

North East Region

Water and Sewerage Master Plan

2025



Since creation, the Palawa have lived in Lutruwita – Tasmania. More than 2,000 generations of Aboriginal families have cared for this Country, looking after its lands, seas, skies and waterways.

In the spirit of respect and gratitude, TasWater acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the traditional and ongoing custodians. We pay our respects to them, their culture and to elders past and present.

TasWater commits to working collaboratively and respectfully with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to protect and sustain the precious resources on this ancient land for future generations.

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This is Version 1.0 of the North East Master Plan which will be updated following community and stakeholder feedback. The latest versions of all nine Master Plans will be published at www.taswater.com.au where ongoing submissions and comments are welcome.

Planning for the region

TasWater has created nine regional Master Plans to share our 50-year vision for infrastructure investment in water, sewerage and recycled water.

The boundaries of the nine regions consider council areas, population, availability of water, the existing network, economic growth and industry investment potential.

These plans are based on a detailed review of how well our current infrastructure and operations meet minimum service standards. We considered issues like how our regions are growing, how well our systems are performing, and climate change.

We then explored different options to make sure we can meet communities' current needs and long-term expectations – all in line with our Corporate Plan. Our aim is to invest in the right infrastructure, in the right places, at the right times to provide the most benefit to Tasmanians and our environment.

Our Master Plans are flexible, and we will adjust them as new information comes to hand. At key points in time, we will seek feedback from our customers, communities and stakeholders so that we don't lose sight of what's important to you.

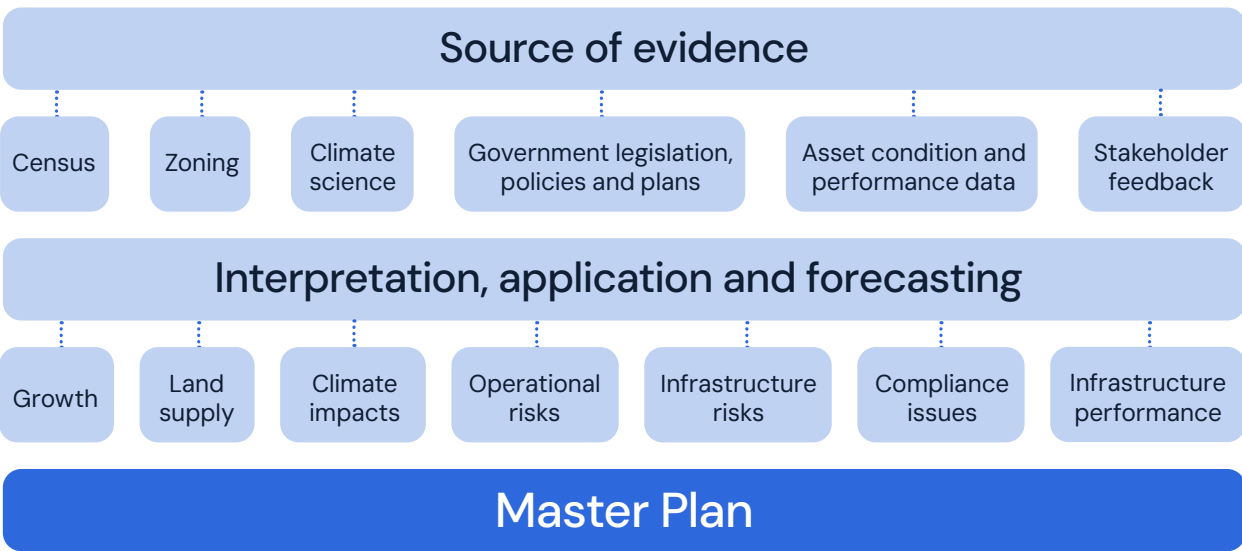
Our process

At TasWater, our infrastructure planning begins with gathering reliable data – including census figures, zoning, climate science, government policies, asset performance, and stakeholder feedback. This helps us understand current conditions and identify future needs. We then forecast growth, land supply, climate impacts, and infrastructure risks.

These insights guide our master planning, where we assess options and plan for future infrastructure upgrades or new assets. The process will be continually refined over decades as conditions change, ensuring our plans remain

responsive and aligned with community needs, environmental goals, and regulatory requirements.

We will continue to update our planning as new information becomes available, including through ongoing engagement with councils and stakeholders. The process is iterative, with a full review undertaken every four years as part of our Price and Service Plan development. This ensures infrastructure priorities are aligned with both our annual budgeting and long-term capital planning, helping us deliver infrastructure that is timely, cost-effective, and responsive to community needs.



About the region

Tasmania’s North East region balances fertile agricultural and dairying areas with forests, coastal towns and remote island communities.

Some of the main centres in the region are Bridport and Scottsdale, with smaller towns like Gladstone in an historic mining area and Whitemark and Lady Barron on Flinders Island.

The region has six water and two sewerage systems as well as a recycled water scheme to support the region’s residents, businesses and farms.

Much of the region’s water and sewerage infrastructure began as part of small, localised systems that were once fit for purpose. However, over time there has been underinvestment in our infrastructure as well as changing community expectations about how we manage growth and operate sustainably.

That’s why in areas like Pioneer, we connected residents to a reliable, treated drinking water supply in 2023. We know that many other smaller towns also need investment in projects to reduce our environmental impact and support growth. This is part of our plan.

Growth areas

Over the next 50 years, the North East region’s population is expected to grow steadily. We have identified a possible 4,800 lots of land available in our service areas which could be developed if zoning allows. Future growth areas are likely to be around Bridport.

However, there are a range of scenarios which make forecasting growth difficult. For example, there are large areas of land across the region which could be rezoned for residential development in time, and further tourism development may occur in towns like Derby and Branxholm.

While we can’t know for sure when and where development will occur, TasWater will continue to monitor data that informs our Master Plan and be ready to adjust our strategy as needed.



North East region key statistics



CASE STUDY

Lady Barron community united to conserve water

Faced with almost five months of water restrictions in 2025, Lady Barron residents and visitors made small changes to their daily habits to save water and ease the pressure on Flinders Island’s water supply.

The Lady Barron community relies on groundwater bores for its drinking water. However, ongoing dry, warm conditions significantly affected groundwater levels and Stage 1 water restrictions were necessary.

Residents and visitors quickly responded to the need to reduce non-essential water by 20 per cent; taking shorter showers, using the half-flush on the toilet and watering plants in the coolest parts of the day.

As water use was managed and groundwater levels steadily improved, the restrictions were lifted.

TasWater has continued to monitor local conditions and is working with the Lady Barron community to make water conservation a part of everyday island life.

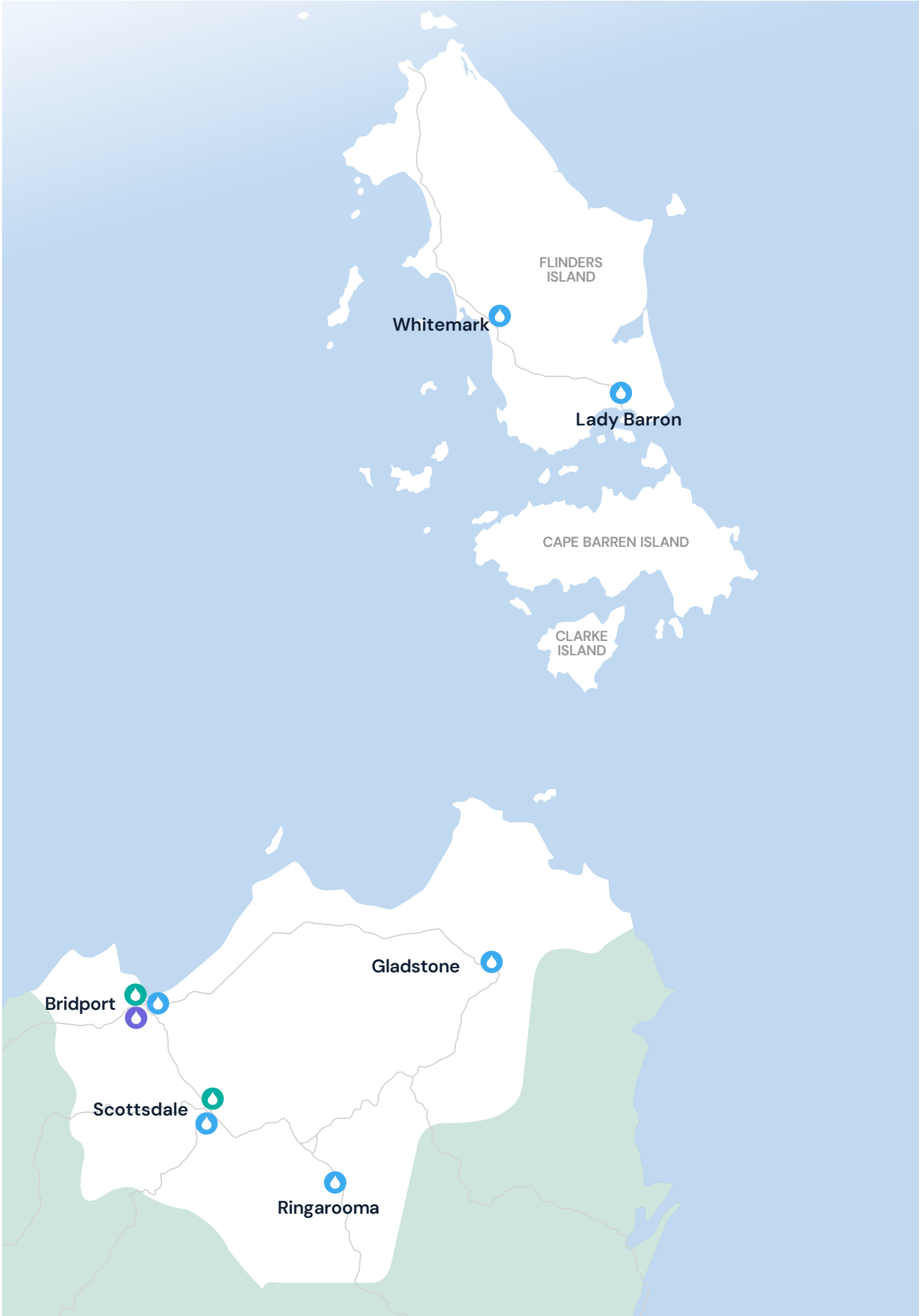


How we service the region today



Legend – infrastructure

-  Water treatment plant
-  Sewage treatment plant
-  Recycled water scheme



Challenges and opportunities

In developing our Master Plans, we have considered challenges that our state will face in future, as well as ones that are unique to the North East region. We also thought about the flip side – what opportunities are there for us to better support local people, our environment, cultural heritage and the economy?

The big issues



Lack of reliable water sources



Inadequate water allocations in our licenses



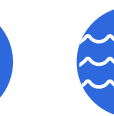
Ageing infrastructure, with many assets in poor condition



High risk discharges from some sewage treatment plants



Opportunity to produce more recycled water



Inundation of coastal assets as the climate warms and sea levels rise



Opportunity to develop future servicing strategies for unsewered towns

Climate change

Based on past trends and climate modelling, Tasmania is expected to keep getting warmer and we may face rising sea levels and more droughts, bushfires and intense weather.

A warmer climate affects how much water we have, its quality and how much our customers need to use. This puts extra pressure on our water supply.

Changes to the seasons – like shorter winters and longer, hotter summers – can also affect water quality. When there are algal blooms and low oxygen levels in our rivers and dams, water can be harder to treat and there can be changes in taste, smell and appearance.

For our sewerage systems, like the one in Bridport, rising sea levels and more storms and floods put our pump stations at risk of inundation or coastal erosion. More intense storms also increase the likelihood of sewage overflows when stormwater gets into our pipes.

Climate change could mean we need to build new infrastructure, operate our systems differently or find other ways to manage water.

Water security

Our drinking water comes from dams, rivers and groundwater bores around the region before it's treated and delivered to our customers.

Already, many rivers that supply our water treatment plants have periods of low flow and the licensed water allocations we receive are not enough to keep up with demand.

If we continue to see drier conditions, river flows and groundwater levels could drop further – making it harder to meet unrestricted water demand.

To help us avoid water restrictions, we will need to continue to make sure we have enough water to go around and encourage our customers to value and conserve water at home and work. TasWater has a [Water Security Strategy](#) in place to guide our long-term water management.

Keeping up with growth

If the region's population grows as expected over the next 50 years, our pipes, pump stations, reservoirs and treatment plants won't have the capacity to keep up.



CASE STUDY

Bridport breathes easy with new aerators

Residents are enjoying fresher air and improved services after TasWater introduced innovative aerator devices at the Bridport Sewage Treatment Plant.

The installation of aerdisc aerators at the plant has improved the treatment process and virtually eliminated odours, enhancing the quality of life for local people.

The new aerators boost performance by mechanically infusing sewage with oxygen in the treatment plant's lagoons; a critical step in breaking down organic material and keeping odour in check.

The aerators support the lagoon system's natural biological processes and reduce the need for costly chemicals. They are safe and easy to maintain for our operators.



Based on the success of the Bridport aerators, TasWater has installed the devices at other treatment plants around the state.

Our infrastructure is also ageing, with some of it approaching the end of its intended operating life.

We will need to upgrade or replace many of our assets so we can continue to deliver safe, reliable services. This comes at a high cost, so improvements will have to be prioritised based on criteria like development timing, community benefit and compliance with laws and performance targets.

In some areas there may be a need to connect unserved communities to water and sewerage systems for the first time. This may be to support new development, address climate change or environmental impacts, or enhance water reliability or sewage treatment in smaller towns. Service introductions are only considered when there is community support, and if servicing costs can be recovered.

Water where it belongs

Around 22 per cent of the water we produce in the North East region doesn't end up reaching our customers. We call this 'non-revenue water' and we are working to cut our losses. Non-revenue water is from pipe leaks, theft, metering errors or uses like firefighting or system flushing.

We are also working to reduce the amount of stormwater that gets into our sewerage systems and can cause overflows. This infiltration can come from leaks, breaks and incorrect private plumbing connections.

If we reduce these problems, we may be able to delay costly infrastructure upgrades. This means we can provide services to more people using the same infrastructure for longer.

Achieving compliance

Like all water utilities, TasWater is subject to a range of environmental and health-based laws and targets.

Health-based targets help us to assess the quality of the water we supply to customers while environmental licenses set limits on any discharges from our infrastructure into the surrounding environment.

We know that due to age and underinvestment in our treatment plants, pumps and pipes over a long period, some of our infrastructure does not meet compliance targets. We are working to close the gaps, and have made great progress in areas like water quality and reliability.

Our 50-year vision for the region

After looking at a range of options to guide our long-term investment in water and sewerage infrastructure, our preferred approach balances climate resilience, water security, customer expectations, environmental and health compliance, and cost.

Our Master Plan is based on what we know today – it’s a guide only. The location, timing and cost of new and upgraded infrastructure are not set in stone and we will remain flexible and adapt as our region continues to evolve.

Our plans for the region’s water and sewerage systems are outlined in the following pages. We have provided a summary of the current situation, the initiatives we propose to address key challenges, when works may occur and the outcomes we hope to achieve.

We are excited about the potential to build on what we have now to protect and enhance the Tasmanian way of life.

You are welcome to let us know what you think. Visit the TasWater website and look for the [Your Say](#) page.

What will it cost?

Initial estimates have been developed to help understand what it will cost to roll out improvements identified in the North East Region Master Plan. The total cost could be around \$113.9 million for sewerage infrastructure and \$67 million for water infrastructure over the next 50 years.

We will continue to work with our stakeholders and customers to make sure any spending is on the right things at the right times. We believe our approach represents a wise investment in the region’s future because it:



Tackles the most urgent issues right away



Delays major spending until later, helping manage budgets and adapt to future changes



Reduces the need for, and number of, complex projects like new dams, treatment plants and long pipelines



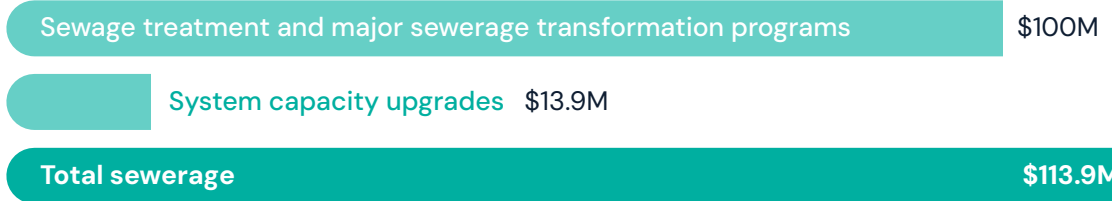
Has a lower long-term cost (net present value) and development cost (capital cost) when compared with other options considered

Estimated cost (\$million over 50 years)

Water



Sewerage



Note: Costs shown are 2025 budget estimates for major infrastructure projects and programs, and are subject to change. They do not include allowances for maintenance, renewal or replacement of ageing assets, or general infrastructure operating costs. There are expected to be additional costs allocated to raw water entitlements, system investigations and monitoring infrastructure after technical assessments are completed.

Our water plan

Area	The situation	What we plan to do	Outcomes
North East Region towns including these systems: • Bridport • Scottsdale • Ringarooma • Gladstone	Ongoing dry conditions which affect the levels of rivers that supply our treatment plants, an increased demand for water, and infrastructure limitations have led to frequent water restrictions across the region. High turbidity in the Bridport raw water system is also a challenge. Our infrastructure is ageing, doesn't always perform well and doesn't have the capacity to meet long-term regional growth. We often rely on third party infrastructure, including water storages, to supplement our systems.	All water treatment plants will need to be upgraded, and the Bridport, Scottsdale and Ringarooma Water Treatment Plants may be replaced once they reach their capacity in future. In Bridport, we propose to study flows in the Brid River to identify opportunities for harvesting more raw water. In the meantime, we will seek greater water allocations under existing licenses. Similarly, we expect to study the Gladstone and Ringarooma systems to identify ways to increase raw water sources. Raw water assessments are needed in the short-term, and may result in water treatment plant upgrades by 2035. Replacement of the Bridport, Scottsdale and Ringarooma Water Treatment Plants are likely to be required by 2050.	 Water security  Capacity for growth  System efficiency and reliability  Enhanced water quality
Flinders Island including these systems: • Whitemark • Lady Barron	Our water treatment plants and system infrastructure have the capacity for forecast growth, but water loss is high on the island. Raw water availability is an ongoing challenge on Flinders Island and there have been extended periods where water restrictions have been in place. At Lady Barron, salt in the groundwater and changing water levels affect the reliability and quality of the water supply.	Testing is expected at the Lady Barron bores to help find ways to increase water supply, reduce losses (non-revenue water) and manage quality. This may involve activating additional bores. If the bores are considered unsustainable in the long-term, a small desalination plant may be considered. Monitoring is also likely at Henderson Dam in the Whitemark system to assess potential raw water yields. Raw water and water loss assessments are short-term requirements, and this may result in system changes. Any treatment plant upgrades or replacements are longer-term considerations.	

North East water

There are no system rationalisations proposed in North East region.

1 Bridport

- Finalise additional water entitlements and conduct Brid River conveyance study and monitoring.
- Optimise the existing Bridport Water Treatment Plant (WTP) to extend the current capacity to meet the medium demands.
- Construct a new water treatment plant at the existing Bridport site once capacity of the optimised plant is exceeded.

2 Scottsdale

- Conduct an on-site condition assessment of the South Springfield raw water pipeline, followed by renewal based on the condition assessment's recommendations.
- Construct a new 4 ML/d WTP to replace the ageing infrastructure of the existing WTP.
- Renew the Brid River raw water pipeline.

3 Ringarooma

- Purchase additional water entitlements.

4 Gladstone

- Conduct a yield investigation on the Gladstone WTP intake site on the Ringarooma River.
- Proceed with the augmentation of Gladstone WTP and secure additional water licences while yield investigations are ongoing.

5 Lady Barron

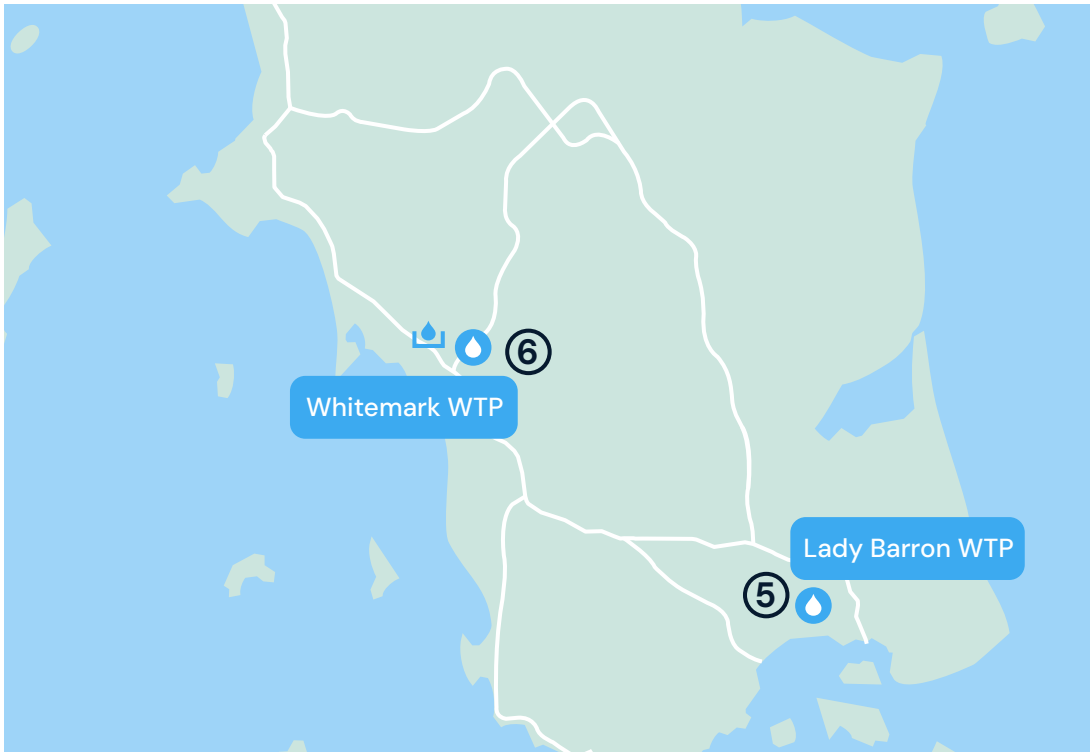
- Conduct a groundwater bore investigation to confirm yield and water quality.

6 Whitemark

- Install flow gauge at Henderson Dam to record actual dam release or inflow, and conduct a yield assessment at Whitemark to confirm available raw water.

- Immediate / short term (by 2035)
- Medium term (2035 to 2050)
- Long term (2050 to 2070)
- Progress at any time if/when the opportunity or need arises

- Water treatment plant
- Raw water storage



Our sewerage plan

Area	The situation	What we plan to do	Outcomes
North East including these systems: • Bridport • Scottsdale	Only two towns are connected to sewerage services right now, and growth pressures in the region could lead to new connections in future. There is capacity in the Bridport and Scottsdale systems to manage projected growth, but our assets are ageing. The Scottsdale Sewage Treatment Plant’s treated water discharge is a high risk to the receiving environment, and there is no recycled water scheme in place to help reduce this risk.	We propose to further improve and expand our systems in line with growth. This may include modest upgrades of the Bridport and Scottsdale Sewage Treatment Plants. There is the opportunity to expand our recycled water scheme at Bridport and introduce a scheme at Scottsdale by purchasing nearby farmland and irrigating it. System upgrades will occur as needed, and we expect to expand water recycling in the short to medium-term. Water recycling schemes and service introductions may occur if there is enough local growth, community support they are financially viable.	 More sustainable infrastructure  Environmental compliance  Capacity for growth  System efficiency and reliability  Reduced operating costs in the longer-term

North East sewage

- 1

Retain Bridport Sewage Treatment Plant (STP)

●

Continue to monitor improvements from aeration upgrades and implement improved disinfection at the current site.
- 2

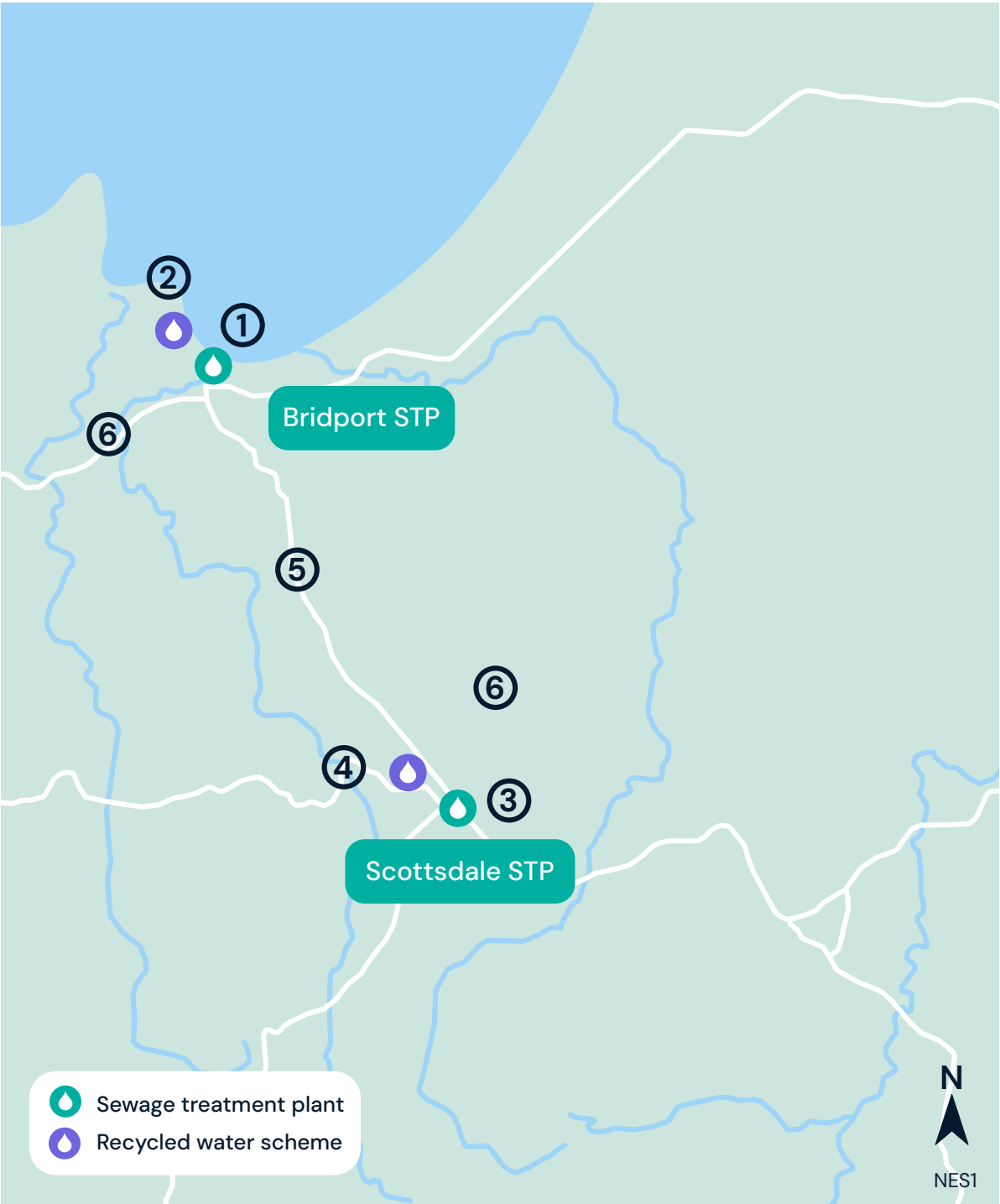
Establish TasWater owned Bridport Recycled Water Scheme (RWS)
- Be ready for opportunistic purchase of a nearby property for future new STP and RWS. Establish a full reuse scheme. Upgrade the STP as required.
- If a major expansion at Bridport is required in future, then a new STP on the nearby land acquired for the RWS would be constructed, and the existing lagoons may be repurposed for recycled water storage and/or a wetlands project.
- 3

Retain Scottsdale STP
- Retain and invest in the current site.
- 4

Establish TasWater owned Scottsdale RWS
- Purchase land nearby to establish a TasWater owned RWS. Establish a full reuse scheme. Upgrade the STP as required.
- 5

Scottsdale
- Long-term, rationalisation of Scottsdale to Bridport may be considered but has been found to be significantly more expensive than local treatment and recycled water scheme. However, the strategy will be reconsidered if a major upgrade to the STP is proposed or if growth in Scottsdale is significantly different to projected.
- 6

Recycled water opportunities
- Possible expansion of recycled water use. With TasWater owned land providing the anchor for the schemes and ensuring reuse occurs in years of low demand there would be opportunities to supply water to other landowners without the risks often associated with single customer recycled water schemes. This could include supply to golf courses and agriculture properties.
- Immediate / short term (by 2035)
- Medium term (2035 to 2050)
- Long term (2050 to 2070)
- Progress at any time if/ when the opportunity or need arises





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