

Helmut Ernst

Waratah,  
Tasmania 7321

Phone:

20.3.2019



The  
Honourable  
Member of Local Council

**Re: Briefing of Stakeholders:  
Waratah now - Your Community next.**

Good morning Councillor,

### **You should be concerned:**

If you google "Taswater Annual Report 2017-18", you will find under the heading "Dam Safety" on page 28 the following:

- *"TasWater is well underway with our program of upgrades for those dams used for drinking water supplies, with further works ongoing for priority-based decommissioning of dams that fall outside this purpose."*

The same document, on page 34 under the heading "Dam Safety Improvement Program" reads:

- *"TasWater maintains over 300 dams, weirs and lagoons across the state. Those dams that have been identified to have a life safety risk are regularly inspected to manage their risks."*

*<https://www.taswater.com.au/About-Us/Publications>*

Let us assume one reservoir per Local Authority exclusively for drinking water supplies. Even this is one reservoir more, than TasWater wants to provide for Waratah. TasWater ignores needs for water for fire-fighting, dilution of TasWater's p-grade sewage outfall, and water requirements for dilution of mines outfall. Waratah Water Reservoir for the last 100 years served all those needs and many more. TasWater intends to decommission the only "Waratah Water Reservoir".

This leaves another 271 dams for TasWater to decommission, that "fall outside the purpose of drinking water supplies", for TasWater. Which of those 271 water bodies are in your Shire? TasWater started off as a corporation by "being gifted" water and sewage infrastructure originally owned by Tasmania's 29 Local Authorities, TasWater's so-called "Owners". Somewhere along the line it added 300 dams to its portfolio? The lands below their water bodies would be "convertible currency". (TasWater's CEO, Mr. Mike Brewster is one of seven part-time Planning Commissioners. Refer [https://www.planning.tas.gov.au/the\\_commission/commissioners](https://www.planning.tas.gov.au/the_commission/commissioners))

Please review the bulleted quotes from "TasWater's Annual Report 2017-18" above; and consider to contact TasWater to find out where the dams in your Local Authority rate on TasWater's "priority based list for decommissioning" of 271 dams.

## **TasWater in Waratah:**

### **Public Property / Heritage:**

TasWater vandalised Waratah Water Reservoir, Crown Land, a Public Reserve, a block of land, which has been part of Australian public space for more than 100 years. Also, it has been the only remaining fully functional part of the Mount Bischoff Mine water harvesting system. It is an integral part of Waratah, having contributed to amenity access for the Waratah Community in too many ways to mention in a short briefing like this. Please email me for additional information.

**TasWater's Motive:**                      **Profit above Public Property**  
**Profit above Heritage**

### **Environment:**

By lowering the spillway level, TasWater reduced the living space of Waratah Water Reservoir's native fauna to a volume estimated at less than 10% of full supply capacity. Platypus were seen struggling in the black mud. Passing bushwalkers were unable to help, in fear of their own life. A pair of sea eagles, annually roosting in a tree nearby was never seen again. Nobody knows what happened to them. Did they also suffocate in black mud? A native species of cray seems to have been replaced by Cerax Destructor, an introduced species, which likes the warmer water, caused by the drop in water level. There have been two summers since TasWater's first intervention, with elevated temperatures and de-oxygenation of the resultant shallow aquatic environment. Waratah Water Reservoir has been the food bowl and genetic store of Waratah Lakes, a series of unique water bodies gracing Waratah Town. These lakes form with Waratah Water Reservoir a closed environmental system, terminating downstream at the 30m high Waratah Waterfall. No Platypus, Burrowing Cray, Trout or Rakali can climb back up the waterfall, once it has gone over its edge. Waratah Water Reservoir has been providing the essence of life: historical, environmental and social for the township of Waratah for the duration of its existence. Instead of being proud custodian of this exquisite heritage, environmental and community asset, TasWater betrayed the trust of every single resident of Waratah by converting the Waratah Water Reservoir into its corporate abattoir of native wildlife.

**TasWater's Motive:**                      **Profit above Environment**

### **The Waratah Community:**

TasWater now seems to own some 300 dams, formerly owned by the 29 Local Authorities. Waratah Water Reservoir is the historical and the only town water reservoir of Waratah. Waratah Water Reservoir has been and still is in so many ways an integral part of Waratah's life. People of Waratah want to keep Waratah Water Reservoir as it has been before TasWater: Crown Land, a Public Reserve. It will take decades for the Waratah Water Reservoir to recover. However, TasWater is still working towards total destruction of the Waratah Water Reservoir, an important part of what makes Waratah, its heritage, its environment and its community unique.

**TasWater's Motive:**                      **Profit above People**

## TasWater (divisively) faking Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

- *“In addition to safety, we have a responsibility to all our customers, and our shareholders - the state’s 29 local councils, to prudently manage our financial resources. We are also directed by the Tasmanian Economic Regulator to operate efficiently.”*

*Excerpt: TasWater’s “Letter to the Waratah Community 28.2.2018”*

A copy of this letter has been sent to Mr. Joe Dimasi, Tasmania’s Economic Regulator, GPO Box 770, Hobart Tas 7001, Phone No. 6166 4293, requesting information as to if he instructed TasWater to put:

**Profit above Public Property**

**Profit above Heritage**

**Profit above Environment**

**Profit above People**

*(I do not think so)*



*Waratah Water Reservoir – Near central confluence in 2018. Water volume reduced by TasWater to (estimated) less than 10% of its full supply volume.*

*(Photo by J. Lello)*

Help the Waratah Community by lobbying your Council and our State Government to force TasWater to change its corporate culture. By doing so you will stop your own Council, as well as Tasmania from being dominated by rogue operators following in TasWater’s footsteps.

**TasWater broke it, TasWater must fix it.  
Waratah Water Reservoir needs State Government Protection now.**

Regards,



Helmut Ernst  
Founding Member, Friends of Waratah Reservoir Incorporated

Distribution:

The Dam Safety Regulator,  
The Tasmanian Economic Regulator,  
Tasmanian Local Councillors  
Members of the Tasmanian Legislative Council  
Members of the Tasmanian Parliament  
Tasmanian Members of Federal Parliament and Senate  
Members and the Executive of "Friends of Waratah Water Reservoir Incorporated"