



# Waratah Dam

May 2019



## Update on Waratah Dam

The Waratah Dam is located in the Waratah-Wynyard municipality in the state's north west. The dam is over 100 years old and was rebuilt in 1975 after it failed.

The dam is currently unsafe and is not required for the local water supply as the water supply for Waratah can be provided year round by the run of the Waratah River. TasWater is therefore looking to divest or decommission the dam and has conducted extensive communications, community engagement and two Expression of Interest processes to appropriately divest the dam - a process that was recently extended and is currently ongoing.

## Safety and economic management are our key concerns

As the dam owner, TasWater's primary concern is to ensure that the dam is safe. The dam presents a risk to life and property that must be addressed. We have been maintaining the dam in liaison with the Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment, however it is still not compliant with modern safety standards.

TasWater has put in place a number of measures to ensure public safety, including lowering the water level to reduce the pressure on the dam wall. This has ensured the short term safety of the dam, and more frequent routine safety checks have been arranged. This is in addition to previous maintenance and improvements including:

- Refurbishment of the outlet
- Work on the upstream face, including the installation of rock to prevent erosion of the dam's upstream face
- The addition of a bridge to allow better access to the dam's crest so that inspections can be done more safely
- Removing vegetation from the dam wall that could damage the embankment and limit dam safety inspections
- Work on the spillway including lowering the spillway level to manage the risk of piping (the cause of leaking)

We have a responsibility to our customers, our shareholders (the 29 local councils and the State Government), and the

Tasmanian Economic Regulator to prudently manage our financial resources and to operate efficiently.

To replace the dam is expensive, with a recent independent assessment putting the cost in the order of \$3.8 - \$5 million dollars. The dam is not a required water supply asset for TasWater, and any further investment in the dam by TasWater must take this into consideration.

## Recent reports

Independent consultants Entura have undertaken a range of investigations, examining the natural and heritage values of the dam and its surrounds, the dam's hydrology, and the cost of building a new dam compliant with modern standards. Their reports found there would be no significant effects on the environment and heritage by decommissioning the dam. These reports have been made publically available at [www.yoursay.taswater.com.au/waratahdam](http://www.yoursay.taswater.com.au/waratahdam)

## Fire fighting

The Tasmanian Fire Service (TFS) has advised that the Waratah reservoir is not required for firefighting purposes, as there are a range of alternatives available. We will continue to work with the TFS to ensure there is adequate water available for firefighting.

## Divest or decommission?

Given these issues and reports, our options are to divest or decommission the dam. We understand the importance of the dam to the community, therefore our preference is to divest the dam to another party. Our second Expression of Interest process will end on the 22 May 2019. It is envisaged it would take six to eight weeks to assess applications that we may receive.

### More information

For additional information or to discuss our current position in more detail, please contact General Manager Corporate and Community Relations, Juliet Mercer:

☎ 13 6992

@ [juliet.mercer@taswater.com.au](mailto:juliet.mercer@taswater.com.au)