

MEDIA RELEASE

Investing in water and sewer services for the Hunter

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A record \$181.7 million will be spent on water and wastewater infrastructure for the Hunter in the NSW Government's 2009-10 budget, supporting more than 500 jobs for the region, Water Minister Phil Costa said today.

Mr Costa said Hunter Water is embarking on its largest ever capital works program which will increase the region's water storage and recycled water use as well as improve wastewater treatment services.

"The Hunter is a region that will grow significantly into the future," said Mr Costa.

"This budget kick-starts a whole series of projects that will improve services, provide water supply certainty and help to ensure cleaner waterways," he said.

"Importantly this investment will also support more than 500 jobs this year alone.

"More than \$75 million will be spent improving the water supply network including funding for the continued planning and design of Tillegra Dam.

"The \$477 million (\$406 million after the sale of surplus land) Tillegra Dam project will drought-proof the Hunter for at least the next 50 years and provide certainty for businesses to invest in the region.

"Money will also be spent on a series of major augmentations including major trunks main replacements that will improve water delivery and reliability across the entire network."

Mr Costa said more than \$106 million would be spent on the treatment and transport of the community's wastewater.

"Construction work will start or continue on nine major wastewater treatment works projects," he said.

"These upgrades will improve the capacity and treatment of wastewater to the benefit of both the Hunter community and the environment.

He said more than \$1 million was also in the budget for wastewater recycling projects at Kooragang Island and Chisholm.

"Increased reuse of wastewater is also an important element in securing the Hunter's water supply," added the Minister.

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