on the floor of the channel. If it were to break in the underwater section, every home, school and business in the area would be without water for up to a week due to the difficulty of having to make the repairs under water.

Hunter Water Executive Manager for Investment and Innovation Darren Cleary said the new pipeline would give Swansea residents the water security expected in the modern age.

“There are 4,500 properties south of Swansea Bridge including homes, schools and businesses relying on us at Hunter Water to ensure they have a steady supply of safe drinking water.

“The nature of supplying water to the area means we need to transport it across Swansea Channel. With Swansea Bridge opening regularly for boat traffic in and out of Lake Macquarie, services like water have been laid on the channel floor using the best technology of the day.

“If the current pipeline breaks in the underwater section at Swansea Channel, it could take a week to repair using divers and underwater equipment. Hunter Water would then have to send a pipe across Swansea Bridge during the evening to refill the reservoirs while repairs were underway.

“Although the reservoirs in Swansea and nearby suburbs are larger than most, our modelling shows some residents would run out of water within 24 hours of a break.

“To remove the risk of residents running out of water, a second pipeline is being tunnelled underground from Little Pelican to Swansea using a technique called ‘horizontal directional drilling’. Residents will have two connections to Hunter Water’s network, essentially providing a safety net in case of a break.

“Thanks to this project thousands of residents plus hotels, resorts, clubs and businesses won’t face the prospect of a lengthy water outage should the existing pipeline break.

“The existing pipeline was laid using the best technology of its time. Today however we’re able to utilise the innovative horizontal directional drilling technique, allowing us to lay the new pipeline deep beneath Swansea Channel away from tidal movements and salt water.

“Hunter Water is investing \$3 million to address this unacceptable risk and provide a more secure water supply for the local community.”

The Swansea Channel watermain crossing project will be completed by Christmas.

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