



# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **LGAT Focused on Bigger TasWater Picture**

Local Government will focus on the Legislative Council Select Committee in its bid to prevent the takeover of TasWater.

The draft legislation being introduced tomorrow cannot proceed without the support of the Legislative Council, who have already formed a Select Committee to first consider the impact of the takeover.

“The Local Government Association of Tasmania is firmly focused on the Legislative Council Select Committee process,” said LGAT CEO, Dr Katrena Stephenson.

“We are developing a submission that considers all aspects of the Government’s planned takeover of TasWater, which the majority of LGAT’s members consider to be conceptually, legally and technically flawed.”

Dr Stephenson said our analysis of the draft legislation will form one component of our submission, which will be developed in consultation with member councils, owner representatives and TasWater.”

“We look forward to confirmation of the Terms of Reference for the Select Committee and timeframes for submissions once the Legislative Council resumes sitting next week.”

“Even at this early stage, we can see that the legality of the takeover still has not been transparently addressed by the State Government. At the LGAT Annual General Meeting, the Treasurer made it clear that he will not be releasing the Government’s legal advice,” said Dr Stephenson.

“This draft legislation presents a very different model of a Government Business Enterprise (GBE) than currently exists.”

“Unlike other GBE's, there is no requirement to deliver a commercial return, nor would it appear to even run a viable organisation,” said Dr Stephenson.

“The Government would also have significant new directory powers that would allow it to interfere in operational matters and override expert and professional plans, or the views of the Regulator.”

“There is a significant draw on consolidated funds until 2025/26 but no clarity as to how those funds will affect other essential services.”

“Importantly, from the moment it is tabled, the legislation seeks to penalise the owners of TasWater for their scrutiny by allowing the Government the right to reduce payments to councils in relation to money spent by TasWater on legal advice, preparing submissions and informing owners. This is unprecedented and goes against all principles of procedural fairness and natural justice,” said Dr Stephenson.

“The legislation also clearly indicates that it is likely that communities who have invested in water and sewerage services over many years will get nothing back on that investment after 2025/26.”

“This is a significant concern for LGAT’s members as those funds support the provision of other important local community infrastructure and services,” she said.

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