LCSC/TWO 33

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[redacted]

September 8, 2017.

To: The Tasmanian Legislative Council, Select Committee, to consider draft legislation for the proposed State takeover of TasWater.

Public submission from TIM SLADE.

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Tim Slade's 17 published articles relating to TasWater, 2013 - 2017.

As a resident at Pioneer, a community advocate and freelance writer, I have written 17 articles since 2013 about Tasmania's drinking water ~ policy and practice ~ all of which have been published online.

Each of my articles may be read at the following link:

http://tasmaniantimes.com/index.php/category-article/239

I recommend to you that you read my articles in sequence, beginning with the first, *Toxic TasWater* (September, 2013) and finishing with *TasWater's Owner-Councils Vote To Reject State Takeover* (May, 2017).

This will give you a story sense, in sequence of time and events, and an the overall picture of the major problems since in 2012.

My articles are some the most concentrated and researched articles written anywhere in the print media during this time. At times, these are necessarily 'dry' (please excuse the pun), but in many of my articles, where possible, I have employed a humourous, lighter take on the heavy facts (if you don't laugh, you'll cry).

My 17 articles were published at *Tasmanian Times*, who allow longer length articles from freelance writers. I have been up-close-and-personal with the key players over an extended period of time. My own community has been looking down into the well since 2012. Please make use of this resource.

1. (a)

Some major themes of my articles:

- Timeline and detail of inaction by CEO Brewster and Chairman Hampton.
- Timeline and detail of inaction and lack of consultation from the responsible Minister, Mr Gutwein, since taking his seat.
- Timeline and detail of inaction and lack of consulation by the Minister for Health, Mr Ferguson, since taking his seat.
- Timeline and detail of inaction and lack of consultation by Chairman Downie (and LGAT President Chipman), since taking this role in respect to TasWater.
- Evidenced failure of the responsible Minister, Mr Gutwein, to consult with the CEO of TasWater at critical times. Furthermore, failure of the responsible Minister to follow-up evidence failures within LGAT and the ORG in their dealings with TasWater.
- Pioneer's 4-year, 8-month wait for full delivery of safe drinking water to the town, via individual rainwater tanks, for approximately 40 homes. Minister Ferguson and other Ministers, and TasWater, blamed residents at Pioneer for not signing contracts, but these contracts did not arrive to residents for several years, and when they were signed, TasWater sat on these contracts for extraordinary periods of time, refusing to co-sign, thus failing to activate the contracts and the 6-month completion clause contained therein. Mr

Ferguson and his ministers, and TasWater, were made aware of this, but blamed residents publically in any case. Minister Gutwein also blamed delay on a check for rainfall figures at Pioneer, after admitting in the GBE that he had thought that Pioneer's rainwater tanks had alreay been completed some time ago. Minister Gutwein at all times refused to meet with me to discuss the detail of problems, citing his busy schedule as the reason.

- The long-standing failure by TasWater, the ORG and the responsible Minister, all of whom received repeated written requests, to explain in writing why an alert was not called earlier at Pioneer, given an unknown history before 2009, and a theme of lead since data began, with several readings exceeding the health limit of 10ug/L.

- Failure of TasWater to test water from new rainwater tanks, despite agreeing to do so 2-years ago, and then again being directed to do so by the Ombudsman 1-year ago. To this day these tests have not been done, and many of the roofs at Pioneer are clearly suspect, in relation to a variety of possible chemical and non-chemical contaminants.

- Innappropriate use of LGAT for TasWater matters, when the correct body and the body with legislated responsibilities is the ORG ~ Owners' Representatives Group. This has led to direct deflection of consultation: with community, 29 councils, TasWater and the responsible Minister.

- Failure of LGAT to refer repeated and long-standing public concerns to the appropriate, responsible person, who is Chairman Downie. Failure of LGAT to advise members of

the public of Chairman Downie's existence in the legislated, responsible role for TasWater.

- The disconnection of alderman of the respective 29 councils, and the by-passing of alderman, from input and decisions of the ORG and / or LGAT in relation to TasWater. The mayor-input-only model of representing the 29 councils with respect to TasWater. And in some evidenced cases, the complete by-passing of councils, including the mayor, from oversight input and decisions.
- LGAT's by-passing of General Management Commitee (GMC) in relation to model for drinking water data reporting, as evidenced by Ms Holmdahl and Mr Jessup.
- TasWater's failure to report back to 29 councils for input or approval of their model for data reporting, as signed-off on by Working Committee of 3 council General Managers.
- Derailing by TasWater of LGAT motion for timely data reporting, despite support by LegCo, Tas Labor, Tas Greens, with no meaningful model for timely data disclosure in existence 2-years on from motion.
- Pioneer's need to by-pass TasWater to seek RTIs to receive data of soil lead (Pb) samples showing off-the-chart reading for lead.
- TasWater's failure to cater for, in a timely manner, elderly and disabled members of Pioneer.
- TasWater mislead on advice from government regarding viability of rainwater tank solution via individual contracts.

- BASS' parliamentary visitors and non-visitors to lead-affected Pioneer since 2012:

  YES ~ Andrea Dawkins (Greens), Brian Wightman (Labor), Kim Booth (Greens), Tim Morris (Greens).

  NO ~ Peter Gutwein (Liberal government), Michael Ferguson (Liberal government), Sarah Courtney (Liberal government), Michelle O'Byrne (Labor).

2.

Tim Slade's Facebook page, a full history of media and events relating to TasWater, 2012 -1017:

My Facebook page is dedicated (on the public setting) to every TasWater issue since 2013.

The link to this practical and easy-to-use resource, my Facebook page, is:

https://www.facebook.com/tim.slade.50

Also on my Facebook page are articles from *The Mercury*, *The Examiner* and *The Advocate*.

Live podcasts from parliament were posted live, including the LegCo's decision to support real-time data reporting, contrary to TasWater policy.

Podcast footage of parliamentary speeches relating to TasWater were also streamed live to the public.

This resource may be used by you to go back to look at the events as they occurred, and to witness the public response to them via FB comments.

(My page is relatively small-scale, with approximately 175 FB friends.)

3.

Tim Slade's recommendation, supplementary notes and questions on the draft legislation before you:

Recommendation:

- A completely new model, with revised levels of oversight, sanctions and participation (rather than the existing council-owned model, or this proposed State takeover) would be the best pathway.

Supplementary notes and questions:

- To what extend can this legislation be considered valid, when the responsible Minister for the preceding period, Mr Gutwein, has in no way been held responsible via a parliamentary inquiry, for his consistent demonstrated lack of action and oversight in relation to TasWater issues during this time?

Mr. Gutwein and his State government, together with Tas Labor, voted against a parliamentary inquiry into TasWater in late 2015, when this motion was put forward by the Tas

Greens. And TasWater's CEO and Chairman referred to Mr Gutwein's misleading of the parliament, in relation to his actions (non-actions), when they wrote and signed the later highly publicised statutory declaration to that effect in 2017.

- The logic which follows the potential approval of this legislation from Minister Gutwein and the State government, is that the CEO and Chairman of TasWater should be sacked for their poor performance as the two most senior workers at TasWater since 2012. Isn't this so? Will the CEO and Chairman be sacked? If not, is this legislation founded upon rhetoric? Is this legislation false?

- Pioneer's experience is that when a problem arises, each level of oversight is broken and disconnected: Taswater; the responsible Minister, Mr Gutwein; and the Owners' Representatives Group, with Chairman Downie.

- The potential for privatisation cannot be safeguarded when in State hands, despite the wording of this legislation to that effect. The privatisation of Tasmania's drinking water is *not* consistent with the wishes of most Tasmanians, nor is it in the interests of price security for customers into the future.

- Why has the State government and the Federal government refused over an extended period to provide additional funding to speed-up works by TasWater?

- To what extent would a change to State ownership of TasWater adversely affect council rates, the cost to home owners accross Tasmania?

- Post Script: Regarding need for real-time data disclosure for

drinking water... High mercury in Greater Hobart, New Norfolk, May 2017 (see link below):

file:///C:/Users/Tim/Downloads/Potable%20exceedances%202017%20April%20-%20June%20water%20quality%20report.pdf

TasWater's one-page pictorial is inadequate (see link below), as it does not contain any baseline data, only a pictorial which is between 3-6 months old anyway. Also no pictorial for THMs or pesticides. (And we had to fight tooth-and-nail just for this unsatisfactory 'improvement' in data reporting.)

https://www.taswater.com.au/Community---Environment/Your-Water/Quarterly-Water-Quality-Report-April---June-2017

Problems with THMs, which are probable carcinogenic chemicals (according to TasWater's own literature) created as a direct result of chlorination, are evident in several towns according to the DHHS annual report, **Pages 20-22, Table 16** (see link below). Also issues with lead in several towns, with Roseberry looking suspicious, even though there is presently no active alert.

file:///C:/Users/Tim/Downloads/Annual%20drinking%20water%20quality%20report%202015-16%20%20Tas%20DHHS.pdf

Surely an argument for real-time data disclosure of all data? 2-years after the LGAT motion for fuller and more timely data disclosure, TasWater are still dithering.

TasWater sent a belated brief for a cost-analysis several months ago, but only after concerted public and political pressure to do so. The brief, when I was eventually allowed to see it, was vague and poorly written, with no definitions of

real-time, and no guidelines for the authors.

I have been unable to share my concerns with Mr Downie, because my e-mails to him are now bouncing. My request to CEO Brewster for Mr Downie's email, nearly 4 weeks ago, has come to nothing. This is unacceptable, from Mr Downie and Mr Brewster.

I have not as yet been provide with the report from the cost-analysis for real-time data.

Thank you for reading my submission.

Good luck.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Slade (B.Ed).