

MEDIA RELEASE

Investing in rural and regional water and sewer services

Tuesday 16 June 2009

The NSW Government will continue to invest in rural and regional water and sewer services as part of the 2009-10 State Budget, Water Minister Phil Costa said today.

Mr Costa said in country NSW \$61.7 million will go towards the continuation of the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program.

“This highly successful program will continue in 2009-10 to help provide important upgrades to water and sewerage services in country NSW,” said Mr Costa.

“Since the program commenced 360 water supply and sewerage projects have been funded to improve public health and the environment and security of services for over one million people living in country towns and villages.

“In 2009/10 up to 500 jobs will also be supported as a direct result of NSW Government funding from the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program.

“State Water will also spend \$56.8 million on works to increase the capacity and improve safety of dams under their management; \$3.9 million for environmental compliance programs and \$4.9 million for asset renewal and replacement.

“This includes more than \$26 million towards the major upgrade of Keepit Dam.

“More than \$5 million will also be spent to commence upgrading Copeton Dam in the Northern Tablelands.

“More than \$19 million is also allocated as part of the Blowering Dam safety upgrade.”

Mr Costa also said the NSW Government would lead an \$8.5 million program for improved water and sewerage in country Aboriginal communities.

“This is an extremely important initiative in the 2009-10 budget.”

“The Department of Water and Energy will work closely with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to administer this program, with the Council also contributing \$3.3 million towards the cost of the program.”

Mr Costa said the NSW Government will also continue with rural water reforms, with some \$16.5 million to be spent on operation and works programs for irrigation areas.

“The Budget continues this Government’s commitment to rural water reforms and creating healthier and more sustainable river systems, especially across the Murray-Darling Basin.

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“A further \$2 million will also be spent on the continued implementation of water sharing plans across the State.

“The Department of Water and Energy will spend \$6.7 million conserving and restoring groundwater resources of the Great Artesian Basin under the Cap and Pipe the Bores Program,” added the Minister.

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Media Contact: Peter McCabe 0439 707 101