

Tasmania's water and sewerage reform

FACT SHEET

Tasmania's property lawyers and conveyancers

From 1 July 2009, Tasmanian homes and businesses in reticulated areas will be serviced by one of the three new local council owned corporations, Cradle Mountain Water, Ben Lomond Water or Southern Water.

The role of the regional water corporations is to source, treat and supply clean and safe drinking water to customers on town water and they will also manage the safe removal and treatment of wastewater from homes and businesses.

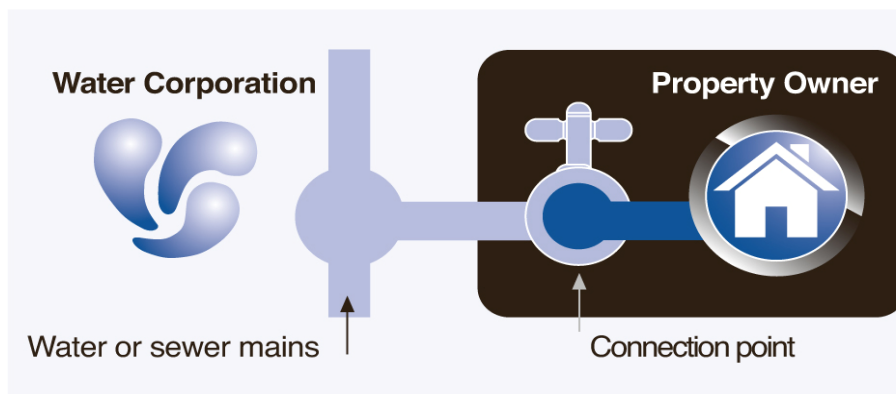
Which local council areas belong to which water corporation?

- Customers of the new regional water corporations will include residents and businesses that are connected to or pay for town water and sewerage systems in the following council areas.

Cradle Mountain Water	Ben Lomond Water	Southern Water
Burnie City Central Coast Circular Head Devonport City Kentish King Island Latrobe Waratah-Wynyard West Coast	Break O'Day Dorset Flinders Island George Town Launceston City Meander valley Northern Midlands West Tamar	Brighton Central Highlands Clarence City Derwent valley Glamorgan Spring Bay Glenorchy City Hobart City Huon Valley Kingborough Sorell Southern Midlands Tasman

What are the water corporations responsible for?

- The water corporations are responsible for the operation and maintenance of water and sewer systems from reservoirs and treatment plants to the connection point at the householder's property.



Why are these changes occurring?

- The State Government's reform of the water industry is aimed at ensuring an improvement in services across the state and the development of vital infrastructure. Through a coordinated, regional approach to water and sewerage needs, the new corporations will be able to deliver a prioritised program of improvements to infrastructure and services across Tasmania.

What are the arrangements for property ratepayers?

- For most property ratepayers, the only difference will be a new look water and sewerage service provider and a separate account for water and sewerage from a new regional water corporation.
- Tasmanians can expect to receive their first account from their water corporation some time after mid August.
- Payment can be made in instalments and a full range of payment options will be available. The account will be calculated using the same method that has been used in the past.
- It is anticipated that from 2010-2011, water and sewerage accounts will be the responsibility of the tenant, not the property owner.
- Any questions regarding accounts can be directed to 13MYWATER (13 6992) or visit www.mywatertas.com.au.

What are the arrangements for tenants?

- Water and sewerage accounts will continue to be sent to property owners for at least the 2009-10 year and it will be the property owner's responsibility to ensure the accounts are paid. People who rent their home (tenants) will not receive an account from a water corporation during this time.

- It is anticipated that from 2010-2011, water and sewerage accounts will start to transition to a user-pays model, similar to that in place for electricity in Tasmania and tenants will be financially responsible for their water and sewerage charges.

What happens to the 337 Certificates?

- From 1 July, questions 29-32 of the *Local Government Act 1993* Section 337 Certificate which relate to water and sewerage matters will be removed from this certificate and property lawyers/conveyancers will need to request a Land Information Certificate in accordance with Section 56ZQ of the *Water and Sewerage Industry Act 2008*. These requests will need to be directed to the appropriate water corporation along with the prescribed fee of \$33.25.

Currently the Lands Title Office through the Valuer Generals Office distributes a Notice of Sale to local councils to inform of a change of ownership. Will this continue and will the water corporation be included in this notice?

- At this point in time, there is no provision for the Land Titles Office to inform the water corporation of the notice of sale.

Will property lawyers/conveyancers be required to notify the water corporation of the transfer of land either by the vendor or the purchaser?

- There is an expectation that the property lawyers/conveyancer will notify the appropriate water corporation of the disposal or acquisition of property.
- This advice can be supplied as part of the process for the apportionment of charges relating the property.

How will outstanding water and sewerage payment for property settlements work?

- Until 1 July nothing changes. From 1 July, corporations will collect payments from the vendors which are calculated to cover the period from the last payment period to the date of settlement.

How will the property lawyer/conveyancer apportion charges relating to fixed charges made in arrears?

- There is an expectation that the property lawyer/conveyancer notify the water corporation at contract informing of the:
 - settlement date
 - vendor's future address
 - purchasers address for future accounts.

- In order to effect the smooth transition of billing, the purchaser's property lawyer/conveyancer can provide the water corporation with a copy of the notice of sale.

When can a special meter reading be undertaken?

- A special meter reading can be undertaken at any time upon the payment of the special meter reading fee.

What will happen to water restriction devices at the time of sale?

- If there a water restriction device fitted at the time of sale, the vendor is responsible for its removal. This will require the settlement of the overdue account with the water corporation. There is likely to be a fee attached to the device's removal and this fee is the responsibility of the vendor.

Will landlords be required to deliver rental rate discounts to tenants once their tenants are paying for their water and sewerage services?

- Water corporations do not have any involvement in commercial arrangements between landlords and tenants.

Who will be responsible for plumbing inspections?

- Councils are currently responsible for plumbing inspections on the property side of the title and will continue to be responsible for them after 1 July. Local councils that currently exercise the self certification process will continue to do so after 1 July.
- Plumbing inspections required for water corporation assets will be the responsibility of the water corporation.

If a property sale includes a commercial entity discharging trade waste to a water corporation sewerage system, what do I need to know?

- Any enquiry can be directed to the local council (prior to 1 July) or the water corporation (after 1 July) on 13MYWATER (13 6992)

For more information:

For more information about the new regional water corporations, people can phone 13MYWATER (13 6992) or visit www.mywatertas.com.au.