



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

9 March 2017

Election Stunt Exposed – Clean Water in Sight

“Despite councils showing a willingness to carefully consider the State Government’s agenda for TasWater and weigh up what future model will give the best outcomes for communities, the State Government continues to play fast and loose with the facts,” Local Government Association of Tasmania President, Mayor Doug Chipman said today.

“The use of opportunistic and misleading data and stories which play on the heartstrings of Tasmanians are purely for political purposes,” said Mayor Chipman.

“This continued rhetoric downplaying the accomplishments and plans for TasWater ultimately hurts all Tasmanians – impacting on our reputation nationally and internationally.”

“All councils want boil water alerts resolved as quickly as possible and in August last year, TasWater publicly announced a two-year plan to have all the current boil water alerts removed by August 2018.”

“This means that before the State Government would take ownership, all the hard work around boil water alerts will have been done by TasWater under Local Government ownership,” he said.

Mayor Chipman said take Ringarooma for example. “Ringarooma is one of five towns that will benefit from the new water treatment plant currently under construction, along with Derby, Branxholm, Legerwood and Winnaleah. All those towns will be off boil water alerts by the end of August this year,” said Mayor Chipman.

“Not only that, but by 1 July this year, a further five communities on boil water alerts will be resolved – Avoca, Lady Barron, Mole Creek, Pioneer and Mountain River.”

Mayor Chipman noted that over a series of meetings in 2015, TasWater expressed concern over proceeding with any further tank replacement programs in small towns and put forward a proposal for the State Government to invest in fixing the remaining towns without any further tank roll outs.

“The Treasurer made it clear to the Chairman of TasWater and its Chief Owner Representative that the government was not prepared to provide any financial support and was happy to see them removed from town water and put onto tanks instead.”

“Ultimately the Board of TasWater, with health equity and the future of the remaining towns in mind, determined it had to find a way to upgrade water services in the remaining towns without State Government help,” he said.

“The Government are persisting with this manufactured crisis when they know that water supplies for 99% of Tasmanians comply with Australian Standards and that the remaining one percent will be fixed before they even have to lift a hand.”

“They also know that at no time have there been concerns raised by the Environment Protection Authority, or the Department of Health and Human Services about TasWater services.”

Mayor Chipman said the State Government knows the compliance data they have presented is misleading - with the sewage incidences highlighted primarily relating to dry weather events during the long drought period and with many interruptions to water services relating to the drought, or to flood events.”

“It beggars belief that a State Government committed to developing the visitor economy and stimulating growth would denigrate Tasmania’s clean, green image for their own political gain,” said Mayor Chipman.

“Further, it suggests the offer to work with TasWater and the council owners is disingenuous and merely another political stunt,” he added.

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For media enquiries, please contact

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