

## REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE TASMANIAN WATER AND SEWERAGE INDUSTRY 2022-23

Today the Tasmanian Economic Regulator published its latest report on Tasmania's water and sewerage industry. The Report provides a review of TasWater's performance in 2022-23.

Tasmanian Economic Regulator, Mr Joe Dimasi, said that TasWater's performance against drinking water quality and customer service standards was pleasing, but the high level of unaccounted for water continued to be an issue, both in terms of the potentially inefficient use of a limited resource and its effect on TasWater's bottom line.

TasWater continued to meet safe water drinking targets in 2022-23. One hundred per cent of TasWater's reticulated water customers received water that met microbiological compliance standards. No water systems operated under boil water alerts or long-term public health (do not consume) alerts during year. However, several short-term public health alerts were issued.

TasWater's call centre performance improved slightly in 2022-23, with 90.5 per cent of calls answered within 30 seconds and 94.6 per cent of calls resolved upon first contact. TasWater received 3.3 per cent fewer complaints than it did in 2021-22. Water quality, including taste, colour and odour, continued to be the most common reason for customer complaints.

The number of residential customers repaying a debt fell by 13.6 per cent in 2022-23 but average debt levels increased. At the end of 2022-23, 4 495 residential customers were repaying an average debt of \$1 425. The number of customers on TasWater's hardship program increased to 636 and the average debt at the time of entering the hardship program was \$2 996. Seven customers had their water supply restricted for non-payment in 2022-23.

The Tasmanian Economic Regulator continues to be concerned at the volume of water that TasWater cannot account for. The Regulator's expectations were set in its 2022 investigation into TasWater's prices and services, which included a target of no more than 20 per cent of sourced potable water being unaccounted for in 2022-23, decreasing to 17 per cent in 2025-26. As part of its Non-Revenue Water Reduction Strategy, TasWater installed 68 district metered areas in 2022-23 to improve its network monitoring and used acoustic leak sensor technology to improve its ability to locate hidden leaks. However, TasWater has estimated that 28 per cent of the water it sourced was unaccounted for in 2022-23, a marginal improvement on 29 per cent in 2021-22.

TasWater's prices for water and sewerage increased by 3.5 per cent in 2022-23. However, this was partly offset by a fall in average residential water consumption. The typical annual bill for a Tasmanian household using the average of 173 kL of water per year was \$1 270, an increase of \$38, or 3.1 per cent, compared to 2021-22.

TasWater's underlying profit, which excludes contributed assets revenue, was \$31.2 million in 2022-23, compared to \$31.9 million in 2021-22. Total capital expenditure was \$209.2 million, which included the continuation of its Bryn Estyn water treatment plant upgrade (since completed in September 2023) and a number of other major projects. TasWater paid \$24.0 million in dividends to its local government shareholders.

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