



Water

Ageing infrastructure and health impacts

Councils managing their own infrastructure are facing growing challenges due to ageing infrastructure, increasing regulatory expectations, and reduced NSW Government funding support. The cost of necessary upgrades to treatment facilities, pipes, and distribution networks far exceeds local government resourcing capacity. Support is urgently needed from the NSW Government to work with regional councils on long-term planning, equitable investment, and coordinated water infrastructure solutions.

Development controls and implications

While Hunter Water pays substantial dividends to the NSW Government, Dungog Shire Council and its communities do not receive any share of these returns, despite bearing the impacts of land use restrictions and funding the provision and maintenance of core local infrastructure underpinning these water assets and infrastructure of significance to the State.

Fragmented waterway management leading to water quality and security

No single authority is currently responsible for the overall health of the region’s waterways. Water quality continues to be affected by sediment erosion and algal blooms, particularly along the Williams, Hunter, and Paterson Rivers, and at Grahamstown Reservoir. A lack of coordinated investment in catchment protection is contributing to environmental decline, posing risks to the Hunter’s drinking water supply and leading to unclear accountability and missed opportunities for joint action.

Challenge	Advocacy Ask
Water Supply and Treatment	Increase investment in regional water infrastructure with co-designed funding models and priorities.
Catchment Area Impacts	Ensure fair returns and consistent planning requirements in catchment-impacted Local Government Areas.
Waterway Health	Establish a lead agency to coordinate Hunter waterway health.