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Media Release

Exercising Dam Safety

TasWater and emergency crews were on high alert today while a dam safety exercise was undertaken to test the emergency management plans.

The mock emergency, dubbed Exercise Vincent, was a major exercise to test the effectiveness of the dam safety management plans for TasWater, the Tasmanian Police, SES and other organisations in the event of a possible dam failure in Hobart.

The agencies all met in the incident room at TasWater's Moonah office to play out the scenario. The scene was set with reports of high levels in Ridgeway Dam followed by excessive rainfall of more than 200 millimetres in 24 hours. The scenario was escalated to include a potential dam failure to test how Tasmanian Police would respond a fictional flooding event.

Louise Maconachie, TasWater's Exercise Controller says this is the first time TasWater has partnered with Tasmanian Police for a major exercise and had active involvement from other agencies.

"TasWater is required by legislation to periodically exercise and test the dam safety emergency management plans. Exercise Vincent has tested not only our plans, but for the first time partnering with other emergency agencies we were challenging how we all worked together." Ms Maconachie said.

"The Police had an operations centre set up at the TasWater offices, which included a representative from the SES, to manage simulated flood impacts including road closures. TasWater had an emergency operations centre running parallel to this with representatives from DPIPWE, dam safety consultants and the dam safety regulator to cover all bases.

"This is also the first time TasWater has had operational staff on site in a major exercise. We had our operators at the dam wall, undertaking inspections, observations and feeding information back to the incident teams in Moonah."

The mock emergency scenario played out over five hours and included multiples stages to change the scenario, escalate the incident and challenge the incident teams.

"Exercise Vincent has been a great success for improving the relationships between TasWater and the other agencies involved. In particular, it has been invaluable partnering with the Tasmanian Police.

"Overall, the exercise was a success and as expected, we have identified some opportunities for improvement.

"We are looking forward to the next joint exercise so we can measure genuine improvement." Ms Maconachie said.