



MEDIA RELEASE

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TasWater Ownership

At a special Council Meeting this week, the Hobart City Council resolved to reject the Tasmanian Government's takeover of water and sewerage systems across the state.

The Council voted 9-3 in favour of rejecting the takeover in the best interests of Hobart ratepayers. Lord Mayor yesterday delegated Alderman Dr Ruzicka as Council spokesperson on TasWater ownership and governance issues.

Chairman of the Council's Governance Committee, Alderman Dr Eva Ruzicka said this is not a vote for higher prices as alleged by the Treasurer in Parliament on Wednesday. It is vote to protect the interests of Hobart ratepayers.

"As elected members, under the Local Government Act, we are elected to represent and promote the interests of the community and our ratepayers.

"The City of Hobart owns 11 per cent of the state's significant water and sewerage assets in its municipal area. These assets were built up over a number of decades and paid for by the people of Hobart. It is just not acceptable that they be simply taken away from our ratepayers and converted into a future GBE by the Treasurer, given the lack of clarity on the Treasurer's financial promises to Councils.

"It has been deeply concerning the way that this takeover was announced - no consultation, little to no detail being provided. Worse still, it is a disturbing policy on-the-run process by the Treasurer. His recent manufacturing of a crisis by media raises real concern the focus is on short term political gains rather than the overall best interests of Tasmanians and the future of the assets.

"The Treasurer's statements seem to indicate this takeover may result in more future debt for Tasmanians to pay back. Aldermen are very keen to meet with the Treasurer to understand the details of the proposal and to discuss other ownership and governance issues.

“When the legislation is forthcoming, Council will urge the Legislative Council to refer it for a full review. We must understand how it will impact on our ratepayers, now and into the future before accepting the Treasurer’s takeover,” said Ald Ruzicka.

ENDS

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