

Orford and Triabunna

February 2017



Future bulk water storage for Orford and Triabunna

To ensure Tasmania's east coast can enjoy a sustainable drinking water supply for the coming decades, TasWater is currently investigating options for a new dam to service Orford and Triabunna.

During the 2006-09 drought, water storages on Tasmania's east coast fell to very low levels, so TasWater's Orford and Triabunna Water and Sewerage Strategy provides a long-term plan for improved bulk water storage. The four dams currently servicing the area – namely the Upper and Lower Prosser dams, and the Brady and Maclaines dams – are all either undersized, at capacity or nearing the end of their design life. Rather than repairing and maintaining four separate dams, it is more effective to consolidate the area's bulk water supply into one dam.

It is important to understand that TasWater has not begun any work to approve, design, fund or construct a dam. We will keep the community informed as we progress.

Proposed Tea Tree Rivulet Dam

The Glamorgan Spring Bay Council is proposing to build a dam on the Tea Tree Rivulet, a tributary to the Prosser River, north of Buckland. TasWater's overriding interest in this proposal has been to ensure the future security of drinking water for Orford and Triabunna. In particular, TasWater was concerned about the potential loss of water along the Prosser River during transmission between the proposed Tea Tree Rivulet Dam and TasWater's Lower Prosser Dam.

Following an agreement with Glamorgan Spring Bay Council to allocate an additional 200 megalitres of water to the Lower Prosser Dam, if the Tea Tree Dam is approved and built, TasWater is now pleased to provide in-principle support for this proposal.

TasWater is not participating in the construction of this dam, nor is it funding the project. However, we will work with all parties involved to ensure the long-term sustainability and efficiency of this dam, and that it is operated in an equitable manner.

Proposed expansion of the Upper Prosser Dam

In order to meet long term bulk water needs, TasWater is investigating a possible expansion of the Upper Prosser Dam within the next 5-10 years.

The Upper Prosser Dam is located 5.5 kilometres upstream from the Lower Prosser Dam, west of Orford. It was built from concrete slabs and buttresses in 1972, is 6 metres high and currently holds approximately 150 megalitres.

TasWater is currently surveying the environment and heritage around the Upper Prosser Dam to gain a better understanding of the area, and will continue to explore the feasibility of this proposal.

Protecting the environment

A dam is used to capture and store water during rainfall periods or upstream releases, so that water is available at a later date. The river itself continues to flow.

In Tasmania, all dams are regulated by the Tasmanian Government through the Department of Primary Industry Parks Water and Environment (DPIPWE). When DPIPWE assesses any dam application, it must ensure that – among other requirements – a minimum of 50 per cent of the river’s flow will pass through the dam along the river to maintain the environment. When dams such as the Lower Prosser and the existing Upper Prosser were built in the 1960s, provision of environmental flows was not always required.

Typically, building a dam requires an environmental management plan for its local area. This plan may include measures such as:

- Expert management of any threatened species
- Including fish passages in the dam design
- The rehabilitation of land adjacent to the reservoir following construction.

Constructing a dam is a lengthy and complex process, which includes a series of thorough investigations before making any decisions. As investigations continue, TasWater will bring a long-term and holistic approach to balancing the needs of Tasmania’s population, industry and the environment.

Want to know more

If you would like to know more about the Orford and Triabunna Water and Sewerage Strategy, visit TasWater’s YourSay website on www.yoursay.taswater.com.au.

Alternatively, please contact Community Engagement Officer, Trent Swindells, on:

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