

A Timetable for Reform

- Early 2009: The new companies will commence minimal operations
- 1 July 2009: Transfer of all existing services and functions to the new local government-owned businesses
- Early 2012: Full transition to the new water pricing and service standards will be phased in over three years, finishing no later than the beginning of 2012.

For more information on the water and sewerage reform please go to www.treasury.tas.gov.au

Improving Water and Sewerage Services for all Tasmanians

The Tasmanian State Government is introducing wide-ranging structural and regulatory reforms that will improve delivery of water and sewerage services in Tasmania.

Whilst representing only 1 per cent of Australia's land mass, Tasmania has 14 per cent of Australia's water resources. This provides enormous opportunities for us. However the current delivery of water and sewerage services in Tasmania is not good enough.

- Nearly 5,000 Tasmanians are on a permanent boiled water alert.
- 15,000 properties on the fringes of major towns are not connected to the reticulated sewerage network and they could reasonably expect to be.
- Around 50 per cent of the wastewater treatment plants in Tasmania do not always meet the required quality standards.
- Over \$1 billion of new water and sewerage infrastructure is required over the next decade and councils do not have the financial resources to pay for it.

Good water quality and supply is important not only to Tasmanian residents but also to Tasmanian businesses. Water and sewerage reform will provide many opportunities for tourism operators and local businesses and will help drive economic growth in Tasmanian communities.

Reform is needed now to ensure that Tasmania's water is safe to drink and sewage is disposed of effectively.

Building a Sustainable Water and Sewerage Sector – The way forward

To build a sustainable water and sewerage sector, the State Government has introduced legislation with the support of local government that establishes new water and sewerage corporations and an enhanced regulatory system.

What does the new legislation do?

- Establishes an economic regulator for the sector, who will independently set prices, set minimum customer service standards and monitor the performance of the businesses.
- Expands the role of the Tasmanian Ombudsman so that the Ombudsman can help to resolve complaints from water and sewerage customers.
- Establishes three regional water and sewerage businesses – one in the North, one in the South and one in the North-West of the State.
- Monitors the businesses' water quality and environmental performance through a yearly *State of the Industry Report* process.
- Establishes a fourth business that will provide common services to all three water and sewerage regional businesses. It is expected that all current water and sewerage employees in councils and bulk water authorities will transfer to the four new businesses next year.
- The businesses will continue to be owned by local government, not the State.
- All financial returns will go back to local government and the legislation ensures the new businesses cannot be privatised.

The State Government will ensure financial help is available for low-income earners to minimise possible price impacts.

“These reforms will greatly improve our environment, public health and the Tasmanian economy. They will ensure the sector's long-term sustainability.”

Michael Aird, Treasurer, Chair of the Water and Sewerage Taskforce