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Taskforce		
Paper		



from the mountains to the sea

Our Ref:

Enquiries: Tony Walker

16 January 2008

Mr Stuart Sharples  
 Ministerial Water and Sewerage  
 Response to Preliminary Position  
 GPO Box 147  
 HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Mr Sharples

**Submission Part A - Proposed Position Paper Future Regulation of the Tasmanian Water & Sewerage Sector**

Break O'Day Council finds it extremely difficult to make a submission to a discussion paper on the reforms to the water and sewerage sector that it is totally opposed to. It appears that the decision has already been made that control of the sector will be removed from Council in one form or another. We have been forced to support either a State or Regional approach and in accepting a Regional approach for the best interest of this Council it has been inferred that Council is supporting the reform.

We would like it placed on record that the Break O'Day Council is totally opposed to control of the sector being taken away from Council for the following reasons;

1. Break O'Day Municipality is an isolated community with no connections, in water and sewerage management to other Councils or Regions.
2. Break O'Day Council is of a firm belief that we can manage our systems far better and be more responsive to community groups and individual communities than a system managed at a State or Regional level.
3. The change may well lead to significant increase in charges for Break O'Day ratepayers especially for the small schemes in our Municipality.
4. The change has the potential to significantly impact on the viability of this Council, being a small workforce, many officers do play a roll in sector. Council does secure an administrative component from water and sewerage charges that help to support a range of staff positions.
5. There has not been any consideration in Council's view to the effect of these reforms on small remote Council's.
6. Break O'Day Council has within its financial capacity provided sustainable water and sewerage infrastructure. The simple fact is many of the consumers on the smaller systems do not have the capacity to pay for a fully treated water supply or can afford a reticulated

sewer system. Significant subsidies would be required to go any way near making these systems achievable. There has never been any indication this would be forthcoming.

The "Discussion Paper" only looks at a portion of the issue, Break O'Day Council are of the opinion the time frames for comment are totally unreasonable as the method of consultation by only releasing parts of the reform package. The only response we received to this concern was, "*unfortunately this is the Governments time frame and we can not compromise*". To be fair this is unacceptable, we are asked to comment on one aspect only, to provide any meaningful response we have to know are we looking at a State or Regional management, if it is regional is it going to be managed by a separate board or are Council's going to manage the sector as is the current procedure with the Regional Water Boards.

We were advised that Part B would be forwarded to Council's on 3 December 2007, it arrived last week and was a lot more of the same, many pages with little clear intent. There has not been any financial information provided nor how is the transfer to occur.

The only constructive submission we can make at this time is that there should be a single management and licencing agency. A multi agency approval system does not work now with similar approval processes, what would change. It currently takes months for marine proposal to receive State Government approval where most of the parties involved are within the same Department.

It is expected Council will make further comment to the Part B paper.

Yours sincerely



Tony Walker  
**Acting General Manager**