

TASWATER

AN ADVERTISING FEATURE

THROUGHOUT the state, TasWater staff are working to secure Tasmania's water supply in challenging times.

The company is addressing the drier than usual conditions by encouraging customers to reduce their water use, and by upgrading existing infrastructure to ensure the security of water supply into the future.

Tasmania, like much of Australia, has been experiencing dry conditions and low rainfall, and TasWater has introduced restrictions this summer.

"The aim of restrictions is to reduce demand," TasWater's Lance Stapleton said.

The company's priority is to make sure people have enough water for drinking and other essential needs, as well as providing water to assist with firefighting.

"If we can all use water wisely and carefully, there will be enough to go around," Mr Stapleton said.

Several factors are contributing to the need for restrictions:

LOW RAINFALL and resulting low river flows, particularly on the East Coast;

COMPETING demands for water from rivers and dams for drinking water, irrigation and environmental flow;

EVENTS such as algae in dams and rivers needing increased treatment;

INFRASTRUCTURE capabilities and limitations.

Dry conditions are particularly prevalent on the East Coast but are affecting other parts of Tasmania as well.

"This can change quickly if rain falls in the right place but we anticipate that for many areas this autumn will continue to be dry and the need for water restrictions will remain," Mr Stapleton said.

"While Tasmania may not be as acutely affected as other areas, we may need to build more resilience and capacity into some systems to reduce the need for water restrictions into the future.

"Across the country we all need to think about conserving water all the



MAJOR FOCUS: A big upgrade is in the pipeline for TasWater's Bryn Estyn Water Treatment Plant near New Norfolk.

Picture: PETER MATHEW

time, not just during summer peak, to reduce the impacts of shortages and the need for severe water restrictions."

TasWater is exploring other options for communities affected by water restrictions, such as additional storage, working with other water managers and potentially even desalination.

"Typically these are long-term infrastructure solutions and can't be rolled-out in the short-term to alleviate water restrictions," Mr Stapleton said.

Tim Cubit of TasWater's Capital Delivery Office is part of the effort to ensure the security of water supply into the future.

The company has an ongoing program of infrastructure investment across all its facilities to ensure a sustainable and affordable water and sewerage system.

The most significant project is the \$165 million upgrade of the Bryn Estyn

water treatment plant, near New Norfolk, which has supplied much of greater Hobart's needs since 1962.

"We are restoring Bryn Estyn to its original capacity which is 160 megalitres per day – we currently produce on average 120 megalitres per day," Mr Cubit said.

"Mostly due to ageing infrastructure, the output of the plant has reduced and it is taking longer to produce the water to the quality we need," he said.

The design is expected to be completed by the end of June, then moving into a two-year construction phase. The plant will be considerably enlarged with new buildings and reservoirs, while continuing to draw and treat water from the River Derwent to supply the needs of 55,000 customers each day.

TasWater is also about to start work

on upgrading the capacity of Henderson Dam on Flinders Island and safety improvements at Mikany Dam at Smithton. Work has recently been done at Swansea to increase the raw water capacity at the plant there.

The company has this week completed the installation of a new activated carbon system at Coles Bay which will enable TasWater to access a further 50 days of supply from the local water source.

"This is all about developing and constructing assets with the future in mind," Mr Cubit said. "We are seeing fewer rainy days but higher rainfall events... we need to be better at capturing the rain when these events occur."

Visit www.taswater.com.au for more information about water restrictions, how to use less water, and TasWater's improvement plans.

Thanks for your help

IT'S nearly two months on for Stage 1 water restrictions in the greater Hobart area, and the community has responded well in helping conserve water by using it wisely.

TasWater's Duncan Sinclair said most residents were doing their bit to reduce non-essential water use. "Demand has generally been lower since restrictions were applied, with storage levels maintained and production from Bryn Estyn, steady," he said.

"Water restrictions and the region's water conservation efforts are helping to manage the tight supply situation in the face of warm, dry conditions, increased demand from a growing population and the need for water surety for our farmers, and for protection during the fire season," Mr Sinclair said.

There is a similar good story out of Scamander where due to the significant decline in the Scamander River's water levels, the town is on Stage 3 restrictions.

"Water consumption has almost halved since the peak tourism period over the New Year with demand currently more than 25 per cent lower than this time last year," Mr Sinclair said.

TasWater will continue to monitor the need to truck water into the town's treatment plant despite some flow returning to the river.

"So please, keep up the good work. I encourage everyone to continue using water wisely as the Weather Bureau notes, it will take several months of above-average rainfall to see a sustained recovery for our war supplies."

TasWater – Community Update Southern Tasmania

Keeping summertime water tasting crystal clear

As summer brings warmer weather, for TasWater, it also brings warmer water. Combined with increased sunlight and nutrients in the water, it can result in the growth of algae in streams and rivers which supply water for drinking. These algae sometimes cause taste and odour in the water.

TasWater's Luc Richard, Leader of Water System Performance, says the water develops an earthy taste and odour.

"People tend to say the water tastes or smells mouldy, muddy or musty."

The reason we get these bad tastes and smells is that sometimes algae produce harmless compounds called Geosmin and Methyl-Isoborneol (MIB).

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) indicate that most people will notice these compounds when they reach around 10 nanograms per litre in the water.

And that varies very much between individuals.

"In terms of who can and who can't taste it, I'm not sure exactly why but it's been shown that some people just don't pick it up and other people are way more sensitive to it than what the ADWG say."

TasWater has a panel who taste tests the water weekly, and if there is any earthy/musty taste, we increase treatment through the addition of activated carbon.

"In simple terms, it involves putting the water in contact with activated carbon. The taste and odour compounds will stick to the carbon allowing untainted water to flow to customers."

As taste and odour is a developing issue in Tasmania, TasWater has been busy retrofitting carbon dosing facilities at many of our water treatment plants. It can slow the overall process and, in some cases, reduce the daily output of the plant, therefore is a contributing factor to the current need for water restrictions.

Luc says that the risk of taste and odour is considered in the design of all new water treatment facilities and is also part of any upgrades at existing water treatment plants.

"Any treatment plant where there is a risk of taste and odour issues in the catchment has carbon dosing integrated into the process, and where that risk is not currently evident, allowance is made in the design to include it at a future date, Luc said."

TasWater also has mobile carbon dosing stations to address taste and odour in the water at our smaller treatment plant locations where an occurrence of taste issues is unlikely.

Bryn Estyn Water Treatment Plant operator Jason Hall monitoring machinery installed as part of the treatment process to manage taste and odour of the water.

