

# Orford and Triabunna

March 2018

Without significant rainfall and inflow into TasWater's dams, it may soon be necessary to place Orford and/or Triabunna on Stage 1 Water Restrictions.

## Dam levels

Anyone driving along the Tasman Highway in recent weeks will have noticed that the water level in the Lower Prosser Dam is low.

TasWater manages the Lower Prosser Dam, conducting regular inspections, using remote electronic devices to measure inflows and the water level, and rainfall data from the Bureau of Meteorology. The town of Orford received median rainfall from December to February, however the last significant inflow of water into the dam from the Prosser catchment was in early December 2017. This is the reason for the dam's low level.

Similarly, Triabunna's water is supplied by Bradys Dam and Maclaines Dam. Without any rain, the current available storage would not be enough to avoid the need for water restrictions.

Bradys Dam can have water quality issues, with low oxygen levels during cooler weather making it unsuitable for drinking. In this case, or during planned maintenance, Bradys Dam is withdrawn from service and Triabunna is temporarily supplied from the Lower Prosser Dam – which puts additional pressure on that water supply.

At this stage, the long-term forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology for south-east Australia suggests a 55 per cent chance of exceeding median rainfall over the period of March to May, but an 80 per cent chance of exceeding median maximum temperatures, which would increase the daily demand for water.

Without significant rainfall that creates a flow of water into TasWater's dams, water restrictions will be required.



**A view of the Lower Prosser Dam, taken on 5 January 2018**

## Tassal

TasWater wishes to address speculation that a recent temporary increase in water use by Tassal is the cause of the Lower Prosser Dam's low level. This is not the case.

Australia's privacy legislation applies to all TasWater customers, so TasWater cannot normally share information about water use by individual customers. Nor do we have direct control of our customers.

Tassal has publicly stated that it accessed a temporary increase in water through the local reticulation network, which was monitored by TasWater in January 2018 and has since stopped. Tassal were within their rights as a customer to use this water. This consumption is not the reason TasWater is now considering restrictions.

A dam with a falling water level will inevitably bring the need for water restrictions closer, regardless of the actions of any customer. This highlights the importance of improving the area's water supply, which will be of benefit to residents, business and future opportunities for the region.

## What is TasWater doing?

That Orford and Triabunna are vulnerable to water restrictions is well-known to the local community. This is why TasWater's *Orford and Triabunna Water and Sewerage Strategy 2015-2050* provides a long-term plan for water security.

### Release of water from the Upper Prosser Dam

The Upper Prosser Dam was built to provide additional back up storage for Orford. TasWater is exploring the potential of releasing water from the Upper Prosser to the Lower Prosser. While this would increase the available supply, in itself this will not be enough to avoid the need for water restrictions.

### Proposed expansion of the Upper Prosser Dam

TasWater is considering a proposal to expand the Upper Prosser Dam to provide more water storage. Our investigations so far have confirmed the location is viable, based on studies into threatened species and local heritage. No approvals or funding have yet been provided for this project and we will consult further with the community if we proceed.

### The Twamley Dam

The proposed Twamley Dam is not a TasWater project, but it could form part of the overall solution to the area's bulk drinking water supply.

Currently, Council has allocated TasWater 200 megalitres of water from the Twamley Dam. This is enough to supply Orford for a year, but there will still be a need for TasWater to create further bulk water storage to completely secure the area's water supply for the long term.

### Investigations of the Lower Prosser Dam

In April-May, you will see TasWater staff and contractors at the dam for approximately 3-4 days, investigating the condition of the Lower Prosser Dam.

This work will include an examination of the dam's hydraulic floodgates.

### Orford to Triabunna Trunk Water Main

TasWater's long-term strategy calls for a new treated water main along the Tasman Highway. This will improve the transfer of water between the two towns, which will eventually be supplied from a single new source.

In partnership with Glamorgan Spring Bay Council, this pipeline will be built in 2019, and installed in the same trench as pipelines for local property development and industry. Each partner is funding its own part of these works, but the collaboration will reduce overall costs and disruption to the area.

More information on these roadworks will be provided once the working schedule is completed.



**Information on water restrictions will be updated as TasWater continues to monitor dam levels and rainfall in the area.**

**Meanwhile, simple changes to your water use can help to ensure we all have water when we need it.**

**You'll find water saving tips on [www.saveeachdrop.com.au](http://www.saveeachdrop.com.au).**

**If you have questions, please email [enquiries@taswater.com.au](mailto:enquiries@taswater.com.au) or phone 13 6992.**