



MEDIA RELEASE

Yes to dollars but not just to dams

17 June 2014

The Australian Water Association (AWA) welcomes the money reserved in today's NSW Budget to fund initiatives that secure urban water supplies and to drought-proof regional communities.

Some key water investments in the NSW Budget include:

- \$700 million to maintain, renew and upgrade critical infrastructure across Sydney's water network.
- \$39 million to upgrade and install town water and sewerage service
- \$12 million to improve water and sewerage services for 61 Aboriginal communities in NSW.
- \$17 million to scope infrastructure projects in the Murray-Darling Basin that will further the State's ability to meet the water saving requirements under the Basin Plan.
- \$1 million towards scoping and feasibility studies for the construction of a new dam on the Belubula River
- \$500,000 to undertake feasibility studies and prepare business cases for priority water security infrastructure projects which enhance town water security across regional NSW.

The Association agrees with the Government, that improving regional infrastructure now will not only assist in drought-proofing regional NSW, but also has the potential to improve the productivity of our agricultural land.

However, the Australian Water Association Chief Executive, Jonathan McKeown, says that it is imperative that the NSW Government doesn't just look to dams to satisfy water security needs.

"Dams are not the only solution to securing water supplies in our regions. The Government needs to ensure that it makes informed decisions on the best water security opportunity for each location.

"A portfolio of options including water efficiency programs, alternative water sourcing and education are all other mechanisms should be considered, aside from just building expensive new dams that have the potential for negative environmental consequences.

"Further, it needs to be ensured that investment is not just spent in large water infrastructure projects, but also looks to address the deficiencies in drinking water quality, wastewater treatment and capacity to meet the growing populations of our regional areas, said Mr McKeown.

AWA hopes to work with the NSW Government as they decide where best the investment is spent in an effort to ensure NSW's ongoing economic prosperity.

For more information:

Amanda White
National Manager – Communications and Policy
Awhite@awa.asn.au / 0403 884 485