

West Coast 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 West Coast 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.

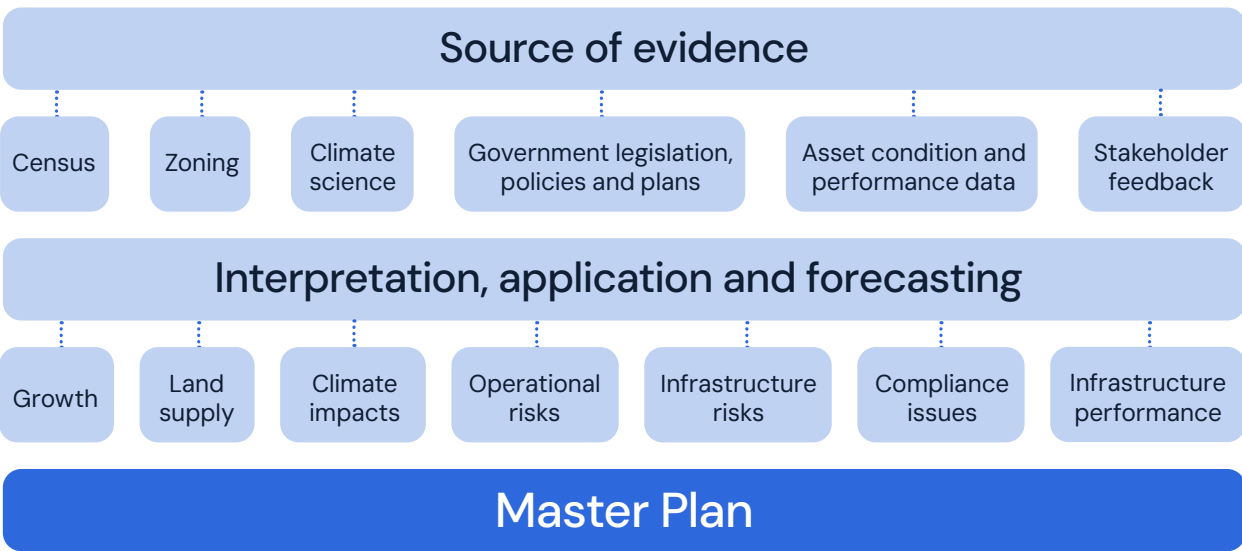
Our process

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 West Coast region of Tasmania blends sparsely populated wilderness with historic forestry, mining and fishing towns.

Many of these centres, like Queenstown and Strahan, have been reimaged to encourage tourism.

The region has five water and seven sewerage systems to support the region's residents, businesses and farms.

A feature of the West Coast is its high rainfall, with an average of 70 per cent wet days each year. This affects our sewerage systems through very high levels of stormwater getting into our pipes, pump stations and treatment plants. In Queenstown, the sewerage and stormwater systems are combined so our treatment plant has to manage unpredictable inflows from an average of 2.4m of rainfall each year.

The high availability of water across the region also makes it hard to introduce viable recycled water schemes.

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 Zeehan, we replaced the raw water pump station on Parting Creek to increase the amount of water available for treatment and removed hazards from old infrastructure. 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 West Coast region's population is not projected to grow. We have identified a possible 330 lots of land in our service areas which could be developed if zoning allows, although this does not consider the large areas of undeveloped Crown and private land that exist around all West Coast towns.

There are a range of scenarios which make forecasting growth difficult but changes in industry and tourism visitation patterns could see the population could increase quickly.

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.



West Coast region key statistics



 CASE STUDY

New water mains deliver gold for Queenstown

From its gold mining roots, Queenstown has evolved over the years to become a popular tourist destination and home to a community of 2,000.

Until recently, something that hadn't changed since the 1950s was the town's galvanised iron water mains. These water mains had corroded to the point where they were affecting water quality at times.

From 2024, TasWater began removing and replacing sections of old pipeline with high density polyethylene pipes

– from Wilsdon Street in the north to Lynchford Road in the south.

About 6km of water main replacements were completed by late 2025, and TasWater plans to continue water and sewer main replacement programs in the town from 2026. We are also relining the steel storage tank in Bowes Street to enhance water quality.

Water testing results and community feedback about the program has been positive; reinforcing TasWater's commitment to providing all Tasmanians with access to clean, reliable drinking water.

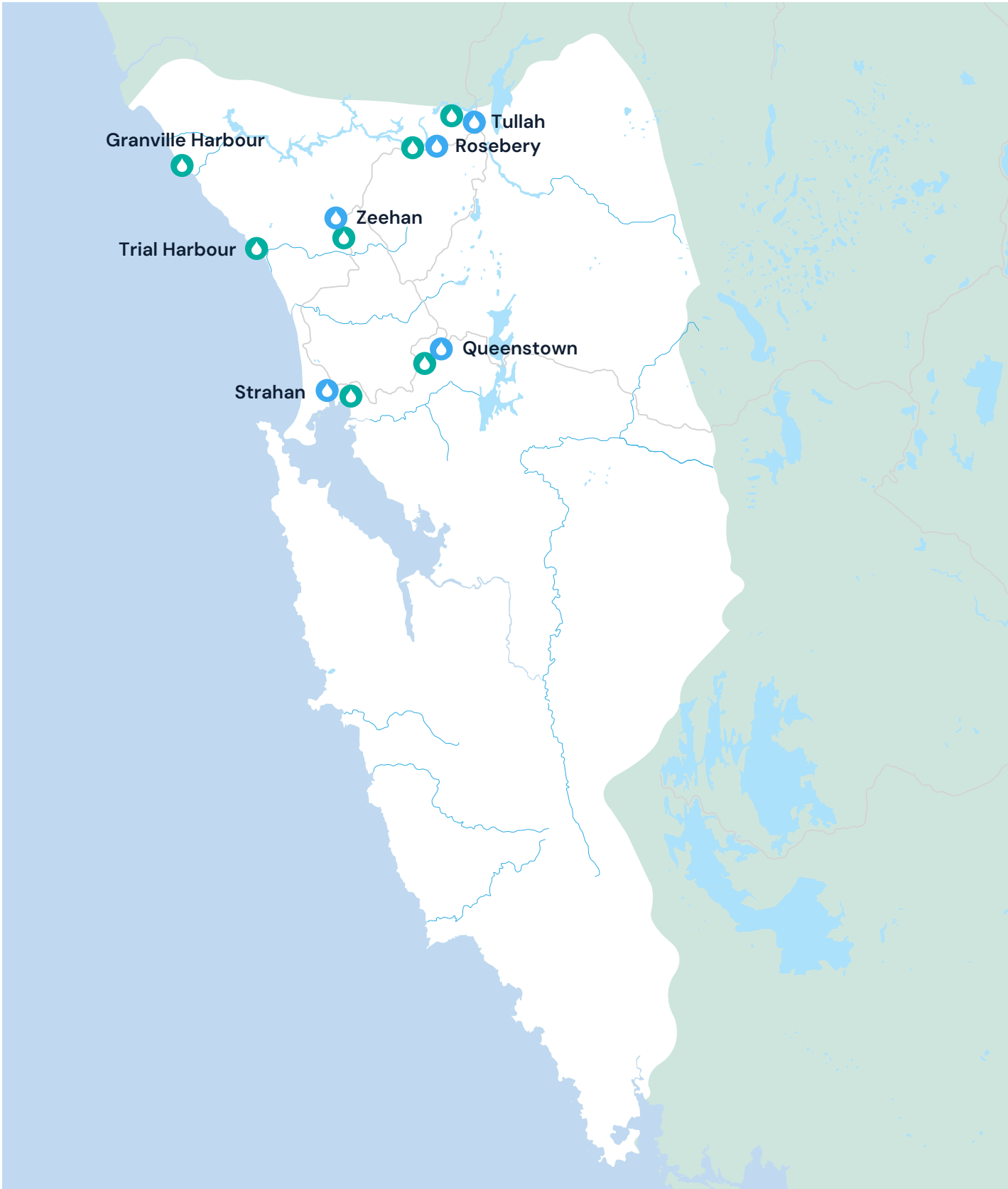


How we service the region today



Legend – infrastructure

-  Water treatment plant
-  Sewage treatment plant



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 West Coast 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

Dispersed small communities, making it hard to streamline systems	Ageing infrastructure, with many assets in poor condition	Very high levels of water loss in our systems (non-revenue water)	Variable water quality	High levels of stormwater getting into our sewers, causing overflows	Inundation of coastal assets as the climate warms and sea levels rise	High risk discharges from some sewage treatment plants

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 Strahan, 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, 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 over the next 50 years, our pipes, pump stations, reservoirs and treatment plants won't have the capacity to keep up.



CASE STUDY

Stormwater a challenge for our sewerage systems

The West Coast region's sewerage systems are not designed to manage the high levels of stormwater inflow and infiltration that occur in wet weather.

Inflow is where stormwater enters our systems through private plumbing that is incorrectly connected to the sewer while infiltration is where stormwater seeps in through cracked or unsealed underground infrastructure.

When the amount of stormwater entering our systems exceeds their capacity, our pump stations and treatment plants have to work overtime, and there is the potential for overflows into waterways, parks and homes.

TasWater is working to reduce stormwater inflow and infiltration in all West Coast

towns. In areas like Rosebery, smoke testing of our sewers has shown a large number of incorrect private plumbing connections. This ranges from roof downpipes connected directly to sewers, to overflow relief gullies lower than they need to be. We plan to introduce an improvement program to address these issues to benefit our infrastructure and environment.



Our infrastructure is 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 unserviced 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. As outlined in our Service Introduction Charges Policy, service introductions are only considered when there is community support, and if servicing costs can be recovered.

Water where it belongs

Around 44 per cent of the water we produce in the West Coast 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. Of all Tasmanian regions, the West Coast records the highest levels of stormwater inflow and infiltration due to its high rainfall and ageing infrastructure.

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. In the West Coast region, we replaced 6km of corroding iron water mains in Queenstown in 2024 and 2025 to provide residents and visitors with more reliable access to high quality drinking water.

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.

This Master Plan is based on what we know today – it’s a guide only. The location, timing and costs of new and upgraded infrastructure are not set in stone and we will remain flexible and adapt as the 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 West Coast Region Master Plan. The total cost could be around \$18 million for sewerage infrastructure and \$14 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.



Our water plan

Area	The situation	What we plan to do	Outcomes
West Coast including these systems: • Queenstown • Rosebery • Strahan • Tullah • Zeehan	In a region of projected low growth and small populations, our systems have capacity for the future. Raw water supply is generally stable although climate change is having an impact on the levels of rivers which supply our treatment plants. However, our infrastructure is ageing, with corroded iron water mains and storages affecting water quality at times. Ageing water mains may also be contributing to high levels of water loss in our systems (non-revenue water). A key area is Rosebery where up to 70 per cent of the water we produce does not end up with our customers. The Tullah and Zeehan Water Treatment Plants are reaching the end of their service.	The Tullah and Zeehan Water Treatment Plants need to be replaced, and Parting Creek Weir at Zeehan upgraded in the short term. We plan to investigate water losses in Rosebery and Strahan before making decisions about infrastructure needs or extending our water allocations under license. Replacement of ageing water mains is expected to continue across the region including at Queenstown and Strahan. The redundant Cutten Street Dams and South Dam in Queenstown may be removed from service.	Enhanced water quality Water security System efficiency and reliability Reduced water losses

West Coast water

- 1

Tullah

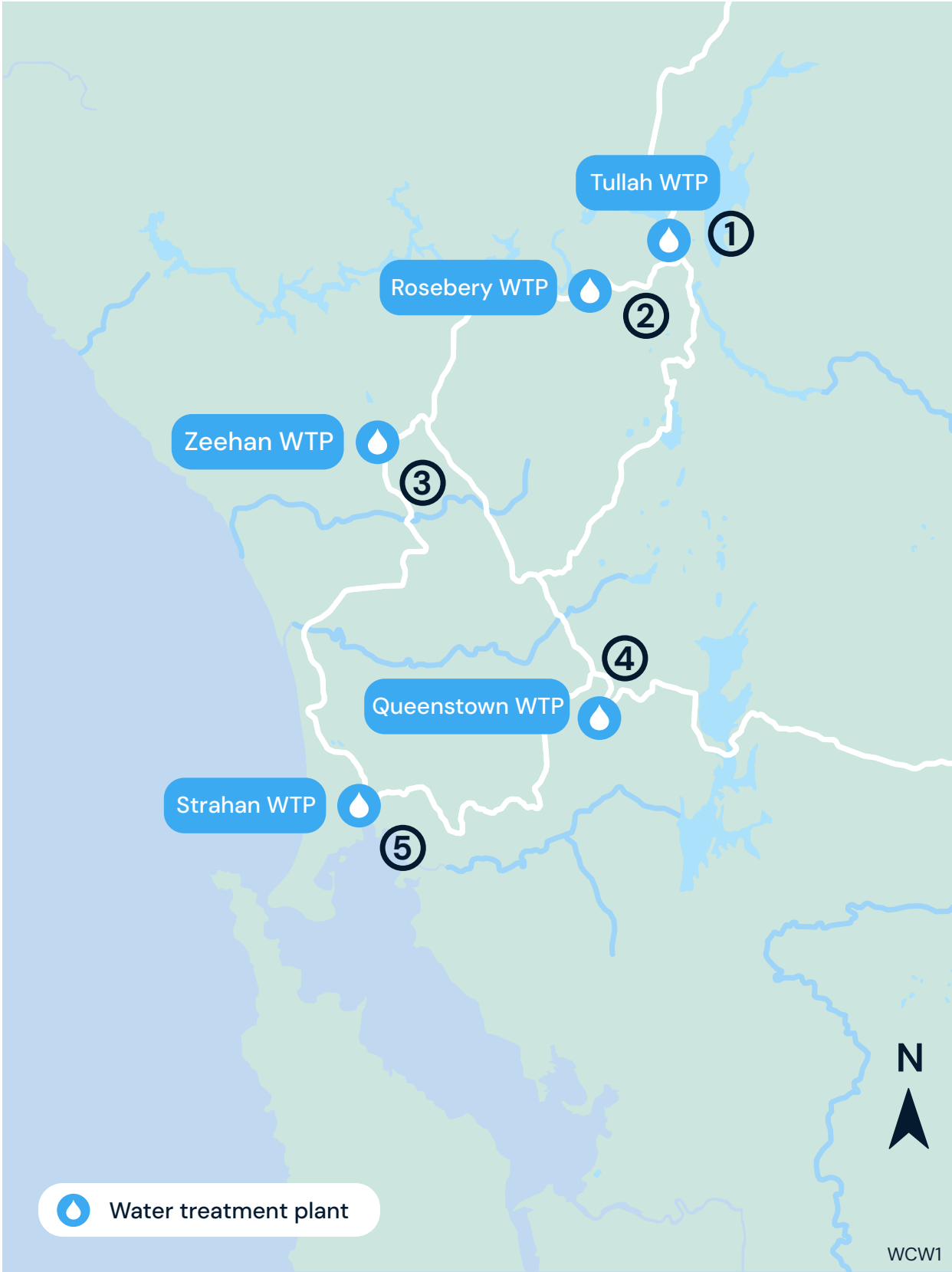
- The Tullah Water Treatment Plant (WTP) is approaching end of life and will require complete renewal in the short term. Refurbishment works to the clarifier and filters may extend the remaining useful life.
- 2

Rosebery
- Lower water loss via targeted improvements to the network.
 - Conduct an updated yield investigation with recent gauge flow data to determine reliability of the Stitt River and Mountain Creek.
- 3

Zeehan
- The Zeehan WTP is approaching end of life and will require complete renewal in the short term.
 - Remedial upgrades to the Parting Creek Weir will improve Zeehan's production capacity.
- 4

Queenstown
- Continue extensive renewal program via replacement of the galvanised iron main with high density polyethylene.
 - Reline the Bowes Street tank to reduce water quality risk in the network.
 - Decommission the three redundant water supply dams in Queenstown – Cutten Street No. 1, Cutten Street No. 2 and South Dam No. 2.
- 5

Strahan
- Lower water loss via targeted improvements to the network.
 - Conduct an updated yield investigation with recent gauge flow data to determine reliability of Manuka River.
 - Perform condition assessment and targeted renewal of the raw water gravity main to improve flows to the raw water pump station and WTP.
 - Refurbish clarifier at the WTP.
- 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



Our sewerage plan

Area	The situation	What we plan to do	Outcomes
West Coast including these systems: • Queenstown • Rosebery • Strahan • Tullah • Zeehan • Granville Harbour • Trial Harbour	Our sewerage systems are set up to manage the low regional growth forecast for the next 50 years. However, all systems experience very high levels of stormwater inflow and infiltration which puts pressure on our sewage treatment plants and poses risks of discharges into the environment. The high regional rainfall and limited agricultural land use makes it difficult to introduce recycled water schemes like those operating in other parts of Tasmania.	All sewerage systems and treatment plants are likely to remain in place in the long-term. We propose to progressively upgrade assets to enhance their reliability and efficiency. At Strahan Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), this may include improving the tankered waste receival facilities. We propose to investigate and implement strategies to reduce the high levels of stormwater inflow and infiltration in all systems.	 More sustainable infrastructure  Environmental compliance  System efficiency and reliability  Reduced stormwater inflow and infiltration

West Coast sewage

- All STPs in the region will be retained in the long-term. Centralisation of treatment is not considered viable due to low flow rates, and long distances along winding routes and indulating terrain between systems. There is a very high degree of uncertainty in population projections at each system and across the region. The potential for flat or declining population is a risk which could lead to oversized assets.
 - There are limited opportunities for recycled effluent use in the region due to very high rainfall and limited agriculture land uses. However, if an opportunity arises in the future, we will consider whether it is a viable option. Some of our effluent is reused through downstream power stations – Rosebery through Reece Power Station, and Tullah through Bastyan and Reece Power Station – though it is a very small proportion of total flows.

- Upgrades to all STPs will be incremental to address risks. In future, inlet screening and UV disinfection may be added across all sites. Projects to increase treatment effectiveness are probable over the medium to long term.

- 1 Trial Harbour STP**
 - Consider installation of absorption disposal system to manage risks associated with surface disposal and reduce Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) rating to low.
 - 2 Granville Harbour STP**
 - Continue to monitor and maintain as required.
 - 3 Queenstown STP**
 - Continue to monitor and maintain as required.

- 4 Rosebery STP**
 - Continue to monitor and maintain as required.
 - 5 Strahan STP**
 - Continue to monitor and maintain as required.
 - 6 Tullah STP**
 - Continue to monitor and maintain as required.
 - 6 Zeehan STP**
 - Continue to monitor and maintain as required.
 - STP upgrade may be required for the EPA to issue a new licence.

- 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

- Sewage treatment plant
- Discharge to absorption area or local irrigation field





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