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Media Release

\$100,000 TO HELP REDUCE LEAKS IN MOUNT GAMBIER

SA Water will spend \$100,000 auditing Mount Gambier's entire water distribution network for leaks as part of an \$8 million leakage management program.

SA Water South East Service Delivery Manager Andy McPharlin says about 300 kilometres of water mains in Mount Gambier will be checked for leaks under the new program - the first of its kind in regional South Australia.

"With pipes buried underground it's almost impossible to find leaks until a pipe bursts, however this program will allow us to check Mount Gambier's mains and identify areas where water might be leaking so we can take remedial action," Mr McPharlin says.

In July this year, State Government announced a similar program for the entire mains network in Adelaide, on a much larger scale.

"Mount Gambier will be the State's first regional centre to be part of the program and SA Water is hoping to roll it out into other parts of the State in the longer term.

"The leakage detection process involves using a hand-held listening device to detect noises at water meters. If a noise is identified, then our staff can follow it up with more advanced detection equipment and possible repair work.

"We are aiming to start the detection program early in 2009 and have it completed by the end of next year."

South Australia has one of the lowest leakage rates in the nation, which is measured by the *Infrastructure Leakage Index* (ILI), a water industry benchmark indicator used nationally.

"Even though we are one of the best performing States when it comes to leakage, there is always more that can be done and we are always looking to reduce leakage across the South East and the State.

"It's no secret that we are experiencing the worst drought on record and I'd like to congratulate the South East region on making every effort to save our precious resource.

"From 1 July to 30 November this year Mount Gambier has reduced its water consumption by 5 per cent compared to the same period in 2006. That's a valuable saving of 79 million litres.

"The leakage detection program is another example of the money being invested into the South East to help secure our water supply and follows the recent successful completion of the \$2.1 million Blue Lake Pontoon Relocation project."