

Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group Ltd
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Hon. David Llewellyn
Minister for Primary Industries and Water
1st Floor, Franklin Square Offices
Hobart 7000

24 April 2007

Dear Minister

Re: Water and Sewerage Infrastructure Reform

Thank you for meeting with representatives from the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group (TAPG) last week.

We welcome the opportunity to make some comments regarding the current review of water and sewerage infrastructure in Tasmania.

TAPG is interested in assisting the State Government find ways to deliver a more integrated and coordinated approach to water management for both urban and rural water users.

As you know, TAPG represents the whole supply chain for key agricultural industries in Tasmania. These industries represent the higher value adding sectors of agriculture and depend on irrigation for growth and productivity. These industries are well placed for growth in the future if water was made available at competitive prices.

The current drought together with reforms that will impact on water allocation from the Murray Darling Basin are having an important influence on agricultural industry thinking in Tasmania. Tasmania is one of the few agricultural regions of Australia with excess water supplies. What it lacks is water development infrastructure to capture and supply that water to farmers and other water users.

There is an awareness that water management (including rural and urban water) needs to be considered as part of an integrated whole. The current review is one step towards achieving this.

TAPG understand that the focus of this review is to consider management of urban and regional water and sewerage infrastructure and not water for irrigation. However, an objective for the State Government in this review should be to consider ways to deliver improved services to all water users.

TAPG would welcome the opportunity to make comments about alternative structures that would lead to better outcomes for rural and urban water management.

TAPG does not have sufficient information at present to be able to make comment on the merits of a State Water Authority versus a regional structure. However, TAPG does support robust discussion on alternative models that are politically acceptable and which result in improved capture, delivery and pricing of water for both rural and urban water users.

Yours Sincerely

Ian Blanden
Chairman, TAPG

CC: Hon Michael Aird, Treasurer