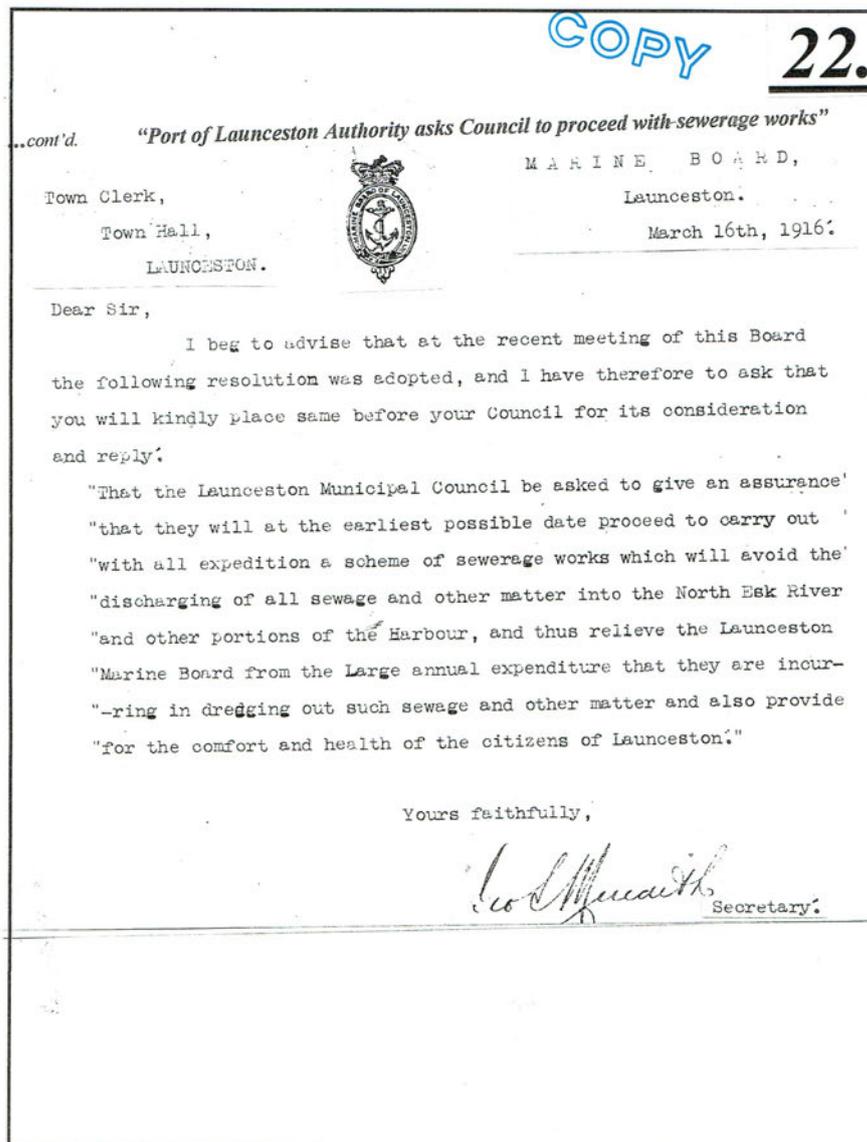


**SUBMISSION TO THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO TASWATER OPERATIONS**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (3) the opportunity for re-use water expansion for irrigation;
 (4) the management of sewage treatment including the disposal of the treated waste biosolids;

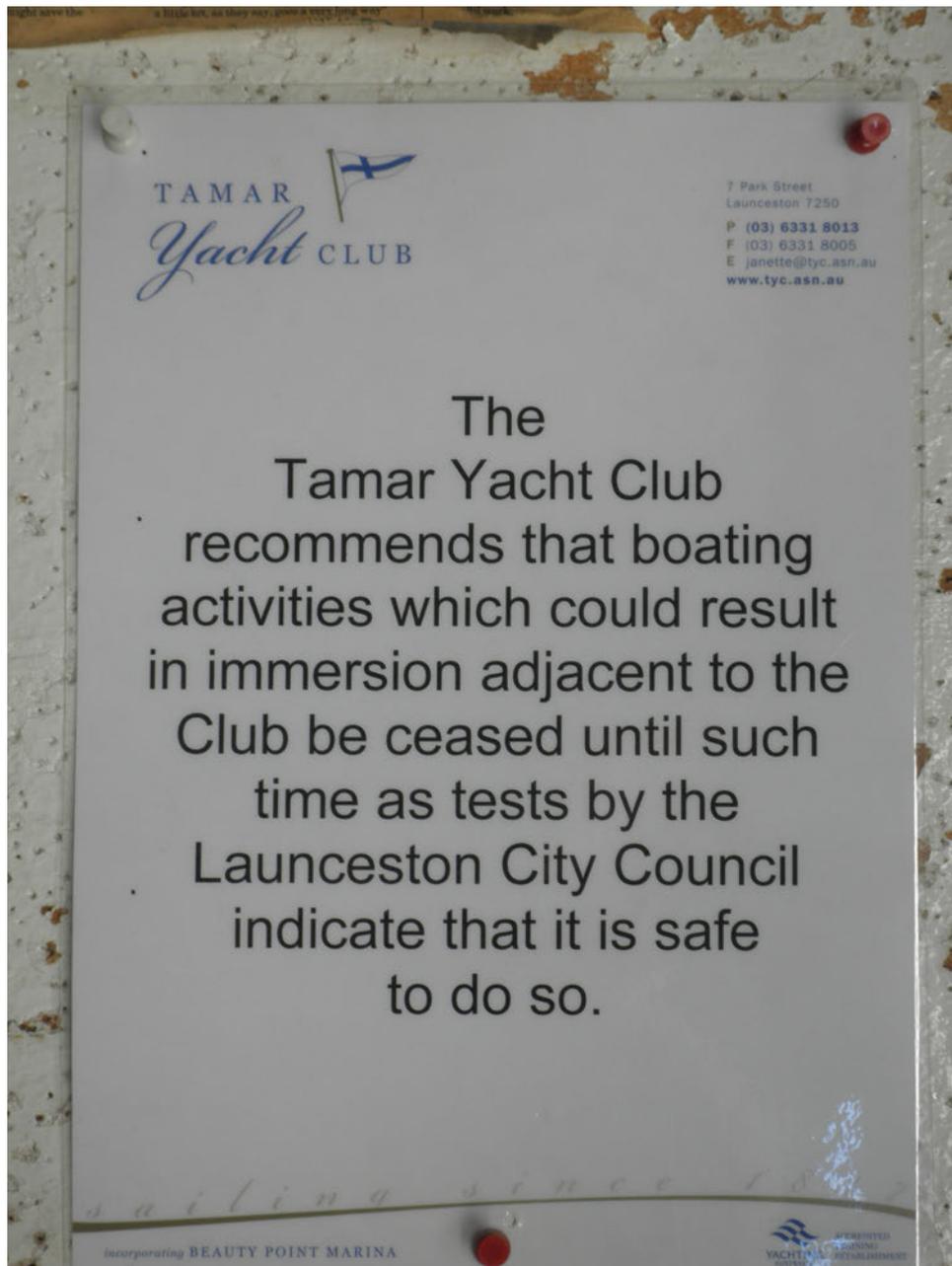


**'In 2015 raw sewage spilled into the Tamar more than 900 times over the course of the year'
 (The Examiner, 23 July 2017)!**

As can be seen from the attached copy of a letter from the then Launceston Marine Board calls have been made for well over **100 years** for the cessation of the practice of dumping of sewage in to the River Tamar.

That it still continues to this day is unforgivable and is to Tasmania's deep and eternal shame; ...a sad reflection on those set in authority over the state!

Launceston's archaic combined sewage and storm water infrastructure has frequently been compared to that of London's Victorian built combined system but Thames Water, fully cognisant of the problems this causes, and looking to the future, is currently constructing a 'Super Sewer' which will take the city's sewage disposal requirements into the 21st century but no sign of such positive action, other than a little 'tinkering at the edges', occurring in Launceston!



Numerous scientific reports, studies and comments expressed by scientists and academics have confirmed the waters of the Cataract Gorge and the upper reaches of the Tamar/Kanamaluka Estuary are very, very sick and as such constitute a significant threat to public health.

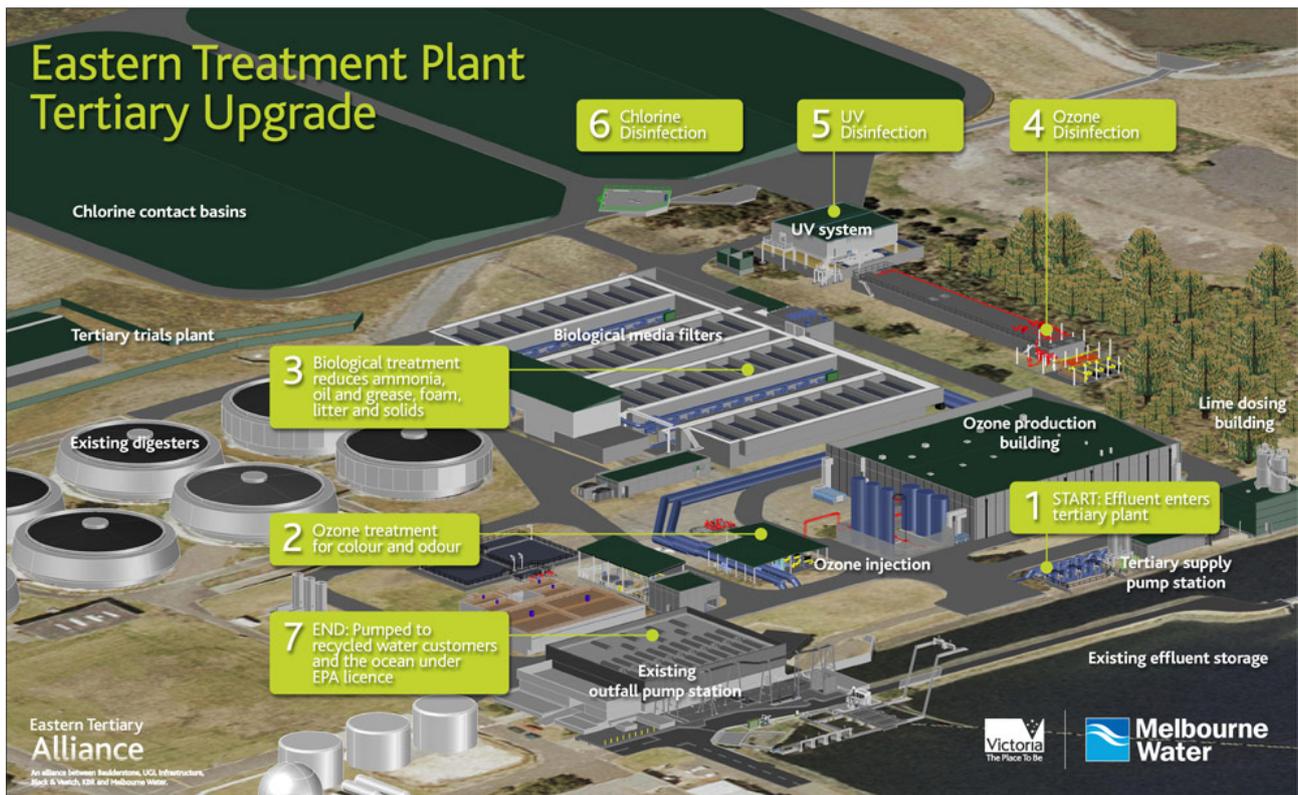
NRM North's 2020 Tamar Estuary Report Card Zone 1 (between Launceston and Legana) received a Grade 'D' which is a 'slight' improvement on the Grade 'F' (fail) that it received in 2018. Even so the grading indicated:

Poor ecosystem health. Zone 1 has consistently received 'poor' grades in past reporting years except 2018 when it received a 'fail'. Improved grades in Zone 1 are due to improved levels of dissolved oxygen, reduced turbidity and a decreased concentration of aluminium, cadmium and arsenic.

This is nothing to be proud of, indeed Launceston is most fortunate that it hasn't suffered a significant outbreak of community gastro related illnesses in recent years as a direct result of river contamination!

There is no doubt solving Launceston's, and its surrounding municipalities, sewage disposal problems will, no matter what, be very, very expensive however there is no need to go ripping up the Launceston streets to replace the old combined infrastructure but to 'bite the bullet', as Thames Water, has done and build a modern state of the art tertiary treatment facility capable of servicing the needs of the entire Tamar Vally and surrounding districts.

Victoria has constructed such a utility with its Melbourne Water's Eastern Treatment Plant (see below).



In accordance with item 3 in the Terms of Reference of this inquiry such a utility would have the desirable feature of being capable of providing recycled water for agricultural irrigation for the entire Tamar Valley, and, as an additional bonus, even possible additional power generation.

Eastern Treatment Plant - Melbourne Water 31/08/2014 11:50 am



Eastern Treatment Plant

The Eastern Treatment Plant at Bangholme was opened in 1975 to serve Melbourne's growing population. The plant sits on 1,100 hectares and treats about 330 million litres of sewage a day – about 40% of Melbourne's total sewage.



Sewage treatment process
Learn how raw sewage is treated at the Eastern Treatment Plant to produce recycled water.

Community and environmental benefits
The way we operate the Eastern Treatment Plant continues to improve, delivering significant benefits for the environment.

Copyright Melbourne Water

In February 2018 then Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced a partnership between the federal government and the Tasmanian government to reduce pollution in the Kanamaluka/Tamar River.

The \$95 million funding package for the long term clean up of the river, to include upgrades to Launceston sewage infrastructure, came after the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce made significant recommendations in its river health action plan in December 2017 however little on the ground action has been seen in respect of upgrading Launceston's sewage infrastructure.

In fact, according to a very recent report in The Examiner, 8 July, 2020, TasWater has not even confirmed when planned upgrades to Launceston's sewage infrastructure will be completed. The article also reported:

A TasWater spokesperson said before final timing could be confirmed and works commence on the upgrades, rigorous design work would be undertaken.

"And all relevant approval sought to ensure a system that will service the community for many years to come,"

This is appalling; ...have we really waited over 100 years for this?



Above sign recently displayed by the entrance gates of the Tamar Yacht Club, Launceston!

In view of all the above, the appalling environmental condition of the waters of Tamar/Kanamaluka Estuary and the already inordinate and unacceptable delays TasWater should instigate immediate upgrades to Launceston's, and neighbouring Municipalities, sewage infrastructure along the lines suggested!

Submitted

by

Jim Collier

of



on

4th September 2020