

Meander–Tamar 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.

Contents

Planning for the region	04
About the region	06
How we service the region today	10
Challenges and opportunities	12
Our 50-year vision for the region	14
Our water plan	16
Meander-Tamar water	18
Our sewerage plan	20
Lower Tasman and Great Launceston sewage	22
Meander Midlands sewage	24

This is Version 1.0 of the Meander-Tamar 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.

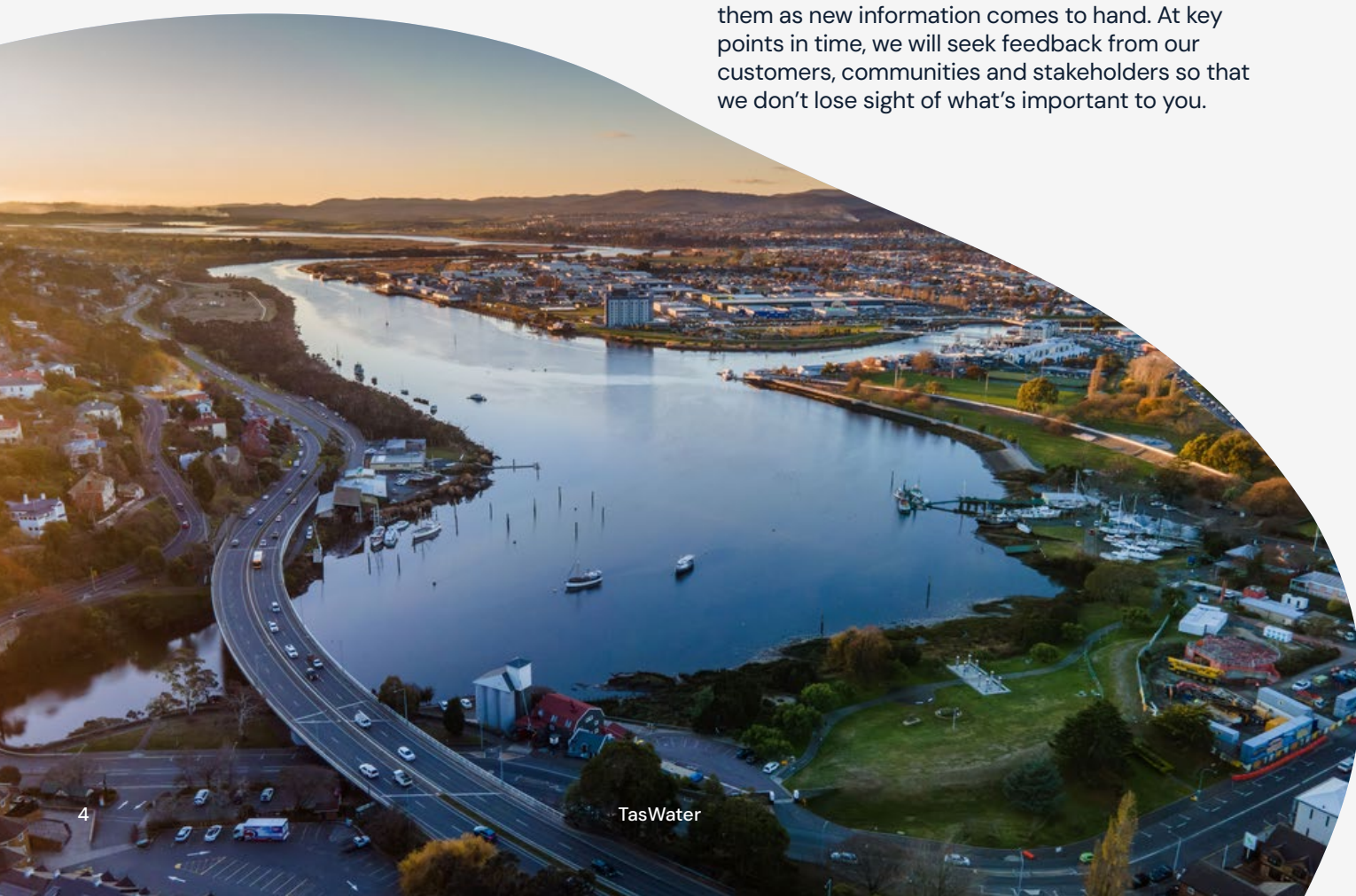
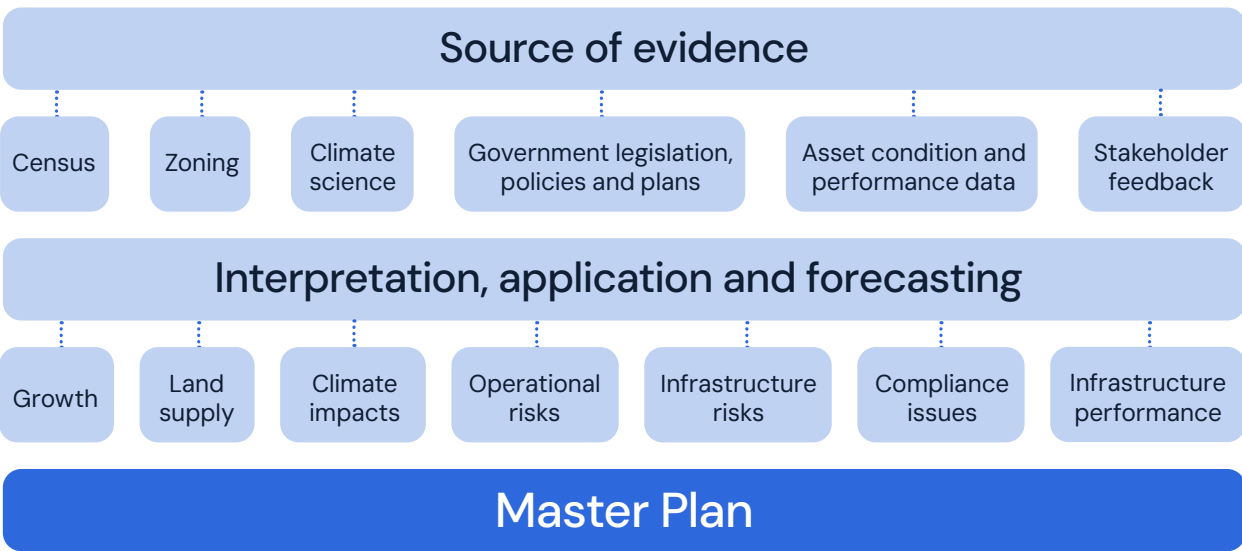
Our process

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

The Meander-Tamar region covers the Greater Launceston urban area, growing communities around the city and rural towns in Tasmania's central north.

The region has nine water and 22 sewerage systems as well as recycled water schemes that support the region's residents, businesses and farms. In some parts of Greater Launceston, the sewerage and stormwater systems are combined. This feature contributes to higher nutrient discharges into the receiving environment in wet weather due to unpredictable inflows. In Longford, about half of all sewage flows are from industry.

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 Greater Launceston we are consolidating seven sewage treatment plants into one high-performance plant at Ti Tree Bend, significantly reducing discharges into Kanamaluka/Tamar estuary and providing capacity for growth. We know that many 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 Meander-Tamar region is expected to grow steadily. We have identified a possible 43,000 lots of land available for development in our service areas if zoning allows, with future growth areas likely to be Waverley, St Leonards, Blackstone Heights, Hadspen, Exeter, Legana, Perth, George Town and neighbouring suburbs.

The growth in Greater Launceston is forecast to be higher than in smaller towns. However, there are scenarios which make forecasting difficult. For example, Greater Launceston may have more high-density development in future, like units in taller buildings and homes on smaller lots, if planning policies change. On the other hand, some smaller towns surrounded by plenty of available land may become attractive to developers and grow faster than expected.

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.



Meander-Tamar region key statistics



 CASE STUDY

UV disinfection to add new layer of protection

To meet the communities’ needs and align with safety goals, TasWater is launching an important initiative.

TasWater is rolling out additional water quality safeguards at four water treatment plants in the Meander-Tamar region to achieve full compliance with health-based targets.

Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection treatment equipment will be installed at the Distillery Creek, Chimney Saddle, Mt Leslie, and Reatta Road treatment plants by 2026 to add an extra layer of treatment.

UV disinfection does not affect the taste, colour or odour of the water but further reduces the risk of harmful microbes entering the water supply.

This initiative is part of a broader program to implement advanced water safety practices at all drinking water facilities in Tasmania.



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 Meander-Tamar 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



Infrastructure approaching capacity and ageing



High risk of nutrient discharges into the environment at multiple locations



Opportunity to connect and rationalise infrastructure



Opportunity to produce more recycled water

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, rising sea levels and more storms and floods put treatment plants and pump stations at risk of inundation. This also increases 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 and rivers 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.

Access to water from the Meander and Liffey Rivers depends on upstream water releases as well as the amount of water used by other users. If we continue to see drier conditions, river flows 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.



CASE STUDY

Revitalising Kanamaluka/Tamar estuary

TasWater is focused on reducing sewage flows and creating extra capacity to support future growth.

The Kanamaluka/Tamar estuary is a special landscape that connects our community. We appreciate its importance to Greater Launceston and the Meander-Tamar region, which is why we are investing today to ensure its health for future generations.

As part of the Tamar Estuary River Health Action Plan (TERHAP), we are delivering new sewerage infrastructure for the city to improve the health of the Kanamaluka/Tamar estuary and the environment that surrounds it.

A key project underway is the Ti Tree Bend Sewage Treatment Plant Covered Storage. This involves construction of a new network storage tank, an overflow tank and a balance tank with a combined capacity of 10 megalitres.

Future flows to the storage tanks will be transferred via a new pipeline 40 metres under the estuary riverbed between the Margaret Street Pump Station and the Ti Tree Bend Sewage Treatment Plant.



Once completed, this new storage capacity will enable us to temporarily store and buffer any incoming flows from the combined Greater Launceston system before we transfer the flows to the existing plant for the final phase of treatment.

Keeping up with growth

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

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.

Water where it belongs

Around 24 per cent of the water we produce in the Meander-Tamar region doesn't end up reaching our customers. We call this 'non-revenue water' and we are working to cut 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. In parts of Greater

Launceston where the sewerage and stormwater systems are combined, our focus is on better managing the unpredictable nature of inflows in wet weather.

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. In the Meander-Tamar region, we have been progressively installing ultra-violet (UV) treatment equipment at our water treatment plants to enhance community wellbeing.

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 the Meander-Tamar Region Master Plan. The total cost could be around \$1.4 billion for sewerage infrastructure and \$537 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



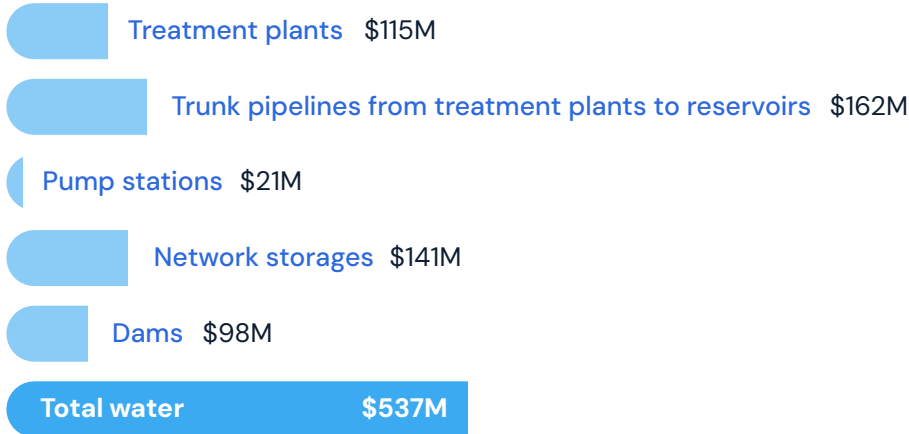
Reduces the need for, and number of, complex projects like new dams, treatment plants and long pipelines



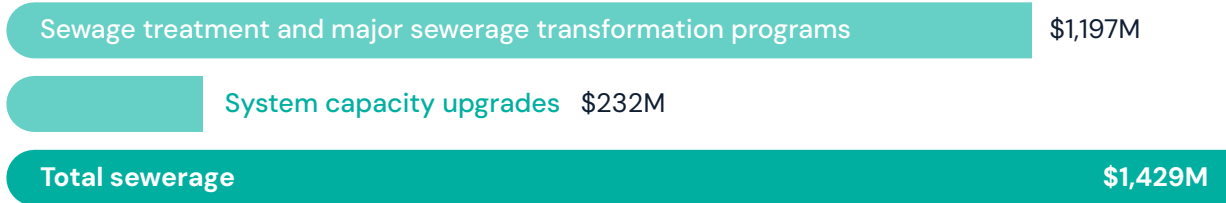
Has a lower long-term cost (net present value) and development cost (capital cost) when compared with other options considered

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. Sewerage costs exclude those related to Tamar Estuary River Health Action Plan projects.

Our water plan

Area	The situation	What we plan to do	Outcomes
Greater Launceston and the Lower Tamar including these systems: • Distillery Creek • Longford • North Esk (Chimney Saddle Water Treatment Plant) • South Esk (Mt Leslie Water Treatment Plant) • West Tamar (Reatta Road Water Treatment Plant)	There is not enough raw water available to keep pace with growth, and dry conditions affect our water allocations from the St Patricks, North Esk and Macquarie Rivers. The dry conditions can also contribute to water quality issues at times. Climate change is expected to make this situation worse over time. Water allocations from Trevallyn Dam are similarly inadequate, and there is competition for supply. Infrastructure needed to address water security issues is expected to be in place by 2035. Less urgent water treatment plant upgrades and trunk pipeline construction will be undertaken after this.	We will need to build a new dam in the Distillery Creek water supply zone and upgrade the local water treatment plant to improve water security and enable more customers to connect to the system. This will help to reduce demand on the Chimney Saddle Water Treatment Plant. However, before a dam is built, some interim measures will be required including supplementing the Distillery Creek system with water from Camden Dam, building a new pipeline from the South Esk system to the Distillery Creek system and pump station upgrades. We will continue to supply the Mt Leslie and Reatta Road Water Treatment Plants from Trevallyn Dam and keep Longford Water Treatment Plant supplied by the Macquarie River in the short-term. More water licenses will be secured as needed. Ultimately, these treatment plants will be need to be upgraded and rationalised and a new water storage may be created for Longford. Several trunk water pipelines and network storages along the East and West Tamar areas will be upgraded in line with growth.	 Water security  Capacity for growth  System efficiency and reliability  Enhanced water quality
Meander Valley including these systems: • Westbury • Deloraine • Mole Creek • Bracknell	Water allocations from the Meander and Liffey Rivers are not enough to support growth in Westbury, Deloraine and Bracknell. This is mostly due to irrigation demands in the area, and ongoing dry conditions. Compounding this, the Deloraine and Mole Creek Water Treatment Plants are ageing and Deloraine Water Treatment Plant struggles to meet demand in the warmer months.	Water supply issues in these systems will initially be resolved by securing additional water allocations. At Bracknell, if additional allocations cannot be secured, a new water storage may be built. This storage would allow the high flows in the Liffey River over winter to be stored for use in summer. We will renew the Deloraine Water Treatment Plant or take water from an upgraded Westbury Water Treatment Plant. Longer term, this option could include supplying Bracknell when its Water Treatment Plant has reached the end of its useful life.	

Meander-Tamar water

1 Projects to address immediate constraints

- Secure an alternative water source to provide additional water security for Distillery Creek.
- Implement minor capacity improvements at Distillery Creek WTP to increase plant production to 35 ML/day.
- Upgrade the Waverley Pump Station to provide demand relief to the North Esk system utilising Distillery Creek's increased capacity and improved raw water security.
- Construct a pipeline from the South Esk system into the Distillery Creek system to that additional capacity from Mt Leslie WTP can be utilised.
- Re-purpose the Franklin Village reservoirs to improve capacity deficiencies at St Leonards.

- 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

2 Distillery Creek and North Esk

- Transfer demands associated with the East Tamar from the Chimney Saddle WTP to an upgraded Distillery Creek WTP and create a reduced Chimney Saddle WTP supply zone.
- Construct an off-stream storage to support the Distillery Creek supply zone.
- Upgrade the hydraulic capacity of the Distillery Creek WTP when growth trigger occurs.

3 South Esk and West Tamar

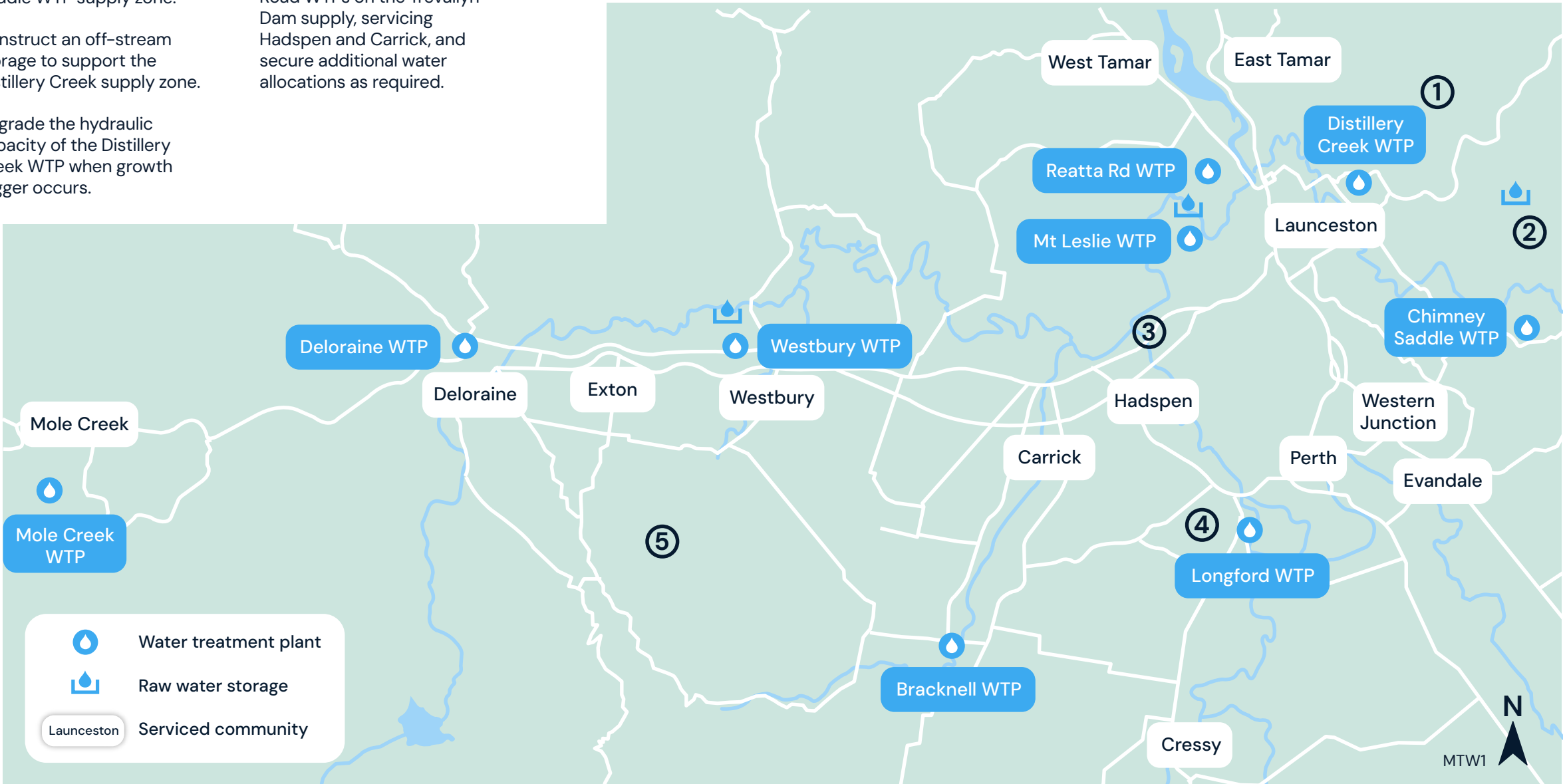
- Retain Mt Leslie and Reatta Road WTPs on the Trevallyn Dam supply and secure additional water allocations as required.
- Retain Mt Leslie and Reatta Road WTPs on the Trevallyn Dam supply, servicing Hadspen and Carrick, and secure additional water allocations as required.

4 Longford

- Retain Longford WTP on the Macquarie River supply and secure additional water licence.
- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of raw water availability and proceed with phased construction of an off-stream storage.
- Upgrade the hydraulic capacity of the Longford WTP when growth triggers occur.

5 Meander Valley

- Renew the Deloraine WTP and secure additional water allocations.
- Upgrade the Westbury WTP when the growth trigger occurs, and secure additional water allocations.
- Retain the Bracknell and Mole Creek WTPs at their current sites and mitigate water security risks through improved drought response planning including water carting.



Our sewerage plan

Area	The situation	What we plan to do	Outcomes
Greater Launceston including these systems: - Hoblers Bridge - Legana - Newnham - Norwood - Prospect Vale - Riverside - Ti Tree Bend	In this growing area where some sewer and stormwater systems are combined, our treatment plants are ageing, approaching capacity and at risk of discharging into the Kanamaluka/Tamar estuary in wet weather.	As part of our commitment to the health of the Kanamaluka/Tamar estuary, we will fully deliver the Launceston Sewerage Transformation (LST) project. This includes decommissioning six sewage treatment plants in suburban Launceston and transferring flows to a new centralised plant at Ti Tree Bend. We will also expand or introduce new water recycling schemes where this is viable. LST is scheduled to be completed by 2035. Water recycling schemes will progress at any time as needed.	 More sustainable infrastructure  Environmental compliance  Capacity for growth  System efficiency and reliability  Reduced operating costs in the longer-term
Lower Tamar including these systems: - Beauty Point - Beaconsfield - Bell Buoy Beach - Exeter - Lilydale - George Town	While our sewerage systems in this area are generally coping well, they may be under pressure if development accelerates. There are already challenges associated with discharges from Beauty Point Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) and biosolids treatment and disposal issues at George Town Sewage Treatment Plant.	We will respond to growth around Beauty Point Sewage Treatment Plant with a major upgrade of the facility and potentially a transfer of flows from Beaconsfield. A new, larger treatment plant could be built at Exeter on a more suitable site away from built up areas and we plan to upgrade the George Town Sewage Treatment Plant. There is also an option to transfer flows from the Bell Buoy Beach Sewage Treatment Plant to George Town if needed. Water recycling schemes will be expanded where this is viable. Works at Exeter could occur by 2035, while all other initiatives would be in the medium to longer-term. Water recycling schemes will progress at any time as needed.	
Meander Midlands including these systems: - Carrick / Hadspen - Cressy - Deloraine - Westbury - Evandale - Longford - Nile - Perth - Western Junction	Sewage systems in the area have little capacity to handle growth and the Perth Sewage Treatment Plant is already operating beyond capacity.	We will transform sewage management in the Meander Midlands to be ready for growth and improve environmental outcomes. This could be achieved by building a centralised plant at Longford and transferring flows in stages from smaller plants like Carrick / Hadspen, Perth, Evandale, Cressy, Westbury and Deloraine. Smaller plants apart from Nile Sewage Treatment Plant would ultimately be closed. Due to the scale of this initiative, we would deliver it in stages with the first potentially being in place by 2035 and the whole scheme completed by 2070.	

Lower Tamar and Great Launceston sewage

- 1

Retain Beauty Point STP

 - Establish a full reuse scheme on TasWater owned property. Upgrade the STP as required. If a major expansion is required in future, then the STP will expand onto the neighbouring farm.

2

Retain Beaconsfield STP and reuse plantation

 - Long-term, decommission and transfer to Beauty Point is the preferred strategy if a major upgrade is required.

3

Retain Exeter sewerage system but establish a new STP site and recycled water scheme

 - A new STP site will be pursued to cater for growth and improve buffer distances. Construction of a new STP and expansion of recycled water use to 100% of effluent.

4

Retain George Town STP with upgrades as required

 - Management of biosolids is a critical issue and will be addressed in the Biosolids Strategy.
 - Low risk discharge so reuse is low priority, but if industrial reuse opportunities arise then these will be pursued.
- 5

Bell Buoy Beach STP Level 1 site – strategy being developed

 - Options include rationalise to George Town, upgrade existing, or a new STP to provide buffer with absorption trench disposal.

6

Retain Lilydale STP and expand the reuse scheme

 - Seek additional recycled water customers, expand the recycled water storage and irrigation area.

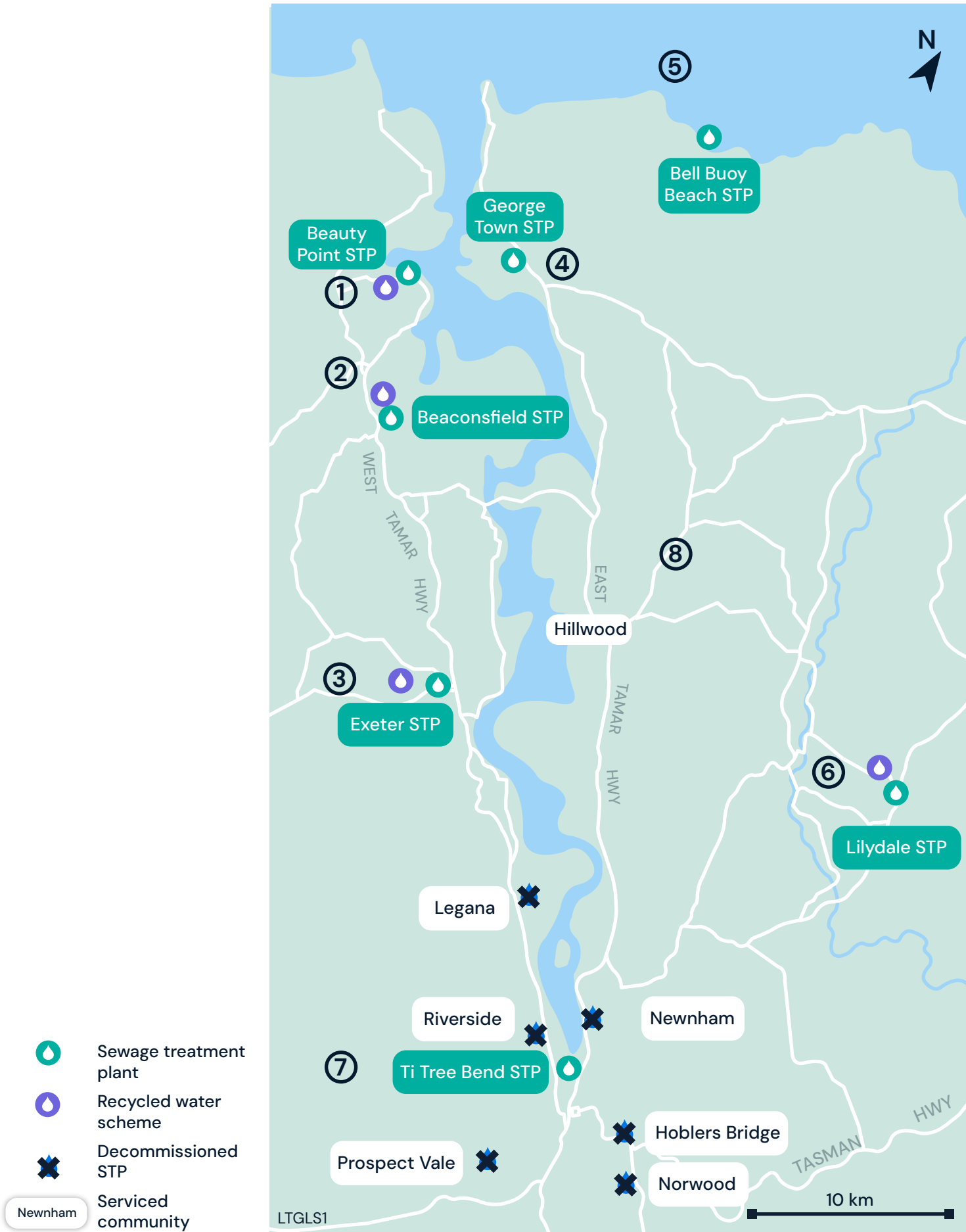
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Tamar Estuary River Health Action Plan (TERHAP) and Launceston Sewer Transformation (LST)

 - TERHAP Increase system capacity to get more combined flows to the STP, add wet weather balancing storage at the STP.
 - Decommissioned Prospect Vale STP to use existing capacity at Ti Tree Bend STP. This is a priority to remove this discharge from upstream of the Basin recreation area.
 - Decommissioned Hoblers Bridge and Norwood STPs to upgraded Ti Tree Bend STP to remove discharges to North Esk River.
 - Decommissioned Riverside, Legana and Newnham STPs and transfer to Ti Tree Bend STP.
- 8

Recycled water opportunities

 - Possible recycled water irrigation, or industrial reuse at Bell Bay or Invermay. Benefits must be weighed against power usage for pumping and high capital cost to transfer. In the future, use of excess solar/ wind for pumping power, could reduce costs of these options and provide additional can be explored.
- 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



Meander Midlands sewage

① Sewage from Hadspen/ Carrick is transferred to Longford STP

● This provides capacity for Hadspen development, utilising the existing spare capacity at Longford STP. Construct new Central SPS at Hadspen. Westbury STP is retained but transfers treated effluent to Carrick, reusing the Carrick lagoons for recycled water storage to remove the high-risk Westbury discharge from Quamby Brook.

② Decommission Western Junction STP

● Transfer to Evandale STP to provide capacity for development at Western Junction. The Evandale Recycled Water Scheme would be expanded to cater for increased flows. Possibly with a return pipeline to Western Junction for industrial reuse.

③ Upgrade Longford STP

● A recycled water scheme for irrigation and industrial customers will be established. If there's insufficient demand for full reuse, then the benefits of highly treated effluent returned to the environment must be considered – it adds water to the South Esk River environment where it is used for potable supply and power generation at Trevallyn Dam.

④ Transfer sewage to Longford STP via Carrick

● This removes the Deloraine STP from the floodplain and rationalises STPs rather than requiring individual upgrades to meet current and changing effluent quality expectations. This may allow for services to be introduced at Exton and Hagley with the transfer main passing through the towns to Longford STP. Increased volume will allow for further expansion of the Longford Recycled Water Scheme.

⑤ Decommission Perth and/or Evandale STPs

● These STPs will be retained until a major local upgrade is required, this may be triggered by growth, or by local reuse no longer being viable. If a local upgrade is required, then transfer to Longford STP is the preferred option.

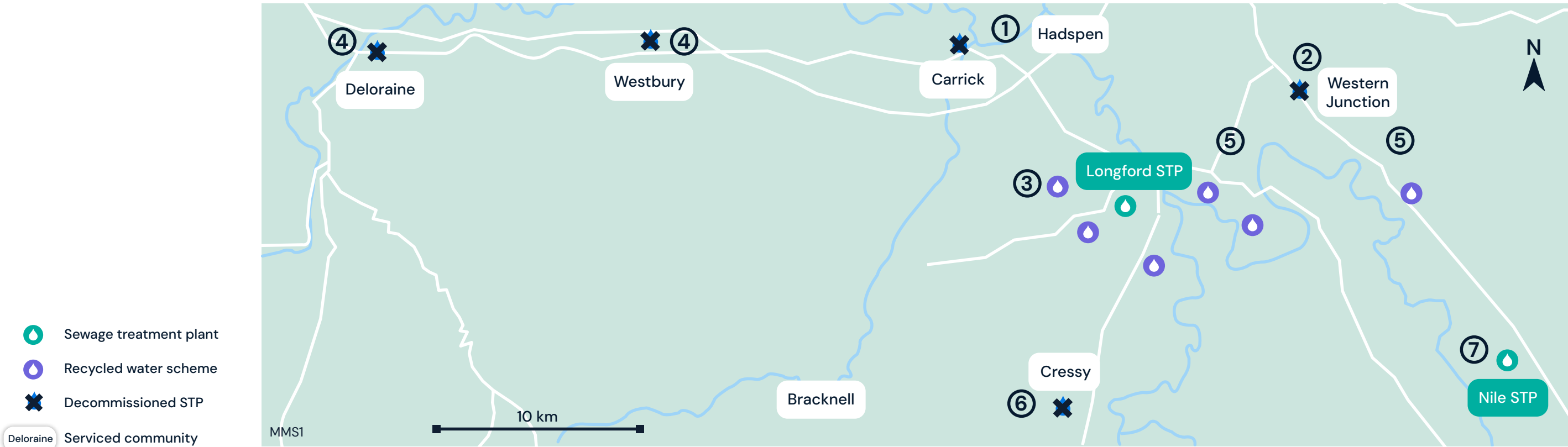
⑥ Decommission Cressy STP

● Transfer to Longford STP to provide additional capacity for future growth if it occurs, or if a local upgrade would otherwise be required.

⑦ Retain Nile STP

● There is no plan to significantly change this system.

- 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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