



Water Infrastructure

Strategic Objective

Ensure a reliable, safe and secure water supply for the Hunter Region through coordinated and sustainable water management practices, infrastructure investment, and proactive measures that safeguard waterways and water resources for current and future generations.

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, such as roads underpinning these water assets and infrastructure of significance to the State.

Fragmented waterway management leading to water quality and security issues

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.

Ageing infrastructure and health impacts

Councils managing their own water infrastructure are facing growing challenges due to ageing facilities and networks, increasing regulatory expectations, and reduced 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 both the State and Federal Government to work with regional councils on long-term planning, equitable investment, and coordinated water infrastructure solutions.

Challenge

Advocacy Ask

Water Supply and Treatment

Commit to a three way funding model for council owned water and sewer infrastructure across Federal, State and Local Government.

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.