

Hunter Water launches major project to restore the Williams River

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Hunter Water has announced the commencement of a significant project to address erosion along the Williams River, a vital source of drinking water for the Lower Hunter region. This initiative, spanning from Seaham to Clarence Town, aims to restore the river's health and secure a sustainable water future for surrounding communities.

Hunter Water Executive Manager Customer Delivery, Glen Robinson, emphasized the importance of the project, stating,

“The Williams River is an important asset to our community, and its preservation is crucial for both local ecosystems and our water supply. It is a vital component in supplying drinking water to over half a million people in the Lower Hunter, with around half of the water in Grahamstown Dam being pumped from this river system.

“Future population growth and the impacts of climate change mean the Lower Hunter needs a resilient and reliable drinking water supply from the Williams River to ensure the long-term sustainability of the region. Phase one of the package of work kicked off this week, with several riverfront landowners committing to the remediation efforts on their properties.”

Securing a Sustainable Water Future

The Williams River plays a crucial role in supplying water to over half a million people in the Lower Hunter. With climate change and population growth posing challenges, a resilient and reliable water source is essential. This project seeks to ensure the river's long-term viability in meeting these demands.

Phase one of the restoration work has already begun, with several landowners along the river committing to collaborative efforts on their properties. The project utilizes various techniques to combat erosion, including:

- **Engineered Rock and Log Structures:** These structures will be used to reinforce severely eroded sections of the riverbank.
- **Bank Revegetation:** Native plant species will be reintroduced to stabilize the banks and create a healthy ecosystem.
- **Weed Removal:** Invasive plant species will be removed to make way for native vegetation.
- **Stock Management Fencing:** Fencing will be installed to prevent livestock from damaging the riverbank.

Collaboration for Success

The project is the result of extensive collaboration between Hunter Water and various government agencies, including:

- Transport for NSW
- Hunter Local Land Services
- DPI-Fisheries
- Port Stephens and Dungog Shire Councils

Hunter Water Group Manager Planning and Engineering and Chair of the Seaham Weir Pool Interagency Working Group, Rob Main, acknowledges the planning and leadership from these agencies in ensuring the program's effectiveness.

"Our collaborative approach with various government agencies and landholders underscores the importance of this work. We are committed to implementing effective solutions that will provide lasting environmental and community benefits.

"We appreciate the support of local landholders and river users as we undertake this vital work. Together, we can ensure the Williams River remains a thriving and sustainable resource for future generations," Mr Main said.

Temporary Measures Ensure Safety

Boating restrictions will be implemented during the construction phase to ensure the safety of users. These restrictions include temporary exclusion zones and no-wash areas within the wakeboarding zone. Signs, markers, and buoys will guide river users through the area.

Hunter Water acknowledges the inconvenience caused by these restrictions and appreciates the understanding of local residents and river users.

A Sustainable Future for the Williams River

With the combined efforts of Hunter Water, government agencies, and local communities, the Williams River can be restored to its former health. This project aims to ensure a clean, reliable water source for generations to come.

For more information and updates on the project, please visit www.hunterwater.com.au/erosionplan.