



Water

A clean, safe and secure supply

Water is one of our most precious natural resources and our actions regarding it today require a precautionary approach that guarantees intergenerational equity. Access to potable drinking water is a fundamental human right.

Plentiful clean water is crucial to the future of Tasmania, its people and ecosystems. Some areas within Tasmania suffer from contamination of both ground and surface water by chemical pollution through the use of farm and forestry fertilisers, herbicides, insecticides and poisons, as well as bacterial and viral contamination from inadequate sewage treatment and from animal faeces.

Catchment capacity is seriously compromised by over-allocations for irrigation, uncontrolled interceptions and catchment damage, inefficient water use and storage and depletion of ground water resources.

Areas of Tasmania are being affected by climate change with serious consequences for rainfall and water availability, and salination of agricultural land is increasing.

Industrial scale forestry operations and the substitution of native forest by plantations are major contributors to catchment damage. Inadequate controls on land clearance and improper irrigation practices exacerbate the problem.

Water is an issue crossing environmental, social, political and economic boundaries. It is essential that an understanding of water precipitation, catchment and use informs all other policy areas.

Governments have fundamentally failed to understand the capacity and sustainability of our water systems and failed to legislate for their protection.

The Greens recognise the urgency of turning around previous failures and mismanagement and will take decisive action to improve water quality and quantity for our communities, ecosystems, economy and future generations.



Specific measures the Greens will take:

Access: ensure that Tasmanians have access to adequate, safe and secure water supplies; mandate high drinking water standards; ensure that town water supplies are clean and safe and no longer require 'boil water' notices except in unforeseen circumstances and emergencies

Catchment: introduce a comprehensive catchment auditing regime to enable water managers to quantify total catchment yields and make decisions on water allocation that safeguard the health of catchments and the water resources they provide; protect and restore water catchments compromised by land clearance to return the capacity of those catchments to store, purify and release water as close as practicable to their naturally occurring levels; encourage, through education and incentives, the establishment of fenced riparian zones protecting the banks of streams and rivers from erosion, disturbance, agricultural run-off and stock effluent; work with interested parties to ensure that base environmental flows are established, introduced and maintained for river systems in Tasmania

Efficiency: ensure that all water users are encouraged, through incentives, education, regulation, metering and pricing of the resource, to conserve usage and maximise recycling; introduce incentives for the smarter use of urban water, including rain water tanks, and encourage the appropriate use of grey water

Chemicals in Catchments: fund a comprehensive, ongoing audit of chemicals used in Tasmania's catchments; increase the frequency and thoroughness of monitoring of waterways for chemical contamination and widely publish the results; enact *Chemical Trespass Legislation*

Industrial Pollution: implement world leading emissions standards; encourage closed loop and recycled water systems for new and existing industry and through strengthened provisions in *LUPAA*

Salinity: participate in the National Water Initiative and, in particular, develop urgent strategies to audit and deal with salinity, including addressing land clearing and irrigation practices

Water Management Act: upgrade to cover water quality, groundwater, more effective catchment management, and to apply to all land and water users including Forestry activities

Meander Dam: this project is not supported on the basis that it failed through the environmental approvals process, it was given subsequent special enabling legislation to override that outcome, that it has failed to attract viable commercial interest, and that a commitment of government funds is against advice to Cabinet

Freshwater Ecosystems Project: freshwater areas are under-represented in Tasmania's reserve system and priorities which have been identified through the Conservation of Freshwater Ecosystem Values Project of government will be implemented

Cloud Seeding: instigate a rigorous assessment and demonstration of likely effects and benefits of cloud seeding and consider introducing an application and approvals process

For more information about this policy contact:

The Tasmanian Greens Water Spokesperson Kim Booth MHA

Address: Parliament House, Hobart 7000

Ph: (03) 6336 2294

E-mail: greensnorth@parliament.tas.gov.au

The Tasmanian Greens Party Networker

E-mail: networker@tas.greens.org.au

Tasmanian Greens Policy Convenor

E-mail: party@tas.greens.org.au

This policy complements other Tasmanian Greens policies:

www.tas.greens.org.au/policy