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Media Release

Fast response to George Town sewage spill means triathlon championships will go ahead as planned

TasWater's General Manager of Service Delivery, Bennie Smith, confirmed that a sewage spill occurred due to a blocked pipe, and overflowed into York Creek in George Town on Friday 10 November.

TasWater worked in conjunction with George Town Council's Environmental Health Officer to respond to the 5,000 litre spill, and the precautionary decision was made to close and evaluate York Cove beach for 24 hours to ensure the water was safe for recreational purposes. The beach has subsequently been reopened for all activities, including the Launceston Triathlon Club event scheduled for Sunday 12 November.

In-line with TasWater's sewage spill procedures and in consultation with George Town Council, all areas affected by the spill were thoroughly disinfected and cleaned, and signage placed at key sites notifying locals of the temporary contamination.

"Given the dry weather conditions, we were keen to understand what had caused the spill", said Mr Smith. After a thorough inspection of the spill site, TasWater staff confirmed they had found and removed a foreign item from a sewerage pipe. However they could not determine exactly what the item was, as it had been dislodged from the pipe using a high-pressure hose.

"This is disappointing and inconvenient to those in the area on Friday and Saturday, but at least our initial findings show the spill was not the result of a TasWater infrastructure failure", noted Mr Smith.

TasWater staff will conduct a further inspection in the coming week with CCTV equipment to ensure no fragments of the foreign object remain. Mr Smith reiterated that the blockage and leak had been quickly and successfully dealt with, and that residents and visitors to George Town could go about their weekend activities as planned.

Ends.