

Tasmanian Ratepayers' Association Inc.

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Legislative Council Select Committee
Inquiry - TasWater Ownership
Parliament of Tasmania
Parliament House
HOBART TAS 7000
Attention: Inquiry Secretary
Ms Natasha Exel

7 September 2017

By email only to : two@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Committee,

Our Association, formerly called *Launceston Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc.*, was established in 2002 by members of the community largely out of concerns for community interests arising from the two-part water pricing controversy unpopularly imposed by the State Government on Local Government. Such was the interest and concerns of our membership, that we collected many thousands of signatures petitioning the State Government against its plan.

We continued our campaigns striving to ensure equity for ratepayers and residents with the establishment of EskWater Joint Authority, Ben Lomond Water and then TasWater. None of these authorities originated from any level of community groundswell calling for such, and always we must lament our cautionary words were ignored and the cost to the ordinary consumer has inevitably increased.

Since 2009, when our interests were broadened to become state-wide, and we changed to Tasmanian Ratepayers Association Inc., our contributions to local government governance and sustainability have strengthened, including the making of submissions to national enquiries being conducted by the Productivity Commission.

So, it is with this wealth of experience we present our view, that in our opinion, should the State Government be seriously contemplating an increase in the capital works programme of TasWater, it need simply just give TasWater the additional funding it has pledged if taken over, and not force a corporate takeover removing TasWater from the ownership of Local Government.

Nothing that we have heard from State Government justifies the hostile takeover it threatens TasWater and Local Government, opposed by TasWater management representing the shareholders, who don't support the move and, we are confident, the consumers do not. In this enlightened era of correctness and sensitivities to community concerns opposing bullying tactics, we see this action to be nothing short of junior playground tactics. This brazen act of seizing or appropriating control is a tactic usually only seen in political coups in third-world undemocratic countries, not a supposedly enlightened Tasmania.

Since the operation of water and sewerage utilities was forcibly taken away from direct Local Government administration, the State Government has raised the bar on environmental standards to be attained, but contributed no capital to the cause.

Please, Members of the Legislation, do not also be swayed by the harsh and haughty arrogance of this Minister and his government. Vote NO to intimidation.

Yours faithfully,

Lionel J. Morrell

Lionel J. Morrell
President, Tasmanian Ratepayers Association Inc.