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Media Release

Upgrade projects at St Helen's remain priority for TasWater

After heavy rainfall last Friday morning, described as a one in five year weather event resulted in an overflow of a St Helen's sewage pump station into Georges Bay, TasWater has confirmed the projected timing for upgrades to the Esplanade pump station.

Tenders for the \$1.2 million new Esplanade pump station and rising main upgrades will commence next week, which will assist with preventing future spills.

TasWater is focused on improving network storage and pumping to combat rainfall events. "TasWater is responsible for 760 pump stations across Tasmania and the sewage pump stations closest to shellfish leases are the top of our priority" CEO Mike Brewster said.

"The timing of the extraordinary rainfall was unfortunate and TasWater understand the impacts to local oyster growers in the Georges Bay area. We will continue to work with the growers to minimise the impact on their business. TasWater appreciate the significant economic impacts to the community in the short term and are confident the final pump station upgrade will make a difference" Mr Brewster said.

On becoming aware of the issue, TasWater notified Break O' Day Council, the EPA, TSQAP and Oysters Tasmania. TasWater also contacted the Environmental Health Officer at Break O' Day to inform the extent of the spill as standard procedure. TasWater erected signs and commenced sampling at Beauty Bay and the Esplanade, which will continue over the next few days.

Whilst working with the shellfish industry in Tasmania, TasWater identified that the bacteriophage process used overseas and interstate was a potential solution for the challenges that come from weather events such as this.

With continued support to the industry across the state, TasWater are one of several bodies that contribute funds to help pursue solutions that have the potential to reduce closure times from 21 days to as little as 10 days.

The \$1.2m upgrade to the Esplanade Pump Station is expected to be complete by November.