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STEP CLOSER TO CONNECTING NORTH, SOUTH WATER SYSTEMS

Minister for Water Paul Caica said today the \$403 million North South Interconnection System Project has taken a significant step forward with the selection of a preferred option to link Adelaide's water storages.

Mr Caica says the preferred option includes a range of system upgrades in the metropolitan area.

"These include installing new booster pumping stations and upgrading some pump stations as well as constructing new pipe work and a number of pressure regulating valves," Mr Caica says.

"The preliminary work to determine a preferred option follows a decision last year to examine alternatives to the construction of a single large diameter pipeline to directly link Happy Valley and Hope Valley reservoirs."

Mr Caica says SA Water anticipates that construction work will begin later this year.

"This preferred solution minimises disruption to the public, while improving system flexibility and water security for greater Adelaide," Mr Caica says.

"As part of the preferred option, some existing pump stations are to be upgraded and some new booster pumping stations are to be constructed at locations that include Gilberton and one on existing SA Water land at Glenelg North.

"A number of existing underground pipelines will be upgraded east, west and north of the CBD and pressure regulating valves will be installed to control water pressure throughout the system."

Mr Caica says the feasibility design and assessment process conducted by SA Water took into consideration a range of factors including cost, operational service, water quality, existing assets, environment, planning, social impacts and infrastructure delivery.

"This project will enhance the flexibility of Adelaide's drinking water distribution network," he says.

"It will also enable SA Water to maximise the use of all available resources, including water from the Adelaide Desalination Plant which is on track to deliver first water by the end of December 2010.

"SA Water will now begin consulting widely with local councils, industry and relevant members of the community to identify key issues associated with its preferred option.

"We want to ensure that we can minimise the inconvenience to residents, businesses and commuters during the construction phase of this important water security project."