



26 January 2019

Attn: News Editors, Producers

For publication immediately

Media Release

TasWater stands by DNA testing at Blackmans Bay beach

Recently Mr Richard Griggs has made comments in the media regarding the process and the results of the DNA testing of water at Blackmans Bay beach. Regrettably these comments may have caused some misunderstanding regarding TasWater's efforts to establish the cause of the *E.coli* detection recently found at the southern end of the beach.

TasWater is keen to ensure the process and the results of the DNA testing are clearly understood. TasWater has made every effort to keep our commitment to protect the health of the public and our environment. To this end, in conjunction with the Kingborough Council, we are regularly testing the water in the area to help determine the source of the *E.coli* and Enterococci using the most up to date scientific methods available to us.

To be clear:

- TasWater conducted DNA fingerprinting through the Australian Water Quality Centre in Adelaide within a reasonable timeframe after the spike in *E.coli* was first recorded; that is, within the time required for the source of the contamination to be properly ascertained.
- The test was taken at the same site as the Derwent Estuary Program result that returned the high *E.coli* levels.
- The DNA marker for human faecal matter is unique. The DNA test showed that the source of the *E.coli* contamination was *not caused* by human faecal matter.
- The DNA test did show markers from the faecal matter of other animals that gather in this location, particularly the birdlife that is found in large numbers in the sheltered in-shore area of the beach.

TasWater CEO Mike Brewster said that he strongly upheld the transparency and robustness of the testing process and that the health of the community is the highest priority for the organisation.

"Our testing regimes and processes are in step with best practice in Australia. The process used in this case was in keeping with that standard and in fact we acted above the usual levels of testing by conducting the DNA fingerprinting."

"We are continuing to work with Kingborough Council and ongoing testing will remain part of the program," Mr Brewster said.

ENDS