

Supplier keeps an ear out for leaks

By **Erin Bull**

TECHNICIANS with special detection equipment will pound hundreds of kilometres of pavement as Yarra Valley Water tries to stop leaks.

About 430 kilometres of water pipes in Maroondah will be checked and repaired after the utility announced a \$560,000 spending boost last week.

The funding, to be used to detect and repair leaking pipes throughout Maroondah and surrounding municipalities, is expected to save almost three billion litres of water.

YVW managing director Tony Kelly said the company had increased the extent of water pipes being checked across its service area to almost 6400 kilometres, a rise of about 150 per cent compared to last year.

Areas showing high water losses are identified with data from YVW's annual zone metering program, which uses hundreds of in-ground flow meters.

The leak detection program then identifies and repairs the leaks.

Pairs of trained technicians hunt leaks with electronic listening sticks or ground microphones on either side of a road.

An electronic listening stick



Water warriors: Project supervisor Matt Roff and leak technician Mitch Wright were in Ringwood last week to detect leaking pipes as part of an initiative to save more water.

Picture: Wayne Hawkins

can detect a leak from a water meter, hydrant or tap, while ground microphones can listen to leaks through the ground.

Technicians then use a leak noise correlator machine to pinpoint the leak.

Leaks are then programmed for repair by maintenance teams.

Mr Kelly said the public could also help detect leaks by keeping an eye out for unusually green patches in the nature strip and listening for the sound of running water coming from drains.

YVW had increased spending on its annual leak detection program by more than \$800,000 over the past five years, Mr Kelly said.

“The huge investment in this program demonstrates our commitment to reducing water losses in the system, especially at this time of sustained drought and with the effort the community is making to save water.”

Details: Yarra Valley Water, 1392837.

Draining experience

Technicians work hard to detect hundreds of leaks

Water | Karen Poh

THEY are detectives of a very different kind.

They look for clues underground using electronic listening sticks and ground microphones, and move quickly when they spot something amiss.

They are Yarra Valley Water's leakage technicians, and their work could save up to three billion litres of water lost to stormwater drains and ground seepage.

More than 1000 leaks have been detected so far this year and plans are to step up efforts to plug leak-

ing pipes in Banyule.

Yarra Valley Water managing director Tony Kelly said technicians would cover about 350km of piping across the municipality.

Electronic listening sticks can "hear" a leak from a water meter, hydrant or tap, and ground microphones will detect leaks through the ground.

Technicians then use a leak noise correlator machine to pinpoint the leak and where the water is escaping from the main. Mr Kelly said some leak detection work would be

conducted at night in areas difficult to operate in during the day.

But residents could also play a role in detecting leaks in their neighbourhoods, Mr Kelly said.

Signs to look out for include unusually green patches in the nature strip, which could indicate underground pipes are seeping; the sound of running water coming from drains; and large volumes of water running from pipes into a creek or drain, especially when it hasn't been raining.

► **Report leaks to 13 92 837.**



Yarra Valley Water leakage technicians Matt Roff and Mitch Wright at work in Banyule.