



YEARBOOK AND ANNUAL REPORT 2019–20

WORKING WITH YOU TO CARE FOR
THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF
OUR ISLAND HOME.

We live in one of the most unique places in the world. NRM North aims to help you keep it that way by continuing to provide leadership to ensure sound management of the region’s natural resources continues; to develop programs that recognise the need to balance the environmental, economic and social needs of the people of the region; and to work in partnership with all stakeholders to determine appropriate investment and cost-sharing strategies in the management of our natural resources.



Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource
Management Association Inc.
63-65 Cameron Street
Launceston TAS 7250
P: 03 6333 7777
F: 03 6334 2822

nrmnorth.org.au

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Cover image: Protecting hooded plover nesting sites along Tasmania’s east coast helps to ensure the future of the threatened species such as this juvenile chick. Credit: Kim Wormald lirrallirra.com. All unspecified images are credit of NRM North.

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CONTENTS

4	From the CEO	42	Annual Report
6	About Northern Tasmania	44	Chair’s Report
	About NRM North	46	Corporate Services Program
7	Northern Tasmania Natural Resource Management Strategy 2015-2020	50	COVID-19 Response
	NRM North Strategic Plan 2019 – 2023	51	Partnerships
8	Water Program	52	Northern Tasmanian NRM Strategy + Sustainable Organisational Funding Model
12	Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program	53	Operations and People Management
16	River Health Action Plan	54	NRM North staff members
17	Tamar Action Grants	55	Organisational Health
18	Land Program	56	Corporate Governance
22	Soil, Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farm	58	NRM North Management Committee Members
24	Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator	59	Attendance at Management Committee and Subcommittee Meetings
25	Weeds Action Fund	60	Management Committee Payments
26	Biodiversity Program	61	NRM North Management Committee Member Profiles
30	Eastern Barred Bandicoot Population Recovery	62	Summary Financial Statements
31	Giant Freshwater Lobster Habitat Recovery	63	Statement of Profit or Loss
32	Ringarooma Ramsar Project	64	Statement of Financial Position
33	Cat Management	65	Statement of Changes in Equity
34	Small Farm Living	66	Statement of Cash Flows
35	Reducing Threats to Hooded Plover Habitat and Population	67	Notes to the Summary Financial Statements
36	Aboriginal NRM Program	70	Management Committee Declaration
40	Cultural Awareness	71	Independent Auditor’s Report



National
Landcare
Program



NRM NORTH CEO REPORT– 2020

On behalf of the Management Committee and staff, it is my pleasure to present to you the 2020 NRM North Yearbook and Annual Report.

The design of the Yearbook is crafted around our four operational programs and addresses strategic direction, a summary of achievements in the past 12 months, our focus for the next year, and a selection of articles on projects and outcomes in each program. The second half of the document is our Annual Report and includes similar information specific to our corporate services program and information on corporate performance and financial management.

A Year to Remember

This has certainly been a year to remember. The widespread and devastating droughts and bushfires across Australia were significant shocks to land managers, businesses, and communities and helped to raise the profile of climate change issues around the world. It is hard to believe something could eclipse those catastrophic events as quickly as the global COVID-19 pandemic; and yet it has.

While NRM North has been fortunate that the impacts of these events have been limited on our capacity to deliver programs, we know that many partners, farmers, and community members are significantly affected. These events will continue to drive a conversation around resilience and adaptive management in natural resource management and will likely be key themes in the update of the Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Strategy due over the next 18 months.

Delivery of NRM outcomes

In the past 12 months, despite these large-scale events, the team at NRM North has been focused on delivering key natural resource management outcomes. In the Yearbook you will read about some of the following key achievements:

- Extension of results from 15 on-farm soil management demonstration sites to address hillslope erosion, soil acidification, and soil carbon in pastures and crops. Early results from pasture trials are showing a distinct increase in dry matter from sowing diverse pastures leading to increased productivity and profitability.

- Protection of 396 hectares of remnant native vegetation on commercial properties to support biodiversity and protect threatened species including the green and gold frog and spotted-tailed quoll.
- Release of two important scientific assessments (Sediment Raking Review and Trevallyn Flow Releases) to inform resource managers of sedimentation management strategies in the upper kanamaluka/Tamar estuary.
- Building community knowledge of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary through the Tamar Forum and release of a social media campaign and video series on key issues impacting the estuary.
- Launch of the 2020 Tamar Estuary Report Card demonstrating improved water quality in the estuary.
- Reduction of pathogens entering the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary by contracting with landholders through Tamar Action Grants funded by the Launceston City Deal for 300 kms of fencing resulting in 630 hectares of riparian area protected and exclusion of 12,000 head of cattle and 140,000 head of sheep from accessing waterways in the Tamar catchment.
- Collaboration with local councils to investigate and remediate the cross-connection of household sewerage systems into the stormwater system in the greater Launceston municipality. Investigations this year identified 19 intrusions and several broken sewerage mains resulting in co-mingling of effluent into the stormwater system leading directly to the estuary.
- Hosting the fourth biennial Small Farm Living Field Day in partnership with Lilydale Landcare attended by over 450 people to learn about ‘the nature of their farm’.
- Five councils and key stakeholders have developed a Draft Regional Cat Management Strategy to support the implementation of the State Cat Management Plan and enhance responsible cat ownership.
- Seven hectares of vegetation have been planted in the West Tamar and Northern Midlands to enhance eastern barred bandicoot habitat.

- Reduction of threats to giant freshwater lobster through fencing of approximately 10 kms of riparian areas, weed management, establishing native riverbank vegetation, and protecting key habitat that provides stream shading and reduces in-stream sediment.
- Controlled over 10 hectares of habitat-altering weeds at key hooded plover nesting sites on the east coast of Tasmania, and implemented a nest warden program including installation of temporary fencing and signage at nest sites to promote fledgling success and educate the community on responsible beach use.

I encourage you to read the articles in the Yearbook to learn more about the work that the team at NRM North has been up to in the past year.

New leadership

This year we welcomed a new Chair of the NRM North Management Committee. Professor Pamela Allan comes with an extensive background and experience in natural resource management and community engagement. For 17 years, Prof. Allan was a member of the New South Wales Parliament and for five years was the Minister for the Environment. Professor Allan has worked with the waste management industry as a strategic policy consultant, chaired local and regional planning panels, and participated on numerous community boards, and chaired the Keep Australia Beautiful not-for-profit organisation in NSW. Professor Allan has had an extensive career in education and is currently an adjunct professor in the School of Technology, Environment and Design with the University of Tasmania. In 2019, Prof. Allan was appointed by the then-Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Peter Gutwein MP, as a member of the reference group established to review the *Tasmanian Local Government Act*. We are very fortunate to have Prof. Allan’s skills and expertise guiding the NRM North Management Committee.

In addition, we welcomed Eleanor Hetharia to the senior management team of the organisation as our new Operations Manager. Ellie has a strong background in environmental and NRM project delivery, policy, planning and regulatory roles at the regional, state,

and federal levels. Ellie has strong leadership, program and project management skills, strategic planning experience, stakeholder engagement and relationship management experience, staff management skills, extensive networks in Canberra and across the country, and extensive technical knowledge of environmental management. When Ellie was recruited, she was the Director of Protected Areas for the Australian Government and prior to that led the high-profile National Landcare Program – Regional Land Partnerships Taskforce for the Australian Government. Ellie has experience in delivering on-ground projects and programs in NRM including biodiversity/threatened species, fire management and environmental restoration projects. We are pleased that Ellie, her husband, and her young family have made Launceston their new home.

Thank you

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our partners, Management Committee, and staff for their contributions to natural resource management in the region. NRM North is successful due to strong collaborative relationships built with our partners. They dedicate time, expertise, and resources to ensure shared programs deliver results at the local, regional, and state level. We are also fortunate to have a dedicated Management Committee that contributes to the organisation above and beyond attendance at meetings. Over the past year, many members have worked shoulder-to-shoulder with the senior management team on improvement projects. Finally, the team at NRM North has worked diligently to deliver a range of existing projects, set up new activities, and share significant on-ground results from our work. Your passion, expertise, and agility drive our success. Thank you all for your continued support.



Rosanna Coombes
CEO

ABOUT NORTHERN TASMANIA

The area defined as the northern region of Tasmania covers 25,200 km² and is bounded by some of Tasmania's most outstanding and picturesque landscapes. From Bass Strait, along the craggy peaks of the Western Tiers to the stunning beaches of the Bay of Fires and the unspoiled islands of the Furneaux and Kent Groups.

More than 145,000 people live in the region, with the major urban areas based around Launceston and the Tamar Valley. The valley is dissected by the iconic kanamaluka/Tamar estuary. At 70 kilometres, it is Australia's longest navigable estuary carrying the combined flows from over 10,000 km² including the waters from the North Esk, South Esk, Meander, Brumbys Lake and Macquarie Rivers.

The many smaller towns that service the rural and coastal communities include numerous historic colonial villages and coastal settlements. The region is governed by the eight municipal councils of Break O'Day, Dorset, George Town, Launceston, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, West Tamar and Flinders (covering the eastern Bass Strait islands).

Much of the region's wealth is derived from industries such as agriculture, viticulture, forestry, tourism, fishing, aquaculture and recreation – all of which depend on our natural resources. Regional agriculture alone generates more than \$632m annually¹, while 79% of Tasmania's wine² is produced within the NRM North jurisdiction.

We are fortunate to have a large number of people in our region eager to improve their natural resource assets, whether that be individually or through community groups.

¹Australian Bureau of Statistics, Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced, Australia 2017-18. <https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/7503.0>

²DPIPWE Wine Market Profile. <https://dipwe.tas.gov.au/Documents/Wine%20Profile%20updated%20March%202014.pdf>

ABOUT NRM NORTH

Trading as NRM North, the Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Association Inc., is one of three formally recognised regional natural resource management bodies in Tasmania and one of 54 across Australia.

NRM North is a not-for-profit organisation established in March 2003 through a community-driven process in response to the Tasmanian Government's Natural Resource Management Framework and its enabling legislation, the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (Amendments 2018)*.

NRM North's vision is to be the leading non-government organisation in natural resource management across northern Tasmania.

Our vision is supported by the following principles:

- Whilst the government provides the majority of funding for the activities of the organisation, NRM North is independent in its decision making and seeking alternative funding sources.
- We aim to change people's attitudes and actions towards managing the natural resources of our region and implement relevant activities on the ground.
- We recognise northern Tasmania is made up of the sub-regions of the Dorset, Break O'Day, Tamar, Meander Valley, Flinders Island and Northern Midlands communities.
- The constitution of NRM North ensures a balance of the region's NRM interests are represented within the Northern Tasmania Natural Resource Management Association Inc., therefore reflecting the principles outlined in the state's Natural Resource Management Framework.
- The Association includes representatives from a diverse group of people from the Aboriginal community, industry, local government, conservation groups, public and private land managers and others who have expertise or an interest in the region's natural resources.
- The membership of the NRM North Management Committee is skills-based (including NRM related skills) to ensure the affairs of the organisation are managed to achieve both the functions of the NRM Act and the aspirations of the Association and broader community as set out in the regional NRM strategy in accordance with good governance principles.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN TASMANIA 2015 – 2020

The Natural Resource Management Strategy for Northern Tasmania 2015-2020 (regional strategy) was developed in consultation with stakeholders and the community to establish an integrated framework to facilitate sustainable management of northern Tasmania's natural resources. The regional strategy is one of three in Tasmania and is complemented by the strategies for southern Tasmania and the Cradle Coast region.

As a whole-of-community strategy, it aims to balance economic, social, and environmental objectives and encourage partnerships between community, industry and government to benefit the region's natural resources.

The regional strategy does not have statutory power or replace any current mechanism or policy relating to natural resource management but seeks to build partnerships between stakeholders and develop synergies between planning and management processes.

While the regional strategy aims to encourage actions by all stakeholders and the community, the NRM North Management Committee draws on the key outcomes in the regional strategy to identify the actions that NRM North will deliver. The NRM North programs are identified in the NRM North Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (organisational strategy).

The regional strategy must be reviewed and amended at least every five years. Staff will work with stakeholders and the community on the update of the regional strategy over the coming 18 months. A more detailed article on the review process is included in the Annual Report section of this document.

Following the regional strategy update process, NRM North will review and amend its organisational strategic plan.

NRM NORTH STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2023

To direct the operations of NRM North, the Management Committee has adopted the NRM North Strategic Plan (2019-2023) which includes five program pillars:

- Biodiversity
- Water
- Land
- Aboriginal NRM
- Corporate Services

Some of our key achievements are outlined in the program summaries that follow.



The kanamaluka/Tamar estuary underpins the region's social, recreational and economic values. Photo: Sam Jack.

WATER PROGRAM

PROGRAM AIM

To maintain and enhance ecosystem health of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary and Brid and George catchments through water quality improvement.

THE BIG PICTURE

Water assets in the NRM North region include surface water, ground water, freshwater lakes, wetlands and estuaries. These assets are essential for the provision of clean drinking water, recreational amenity and industry, and support diverse and unique aquatic ecosystems. The kanamaluka/Tamar estuary is a focal point for residents and visitors to the region and underpins recreational and economic values. The health of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary has been a long-standing issue of contention in the community. The upper reaches of the estuary are under pressure from high loads of diffuse and point source pollutants including nutrients, sediments, metals, and pathogens. Other key catchments in the region that support townships and face similar water quality pressures include the Brid and the George catchments. There is an opportunity to work with key partners, landholders, and the community to address the pressures facing our rivers and estuaries and to reduce pollutants entering our waterways from urban and diffuse (catchment) sources.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

The Water Program focuses on improving water quality and enhancing the ecological, social, and economic value of the region’s waterways by reducing the load of diffuse (catchment) and point source (industry and sewage treatment plants) pollutants entering waterways. The target catchments and issues NRM North will focus on between 2015-2025 include:

- building the capacity and knowledge of the community and management agencies to understand and manage stormwater quality, sewage treatment plant discharges and overflows and recreational water quality; and
- on-ground actions to reduce pollutants entering waterways from dairy areas in the Meander, Brid and George catchments and grazing areas in the Brid, George, North Esk, Macquarie and Brumbys Lake catchments.



The TEER Program continues to identify opportunities to reduce pollutant inputs and improve water quality in the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary. Photo: Sam Jack.

2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Launched the 2020 Tamar Estuary Report Card, demonstrating improved water quality in the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary.
- Developed the TEER Program Strategic Plan 2020-2024 with a continued focus on working together, understanding our waterways, and building community knowledge.
- Released the Sediment Raking Review and Trevallyn Flow Releases Study, informing resource managers and decision makers on sedimentation management strategies in the upper estuary.
- Built community knowledge and awareness through the Tamar Forum and education about gambusia at Science Week and the Ecological Society of Australia conference.
- Facilitated best practice stormwater management through soil and erosion control training with the Master Builders Association.
- Identified 19 incidents of sewerage intrusions and 2 broken sewer mains resulting in co-mingling of effluent into the stormwater system leading directly to the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary. Most of these issues have been remediated.
- Landholders have been contracted through Tamar Action Grants for 300 kms of fencing to achieve 630 hectares of riparian area protected and exclusion of 12,000 head of cattle and 140,000 head of sheep from accessing waterways in the Tamar catchment.
- Conducted summer algal bloom monitoring at Lake Trevallyn with no blooms detected.
- Continued the Ecosystem Health Assessment Program (EHAP) monitoring, collecting monthly samples along the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary to inform report card grades.

2020/21 FOCUS

- Continue monitoring the health of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary through EHAP.
- Facilitate capacity building for best practice stormwater management, and work with the Southern Stormwater Taskforce to develop a state-wide approach to stormwater management.
- Continue to deliver projects to reduce pathogens entering the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary by:
 - completing stormwater intrusion investigations in the Launceston urban area to reduce intrusion of sewage into the stormwater network;
 - continuing to support dairy and grazing landholders to undertake riparian management activities and exclude stock from waterways through the Tamar Action Grants; and
 - continuing to support dairy farmers to improve dairy effluent management practices and reduce stock effluent from entering waterways.
- Review long-term data collected from the Lake Trevallyn Algal Bloom Monitoring Program to inform future monitoring and management.
- Build community knowledge and awareness through an educational video series and Tamar Discovery event.
- Continue monitoring saltmarsh and other biological species and communities.

TAMAR ESTUARY AND ESK RIVERS EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN

The Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program was established in 2008 and is a regional partnership between the agencies responsible for management of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary and Esk rivers system. The TEER system is the largest catchment in Tasmania and covers 10,000 km² of the state and drains approximately 15% of Tasmania. The TEER Program aims to provide a coordinated approach to management and a guide for solutions and investment to protect, maintain and restore the waterways from 'catchment to coast'.

A key goal of the program is to improve our scientific understanding of issues impacting the health of the TEER waterways to better identify and target priority areas requiring investment in on-ground works. The TEER Program fosters collaborative partnerships and works closely with a range of partners including industry, government, research and development institutions, business, natural resource management organisations and the community to monitor and report on waterway health as well as coordinating activities to reduce pollutants entering waterways.

TEER Program Manager, Dr Jo Fearman, said the local community plays an important role in working together for healthy waterways, and as such, building community knowledge of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary and Esk rivers is an important part of the TEER Program.

"The kanamaluka/Tamar estuary and Esk rivers support social, recreational, environmental and economic values that are highly valued by our community. The estuary is where these systems meet and it's important that our community understands the rich and diverse aquatic ecosystem in our own backyard."

Dr Jo Fearman

This year the TEER Program released an education campaign featuring science and history experts as well as representatives from partner organisations including industry, government, and community, to explore some of the issues that continue to capture the attention of the local community. Information has been shared through videos and fact sheets covering a range of topics such as the formation of the estuary, pollutants in the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary, and our resilience to flooding.

Knowledge and Content Manager at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Christine Hansen, said the social history of the estuary is an important part of our community.

"I think we are people of the estuary. We're not entirely freshwater people, or 100% saltwater people. We live in that place where freshwater and saltwater meet, and that's really magical. I'd love to see the tidal nature of the estuary brought into people's consciousness."

Building community knowledge of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary enhances our opportunity to work together for healthy waterways and helps to ensure that science-based evidence is used for decision making.

Did you know...

While the kanamaluka/Tamar River is its official name, the waterway is actually an estuary with the tidal influence extending into the North Esk through to Hoblers Bridge.

An estuary is where freshwater from rivers meets marine water from the sea. The tide can bring saline water all the way up the estuary during summer when freshwater flows from the rivers are lower.



West Tamar Council General Manager and TEER Chair, Rolph Vos, being interviewed for the education campaign. Photo: NRM North.

TEER ECOSYSTEM HEALTH ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AND 2020 TAMAR ESTUARY REPORT CARD

The TEER Ecosystem Health Assessment Program (EHAP) covers an area extending 70 kilometres from the Tamar Yacht Basin at the confluence of the North and South Esk Rivers to the mouth of the estuary at Low Head. Since 2016, the EHAP has conducted continuous monitoring of the estuary, publishing biennial report cards detailing the health of the waterway.

With logistical support from EHAP partner TasWater, monthly samples are taken from 16 sites along the estuary and tested for a suite of water quality parameters. The data is collated and used in the preparation of report cards, as well as being accessible to the community for research and industry investigations related to the estuary. The seventh Tamar Estuary Report Card, released in July 2020, revealed improvements to water quality throughout the estuary compared to the previous report in 2018.

Chair of the TEER Program, Rolph Vos, said the findings are encouraging.

"It's rewarding to see water quality is improving in the estuary, and we'll continue to see improvement as we work with the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce on collaborative management of the estuary."

Rolf Vos

Established under the Launceston City Deal, the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (TEMT) has developed a River Health Action Plan to recommend priority investments and policy actions used to measure estuarine health and will look at ongoing governance of the estuary. More information about the River Health Action Plan can be viewed on p16-17.

TEMT Chair, Gary Swain, said the work of the TEER Program provides science-based evidence to help formulate policy and planning.

"The TEER Program establishes the facts around water quality which is vital to the TEMT's work in developing informed policy proposals about the long-term future of the estuary."

Gary Swain

The report card uses a grading system from A to F for five zones in the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary. The grades represent the overall health of the estuary. Compared to the previous report card, Zone 1

(Launceston to Legana) improved from a 'Fail' to 'Poor' grade while Zone 5 (the lower part of the estuary at Low Head) had the greatest change, improving from a 'Fair' to 'Excellent' grade.

Improvements in water quality across the estuary can be attributed to the lack of extreme weather events and the cessation of sediment raking. Water quality in the lower estuary is excellent, in fact it is the best water quality that has been recorded since monitoring began 10 years ago. In the upper estuary, water quality has improved significantly from 2018 but remains in poor condition. The reduction in metals and turbidity and the improvement in dissolved oxygen is offset by the presence of elevated nutrients from various sources.

The TEER Program continues to work with partners to identify opportunities to reduce pollutant inputs and improve water quality in the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary.

The EHAP partners include: NRM North, the Tasmanian Government, the Environment Protection Authority, Department of Health, City of Launceston, West Tamar Council, Meander Valley Council, Northern Midlands Council, TasWater, Hydro Tasmania, Bell Bay Aluminium, Petuna Aquaculture, South 32 TEMCO, UTAS and the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS).



Sites are monitored from Kings Bridge to the mouth of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary at Low Head. Photo: Sam Jack.

LAKE TREVALLYN BLUE GREEN ALGAE MONITORING

The blue-green algae *Dolichospermum circinale* (also known as *Anabaena circinalis*) was first discovered in Lake Trevallyn in bloom proportions in January 2007. This bloom was the catalyst for the establishment of the Lake Trevallyn Algal Bloom Monitoring Program and Working Group. The group’s aim is to monitor the occurrence of algal blooms in Lake Trevallyn during the peak summer recreational period, providing early warning mechanisms to water authorities and the public. The program also aims to understand the key drivers influencing bloom formation and develop suitable mitigation and management strategies.

Some of the key findings from the 2019/20 monitoring season revealed *D. circinale* cells were present in Lake Trevallyn, however they did not increase to bloom proportions.

The monitoring period also found:

- surface water temperature was above 20°C for 3 weeks prior to the peak cell count, and although important in maintaining algal blooms, it is not the main driver of bloom formation;
- residence time was high (>6 days) and inflows low until the end of January which coincided with the peak cell count; and
- wind speed was rarely below the 8 metres per second threshold thought to be required to increase thermal gradients and therefore the likelihood of bloom formation.

A review of historical data is planned to further investigate the drivers of bloom formation and to inform future monitoring and management responses.



Blue-green algae *Dolichospermum circinale*. Photo: Dr Darcie Leong.

TEER STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2024

The vision of the TEER Program is to be ‘a trusted and respected provider of science and evidence that informs decision making to protect, restore and enhance water quality in the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary and its rivers from catchment to coast’. This is separate from, but complementary to, the work of the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (TEMT) whose role is to form policy and source investment for improvements to waterway health.

The role of TEER is to improve the understanding of issues impacting waterway health to better identify and target priority areas requiring on-ground action. To achieve this, the TEER Strategic Plan 2020-2024 outlines three future directions:

1. Work together to provide integrated governance, planning and management.
2. Understand and advise on waterway health.
3. Build community knowledge and awareness.

Under the Strategic Plan 2020–2024, the TEER Program will continue its core activities such as water quality monitoring and stormwater management as well as developing a greater focus on building community knowledge and awareness and enhancing biological monitoring.



The TEER Program investigates issues impacting waterway health and identifies priority actions to improve water quality. Photo: Ryan De Bruyn.

TAMAR RIVER HEALTH ACTION PLAN: CATCHMENT WORKS PROGRAM

In 2018 the Tasmanian and Australian governments jointly committed to funding the recommendations from the River Health Action Plan. The plan released by the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (TEMT) identified investments to improve the health of kanamaluka/Tamar estuary with the primary goal of improving public health through reduced pathogen concentrations.

Selected as the preferred provider for delivery of the plan's catchment actions, NRM North established the Tamar River Health Action Plan - Catchment Works Program. With additional support secured through the Australian Government's Tamar Estuary River Health Grant, a total investment of \$11.5M over six years from 2018/19 was secured to support implementation of catchment works including:

- excluding stock access to waterways;
- rehabilitating riparian vegetation buffers on grazing properties;
- improving effluent management on dairy farms; and
- addressing instances of sewage intrusion from the separated stormwater systems in Launceston's urban areas.

These actions are expected to reduce pathogen concentrations in the Launceston to Legana Zone 1 of the estuary by more than 4 per cent.

With support from local and state governments, DairyTas and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, NRM North established a collaborative partnership to oversee and guide implementation of the Tamar River Health Action Plan - Catchment Works across rural and urban catchment areas.

In the urban landscape, action is underway to identify and address instances of sewage intrusion into the separated stormwater system. These works are built on the success of a City of Launceston program that found sewage intrusion into the separated stormwater system in parts of Launceston was causing elevated pathogen levels in stormwater that directly discharged into the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary. Rectifying these issues resulted in significant and measurable improvements in pathogen levels. In partnership with the City of Launceston and West Tamar Council, the

program extended these actions across Launceston urban catchment areas including Riverside, Mowbray and Punchbowl, with further investigations continuing. These actions will include the suburbs of Ravenswood, St Leonards, West Tamar and Prospect Vale in the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

To date, the program has identified and remediated 19 instances of sewage intrusion and two broken sewer mains spilling through to the stormwater systems with direct flows to the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary.

In the rural landscape, the Tamar Action Grants provide financial support to landholders for the implementation of on-ground works across grazing and dairy industries in the Tamar catchment. More about the Tamar Action Grants can be viewed in the following article.

NRM North's partnership with DairyTas will:

- include an effluent extension program to build the capacity and skills to develop environmentally sensitive effluent management practices;
- support the revision of effluent management plans; and
- provide access to the Tamar Action Grants to support on-ground works.

The extension program included workshops and field days to educate and showcase best practice effluent management within the dairy industry including the Sustainable Dairying and Effluent Expo which was restricted to virtual delivery in 2020 due to COVID-19.



Targeted catchments of the NRM North RHAP Program.

RHAP TAMAR ACTION GRANTS

The Tamar Action Grants continue to attract widespread support and interest from dairy and grazing landholders within the Tamar catchment to improve water quality by limiting stock access to waterways and reducing effluent runoff.

Now in the second year of operation, the Tamar Action Grants support a range of funded activities including the installation of waterway fencing; provision of alternative water supply; stock crossings; riparian revegetation; and effluent management upgrades on dairy farms.

In just over 12 months, funding to support more than 300 km of waterway fencing has been committed. These on-ground works will exclude over 10,000 cows, 147,000 sheep and 1,500 dairy cows from accessing waterways, resulting in a significant reduction in pathogens entering the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary.

NRM North Catchment Coordinator, Jesse Webster, said restricting large numbers of stock from waterways will have significant environmental improvements.

"Every project has the primary goal of reducing pathogens from entering the waterway by excluding stock, but once stock is removed, you will see the vegetation bounce back which reduces potential bank erosion, allows riverbanks to become more resilient to flooding, decreases sediment entering the waterway and improves water quality for everyone."

Landholder interest has exceeded expectations, with applications for 40% of the 730 km target area for stock exclusion approved in the first 12 months. Grant recipient Ben Morrison, who is a landholder on the Nile and South Esk Rivers, said the funding is an attractive incentive to support actions that will ultimately improve waterway health.

"Funding of this size doesn't always come along, so as a landholder you need to jump on-board these opportunities. The flexibility of the program allows us to construct 7 km of river fencing and install 10 water troughs, excluding 13,400 sheep from the river ... it has also allowed us to invest our own money to remove about 25 hectares of gorse and plan for revegetation which will be great for the river's long-term recovery."

Ben Morrison

The Tamar Action Grants are part of the Tamar River Health Action Plan - Catchment Works Program resulting from work undertaken by the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce and funded through the Launceston City Deal.

The program runs until June 2024.



TAG recipient Ben Morrison will undertake works on his Nile property to exclude 13,400 sheep from the river. Photo: NRM North.

LAND PROGRAM

PROGRAM AIM

To improve soil health and the adoption of best management practices in northern Tasmania's productive agricultural landscapes for improved profitability, sustainability, and resilience.

THE BIG PICTURE

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors in the northern regional economy with the gross value of agriculture across Tasmania of \$1.6 billion in 2017-18, increasing by 9.1%.

Creating an awareness of practices and promoting adoption of those practices that lead to resilience of the farming business, its people and resources, is critically important as farmers are faced with increasing economic, social and biophysical pressures such as climate change. Supporting farmers to enhance resilience and manage these increasing pressures is a priority of the Land Program.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

The strategic focus of the Land Program is to build the skills and capacity of farmers in the northern region to better manage soil health and to promote the adoption of best management practices which will help mitigate soil degradation and economic loss.

As soil health is one of the foundations of productive and profitable agricultural enterprises, our focus on soil health is considered a good investment.

Between 2015-2025 NRM North’s Land Program will support farmers through:

- increased adoption of best management practices across the region;
- increased adoption of practices to mitigate hillslope erosion and soil acidification, and increase soil carbon;
- increased awareness of practices to reduce wind erosion, soil compaction and salinity;
- protection of Tasmania’s natural values and assisting farmers to improve agricultural productivity through the removal of invasive weeds; and
- increased resilience against economic, social and biophysical pressures.

2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Completion and final report on the hillslope erosion mitigation trial at Deloraine.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the four established carbon in pasture trials.
- Staged report of 14 soil acidification trials in the north-east farming region and Fingal Valley.
- Ten farmers on Flinders Island have volunteered to host lime trials between 2020 and 2022.
- Over 106 people attended in-person hillslope erosion, carbon in pastures and crops and soil acidification events, as well as participation of 59 farmers in online webinars.
- The Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator supported farmer’s knowledge of and access to a range of Tasmanian and Australian Government grant opportunities.
- The Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farms sub-project expanded to include Flinders Island. In total, 797 hectares of proposed revegetation and native vegetation protection works have been assessed across 56 sites. To date, eight new agreements have been created to protect 433 hectares of native vegetation in the Flinders Island target area over the next two years.

2020/21 FOCUS

- Further development of soil acidification trials on Flinders Island.
- Continue to monitor species diversity and production within the carbon in pastures trials.
- Continue to expand and build on our networks and provide relevant, practical information and ideas about best management practice for sustainability and profitability to farmers, industry bodies, community groups and other interested parties.
- Establish and evaluate the carbon in crops trial in the Northern Midlands.
- Provide a targeted approach to tackling high priority weeds to improve the productive value of agricultural land and protect Tasmania’s natural values through the delivery of the Weeds Action Fund on behalf of the Tasmanian Government.



The Land Program investigates practices for optimum soil health and agricultural productivity.

SOIL HEALTH, VEGETATION AND BIODIVERSITY ON-FARM

NRM North's farm demonstration trials in the 2019-2020 financial year have revealed practical and productivity-boosting advantages available to the region's farmers and agriculture industry, including the cost-effectiveness of soil erosion controls, pasture composition changes from liming and improved pasture production from plant diversity.

Before the impact of COVID-19, NRM North engaged nearly 100 farmers and industry staff in field days and workshops that involved demonstrations and presentations from industry experts.

Investigations into the effect different lime products have on pastures are continuing at 14 farms around Tomahawk, Waterhouse, Winnaleah and in the Fingal Valley.

Pasture consultant Eric Hall said the trials have returned some interesting results.

"There was a distinct change in better grass frequency within the limed plots and a reduction in weedy grasses."

Eric Hall

Ten farmers on Flinders Island have volunteered to host lime trials between 2020 and 2022.

In another on-ground demonstration, the hillslope erosion trial at Weetah revealed groundcover from plants was the most beneficial and cost-effective defence against productivity loss due to hillslope erosion.

Other current trials are looking at the cost-benefit ratio of highly diverse pastures. Early findings from



Investigations into the use of lime products on pastures has returned positive results. Photo: NRM North.

the trials in Scottsdale, Hagley and Rosevale, have revealed a distinct increase in dry matter production for the diverse plots.

Scottsdale farmer Clinton Lette said the initial results are promising.

"We are looking at increasing our pasture diversity in the coming spring, with the renovation of one paddock as part of our program."

Clinton Lette

In partnership with Southern Farming Systems, the Land Program is also investigating a range of techniques to increase soil carbon in mixed farming areas of the Northern Midlands.

Whilst the trials have drawn strong interest and participation, the onset of COVID-19 has had a significant impact in project delivery. As such, an online format was adopted to continue to provide information and resources, and extend trial findings with the farming community. NRM North produced a series of short videos with farmers and industry experts from trial locations. These were posted to Youtube and accompanied by trial fact sheets and webinars to facilitate community discussion about the trials and trial outcomes.

The program also focuses on increasing connectivity and habitat for threatened species by supporting farmers to protect and establish native vegetation on-farm. The Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farms sub-project has continued to have great success engaging commercial landholders to protect native vegetation on-farm and improve habitat for threatened species, including the green and gold frog (*Litoria raniformis*) and spotted-tailed quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*). To date, stock have been excluded from 104 hectares of native vegetation, and six hectares of revegetation has been completed on farms in the north-east coastal plains target area.

In 2020, the project target area expanded to include Flinders Island. In total, 797 hectares of proposed revegetation and native vegetation protection works have been assessed across 56 sites. To date, eight new agreements have been created to protect 433 hectares of native vegetation in the Flinders Island target area over the next two years.



Soil erosion trials explore the cost-benefit ratio of erosion mitigation techniques. Photo: NRM North.

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE LANDCARE FACILITATOR

NRM North's Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) provides important core agricultural services across the state's north by supporting farmers, industry and community groups (including Landcare Groups) to adopt new and innovative sustainable agriculture practices. Establishing and building partnerships with these key groups is also central to the RALF role.

In 2019-2020, NRM North's Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator, Adrian James, worked collaboratively to implement solutions to various issues facing the agricultural industry in Tasmania's north; support the delivery of local and state-wide events; encourage collaboration between the regional NRM bodies; and deliver information including grant opportunities to the farming community.

Mr James said providing advice and support to farmers is a major focus of the Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator.

"After hearing about funding opportunities for rebates on stock-water equipment and works to improve drought resilience, we were able to promote the opportunity, helping farmers without internet access over the phone. The result was a higher-than expected uptake and consequently, a higher level of funding support to help provide drinking water for livestock during future dry seasons."

Adrian James

The RALF also led a collaboration between people in different organisations working in Tasmania on soil health projects funded by the Australian Government's Regional Land Partnerships. This includes the state's three regional NRM bodies and other organisations such as Southern Farming Systems.

By working with farmers, industry, and community groups to promote sustainable agricultural practices and to support RLP agricultural projects, RALFs contribute towards the RLP program's agricultural outcomes, which (by 2023) include:

- an increase in the awareness and adoption of land management practices that improve and protect the condition of soil, biodiversity, and vegetation; and
- an increase in the capacity of agriculture systems to adapt to significant changes in climate and market demands for information on provenance and sustainable production.

Like many programs and projects, the RALF role was impacted by COVID-19, with some events, including the Tasmanian Precision Agriculture Expo, being cancelled. However, NRM North's RALF will continue to provide assistance to individual farmers, support farmer groups and work towards larger projects in the industry in future years.



The RALF works collaboratively to deliver solutions and opportunities to farmers. Photo: Adrian James.

WEEDS ACTION FUND

NRM North is pleased to have been selected to assist the Tasmanian Government in the delivery of Stage 2 of the \$5M Weeds Action Fund (WAF). The funds will be invested with farmers and other community organisations to tackle weeds that are impacting valuable agricultural and environmental assets.

The Weeds Action Fund seeks to:

- provide a more strategic and targeted approach to tackling high priority weeds that affect agriculture and the environment;
- improve the productive value of agricultural land and protect Tasmania's natural values through removing the harmful effects of serious weed threats;
- support landowners, local government and the broader community in tackling serious weeds with sustainable, long-term and effective actions;

- ensure there is a strong, coordinated link between the different levels of government and the Tasmanian community in tackling serious weeds and the delivery of the WAF through the appointment of a Chair of the Weeds Action Fund; and

- encourage the concept of shared responsibility for weed management and biosecurity, and provide an opportunity for landowners to co-invest in removing the threat of serious weeds on their properties.

NRM North will be working with our delivery partners NRM South and Cradle Coast Authority, with the Chair of the Weeds Action Fund, Ian Sauer, and with the Department of Primary Industry Parks, Water and Environment, to prepare for the first round of applications in Stage 2 this spring.



Orange hawkweed (*Hieracium aurantiacum*) has been found in open woodland and grasslands, poor pastures, roadsides and neglected areas in the Southern Midlands, Central Highlands and around Hobart. Photo: DPIPWE.

BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM

PROGRAM AIM

To maintain and enhance landscape function for biodiversity, with a focus on protecting habitat for communities and species and listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act)* and Ramsar wetland values in northern Tasmania.

THE BIG PICTURE

The NRM North region comprises approximately 60% natural landscapes which support native species, communities, and ecosystems. These biodiversity-rich natural landscapes are highly valued for the way they characterise Tasmania, being a significant drawcard for the tourism industry and Tasmania’s economy. However, the biodiversity values are under increasing threat from habitat loss, changing land use and development pressures, weeds, pests and diseases, climate change, and natural disasters such as floods, drought, and fire. There is an opportunity to work with public and private land managers to implement on-ground action and to support policy and planning initiatives to buffer the impact of these threats and pressures on our biodiversity.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

The Biodiversity Program aims to protect and enhance native habitat and landscape function, with a focus on high value natural assets including threatened species and ecological communities, endemic species and Ramsar wetland sites. The priority natural assets and associated actions have been selected based on NRM North’s capacity to achieve long-term positive outcomes by increasing community awareness and involvement and working with a range of partners across land tenures.

The biodiversity assets NRM North will focus on between 2015-2025 include:

- endemic species such as Shy Susan (*Tetratheca gunnii*) and Davies Wax Flower;
- nationally listed species including the giant freshwater lobster and eastern barred bandicoot; and
- Ramsar sites including the Ringarooma River.

2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Commenced a 4-year project to reduce threats to the internationally listed Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River wetland complex.
- Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project planning and data-gathering phase finalised. To date, over 27 hectares of land have been contracted for revegetation work and 16 hectares of native vegetation to be fenced off from livestock; 7 hectares of habitat have already been planted.
- The 4th biennial Small Farm Living Field Day held in partnership with Lilydale Landcare achieved record attendance (over 450 attendees).
- The Giant Freshwater Crayfish Project has engaged many landholders across three catchments to protect and improve waterway habitat.
- Five councils and key stakeholders have developed a Draft Regional Cat Management Strategy for the Tasmanian Cat Management Project, bolstering a coordinated approach in the north.
- ‘Defending the Hood’ Project engaged nest wardens to monitor the success of nesting hooded plovers on east coast beaches. A comprehensive population survey of east coast shorebirds was also completed.

2020/21 FOCUS

- Continue on-ground works in partnership with landholders and communities for Regional Land Partnerships projects including eastern barred bandicoot, giant freshwater lobster, vegetation on-farms, and the Ringarooma Ramsar site.
- Continue citizen science projects to collect vital information for threatened species projects, such as eastern barred bandicoot and giant freshwater lobster.
- Commence ‘Bandicoots in Backyards’ Project to engage urban residents in conservation activities for eastern barred bandicoot where the species exists within urban environments.
- Conduct population surveys for shorebirds on Flinders Island and the east coast, with a focus on the threatened hooded plover, and a stronger focus on education and community involvement for hooded plover conservation on Flinders Island.
- Targeted monitoring, surveys, and participation in conservation planning for critically endangered plant Shy Susan (*Tetratheca gunnii*) which exists only in the Beaconsfield Hills.
- Implement high priority and cost-effective actions, in collaboration with local councils and key stakeholders, while continuing community education around responsible cat ownership.



A key focus of the Biodiversity Program is to protect and enhance native habitat and landscape function.

EASTERN BARRED BANDICOOT PROJECT

Safeguarding northern Tasmania as a refuge for eastern barred bandicoot

The Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project aims to increase community awareness about threats to the species and ways to mitigate those threats. Activities include improvement of habitat through planting suitable species to provide habitat patches, and fencing stock out of vegetation to allow regeneration of understory.

The eastern barred bandicoot is vulnerable to predation by cats, infection with toxoplasmosis (a disease carried by cats), and loss of habitat which includes grassy areas where they forage for insects, and areas of dense undergrowth that provide refuge from predation. The project has been well received by landholders in the West Tamar and Northern Midlands municipalities, with 25 landholders signing management agreements to protect and enhance habitat for the threatened species.

NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator, Jo Lyall, said commitment from landholders is key to the success of the project.

“Interest from compassionate and resolute landholders is resulting in some great outcomes for the preservation of resident bandicoot populations.”

To date, landholders have signed up over 27 hectares of land for revegetation work and 16 hectares of native vegetation to be fenced off from livestock.



Baby eastern barred bandicoot found on a participating property in Glengarry. Photo: Jo Lyall.

Positive results have been achieved so far by working in collaboration with project partners. The West Tamar Landcare Group has coordinated working bees to assist participating landholders to complete on-ground works, and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy has captured critical data using motion-activated cameras. Data analysis will indicate any change in the number and location of bandicoots, as well as their numbers at sites where works are undertaken, compared to control sites.

To date, monitoring has been undertaken at 89 sites including some control sites, and 18 habitat management plans have been produced to advise landholders about actions they can take to look after fauna and flora on their properties.

Dr. Helen Morgan from the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, who is overseeing the monitoring program, said the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project is helping to raise awareness about their vulnerability.

“The wildlife cameras are showing us where they live and what they do at night. I hope more people will protect habitat and contain their cats.”

Dr. Helen Morgan

The project is also working with northern region’s Cat Management Coordinator to raise awareness about responsible cat ownership.

So far, most of the participating properties are rural or semi-rural, but the project is expanding to the urban environment with the launch of the ‘Bandicoots in Backyards’ scheme, which will provide tailored landscape designs to encourage bandicoot-friendly plantings on smaller properties.

With the loss of natural habitat in the urban environment, bandicoots are even more at risk from roaming cats, hence creating attractive landscape design while providing a bandicoot refuge is mutually beneficial for householders and bandicoots. This may also provide habitat for a range of other native fauna in the urban environment.

With funding from the Australian Government’s Regional Landcare Program, the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project seeks to inspire the community to look after this endearing species, which has one of its last strongholds in northern Tasmania.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR GIANT FRESHWATER LOBSTER RECOVERY PROJECT

The ‘Partnerships for Giant Freshwater Lobster Recovery’ Project continues to have great success, with habitat protection and rehabilitation works now completed along five kilometres of high-priority river reaches in north-east Tasmania.

The giant freshwater lobster (*Astacopsis gouldi*) is endemic to northern Tasmania and is the largest freshwater invertebrate in the world. Also known as the giant freshwater crayfish, the species has been protected since 1998. The giant freshwater lobster is listed as a threatened species under both the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and the *Tasmanian Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*.

The project is now entering its third year and aims to expand the distribution of remaining populations of the iconic species in the Pipers, Brid and Boobyalla catchments in north-east Tasmania. The giant freshwater lobster faces threats from large-scale habitat disturbance or loss, siltation of waterways, poaching, drought, and climate change, with populations in the state’s north-east suffering the largest declines.

In 2019/20, the Boobyalla catchment was added as a target area for the project. The Boobyalla catchment is considered by experts as one of the few remaining catchments in Tasmania’s north-east, with a stronghold of high-quality riparian habitat holding great promise for the future of the species. To date, the project has engaged with 36 landholders across the three catchments. Ten are currently contracted to complete a total of over 10 kilometres of habitat protection and rehabilitation works in high-priority river reaches.

Works undertaken include fencing stock out of waterways, controlling riverbank weeds, establishing native riverbank vegetation, and installing off-stream water sources for stock. The on-ground works will help to address key threats to the species by reducing siltation of waterways, stabilising riverbanks, and increasing stream shading to stabilise water temperatures.

The project also facilitates a citizen science program that aims to fill key knowledge gaps by training community volunteers to undertake habitat assessments and water quality monitoring. Giant

freshwater lobster expert Todd Walsh presented a training day in December 2019 at a property engaged to undertake habitat rehabilitation works in Lilydale. He said community volunteers provide valuable data.

“The citizen science program will help to find more of the existing populations but also provide information about the overall habitat in the north-east.”

Todd Walsh

There has been strong enthusiasm from the community to learn more about the species and contribute to the project, while taking the opportunity to explore their local rivers and streams. Since the start of the project, 34 community members have been trained with the skills and knowledge to begin collecting habitat data.

NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator Lauren Bird said the community response is encouraging.

“People are really interested in finding out more about this unique species, and they’re keen to help its conservation in whatever way they can. The more people that know about the species, its habitat needs, and potential threats, the better chance we have of success in our conservation efforts.”

The Partnerships for Giant Freshwater Lobster Project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program.



NRM North volunteers learn how to undertake habitat assessments to aid giant freshwater lobster recovery. Photo: Lauren Bird.

RINGAROOMA RAMSAR PROJECT

In July 2019, NRM North commenced delivery of a four-year project ‘Reducing threats to the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site’. The site in Tasmania’s north-east is one of 10 wetland complexes in the state that are listed under the Ramsar convention, considered internationally important.

Although remote and seldom visited, the site has been heavily impacted over the past two centuries, with prolific mining in the catchment above releasing millions of tonnes of sediment which have altered the waterways.

Today, the majority of the 3,500 hectare Ramsar site is located on private agricultural land, with the remainder within the Cameron Regional Reserve. The upper catchment of the Ringarooma supports farming communities, reserves, and production forests.

The Ringarooma Ramsar site is a culturally rich and significant landscape. There are several landforms within the project area that are considered to be culturally sensitive (coastline, creeks, the Ringarooma River, lagoons and wetlands) with a high likelihood that unrecorded Aboriginal heritage may occur within the project area (Aboriginal Heritage Tasmania, 2019).

Encompassing at least 10 wetland types and various ecological communities including marshes, swamps, and shallow lakes, the Ramsar site extends from freshwater systems upstream to coastal estuarine areas. The area is home to rare flora and fauna and provides habitat for migratory birds, and breeding grounds for fish and macroinvertebrates.

This project focuses on approximately 1,000 hectares of the site including freshwater wetland vegetation communities, and 9,500 hectares of agricultural land that drains to these wetlands.

The aim is to improve the quality of surface water draining to the wetland ecosystems, remove infestations of environmental weeds, and improve our knowledge of native vegetation.

NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator Monique Case, who is managing the project, said it is exciting to be working in such a significant landscape.

“Managing wetlands sustainably is in the best interests of everyone ... It is important to work with wetlands in ways that provide benefits now,

whilst preserving services such as nutrient cycling, groundwater regulation, and fish production for future generations.”

The initial focus has been on planning and investigation, including field work for the development of a Water Quality Improvement Plan and a Vegetation Management Plan that will inform on-ground investment in the future.

Crucial to the success of the project is ongoing commitment from and engagement with the local farming community. Negotiations with landholders have been positive to date, with memoranda of understanding with two landholders successfully ratified.

Development of the Water Quality Model is underway, covering assessment of nutrient sources, sediment and pathogen pollution in the catchment, and the projected impact of management actions such as fencing stock out of streams and wetlands, revegetation of waterways and improving effluent management.

Dr. Rebecca Kelly, director of consulting firm isNRM is working on the development of the model. She said the data is critical for future planning.

“The modelling will help us understand where pollutants are coming from, and what the most effective actions are for improving water quality now and into the future.”

Dr Rebecca Kelly

This project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program.



Magic moment on a water sampling run, overlooking a property that drains directly into the Ramsar wetlands. Photo: Monique Case.

CAT MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The primary goal of the Cat Management Project is to further the objectives of the Tasmanian Cat Management Plan (2017 – 2023) by working with local councils and the community to improve management and reduce the impact domestic, stray and semi-owned cats have on the environment, primary industry and the community.

Now entering its third year, the project is funded by the Tasmanian Government and delivered through partnership arrangements with Kingborough Council, Cradle Coast Authority and NRM North, who each employ a regional Cat Management Coordinator.

In the past 12 months, a major focus of the collaborative approach has been the development of awareness and educational resources to encourage responsible cat ownership throughout the Tasmanian community.

Following the development of ‘TassieCat’ as the public branding for the Tasmanian Cat Management Project and the launch of its website in 2018, last year the TassieCat Facebook page was created, providing an additional platform to deliver key messages about cat health and responsible cat ownership.

An online and television campaign featuring ‘Scruffy the Cat’ was also created, with the tagline: ‘Microchip, Desex, Contain’.

At a northern regional level, the Cat Management Project also made significant headway in forging stakeholder networks and partnerships for improved cat management, with the development of a draft Regional Cat Management Strategy.

Local councils who were already involved in the Northern Regional Cat Management Working Group approached NRM North with a view to developing a strategy to guide and promote a coordinated approach to cat management issues and initiatives. NRM North agreed to facilitate the process and engaged a consultant to work with key stakeholders through a series of constructive workshops held in late 2019. The strategy is due to be ratified by all parties early in the 2020/21 financial year, with implementation to commence soon after.

NRM North’s Biodiversity Program Manager Kate Thorn, said the collaborative attitude between diverse stakeholders involved in developing the strategy had been crucial.

“Here we have local government, animal welfare organisations, veterinarians and the state government, all coming to the table with the attitude that, yes, cat management is a difficult issue but it’s one we are going to tackle with our shared resources for the good of the animals, the community and the environment.”

Rachel Beech from Just Cats, the authorised cat management facility in the northern region, said the collaborative approach has been productive.

“I have truly enjoyed sharing our experience, knowledge and concerns as well as positive outcomes, with a group of others who share the same passion and who want the same result for cat management in Tasmania.”

Rachel Beech

The project is on track to consolidate efforts built over the last two years, with a broader rollout of the educational resources already developed, and continued collaboration among the network of stakeholders in the northern region for a more coordinated approach to the management of domestic and stray cats.

NRM North is a delivery partner in the Tasmanian Cat Management Project, which is funded by the Tasmanian Government.



Minister for Primary Industries and Water, Guy Barnett, at Ten Lives Cat Centre for the launch of the Scruffy the Cat video series. Photo: Rosanna Coombes.

SMALL FARM LIVING

For its fourth time, the biennial Small Farm Living Field Day returned to Sonoma Lodge, a private property in Lilydale, in October 2019. The event, held in partnership with Lilydale Landcare Group, saw a record 450 people making their way through the gates to learn about ‘the nature of their farm’.

Attendees were treated to a wide variety of demonstrations and presentations. This included keynote speakers Chris Wisbey and Sally Dakis who captivated crowds with their experiences as cherry and peony farmers in south-east Tasmania, and Dr Graeme Stevenson who provided an entertaining talk about earthworms and dung beetles in agriculture. Other topics included cat management, pasture health, livestock and biosecurity, and conservation efforts for giant freshwater lobster.

Over 25 local stallholders provided a range of advice, resources, and local produce. The field day attracted smallholders from across the state with many specifically seeking out the event to learn how to improve the nature and productivity of their small properties. Several attendees commented that this year’s field day was ‘the biggest and best yet.’

NRM North was delighted to be listed as a finalist for the Australian Government Partnerships for Landcare Award at the Tasmanian Landcare Awards for the Small Farm Living Field Day and our long-standing partnership with Lilydale Landcare.

The Small Farm Living Field Day is scheduled to return in 2021.



Smallholders enjoy the stalls and demonstrations on offer at the 4th biennial Small Farm Living Field Day at Sonoma Lodge, Lilydale. Photo: Kate Thorn.

REDUCING THREATS TO HOODED PLOVER HABITAT AND POPULATION

The aim of the Hooded Plover Project is to increase understanding of the status, location, and trends of the species’ breeding populations in northern Tasmania and to prevent further decline of numbers at sites where management actions have been implemented.

The project is funded by the Australian Government and supported by the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service to deliver recovery actions for the hooded plover (eastern) (*Thinornis rubricollis*) from 2018 to 2023.

The target areas of Flinders Island and the east coast of Tasmania from Cape Naturaliste to Ironhouse Point comprise over 20% of the remaining population of the species, which is under threat from human disturbance, climate change, weed incursions and predators.

In the 2019/2020 fiscal year, project outcomes included:

- contribution to the national hooded plover data collection through sharing monitoring and survey results with Birdlife Australia;
- control of over 10 hectares of habitat-altering weeds in key nesting areas on the east coast;
- installing temporary fencing and signage, and coordinating a community warden program for five nest sites, three of which successfully fledged nine juveniles from four clutches; and
- raising community awareness about threats and conservation actions for hooded plovers and other shorebirds, helping people to ‘be a good egg and share the shoreline’.

NRM North staff and local community members undertook population surveys across 80 kilometres on Tasmania’s east coast in November 2019. The survey will be repeated on the east coast and Flinders Island in coming years to assist in identifying local population trends.



Hooded plover nest with egg identified during the November population survey on east coast beaches between Cape Naturaliste and Ironhouse Point. Photo: Adrian James.



ABORIGINAL NRM PROGRAM

PROGRAM AIM

To build knowledge and capacity within Tasmanian Aboriginal communities to manage natural values and enhance awareness of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage in natural resource management.

THE BIG PICTURE

The NRM North region encompasses the homeland of Tasmanian Aborigines and contains returned Aboriginal land. NRM North acknowledges and respects Tasmanian Aborigines and their deep spiritual attachment to country and its values, and their knowledge and skills in natural resource management. NRM North recognises that Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural values and land management practices are critical to the management of the region’s natural resources.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

The focus of the Aboriginal NRM Program is to work in collaboration with the region’s communities to facilitate natural resource management on country and improve awareness and consideration of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage in natural resource management planning, use and development.

The strategic outcomes NRM North will focus on between 2015-2025 include:

- increasing the capacity to implement Healthy Country Plans and provide opportunities for continuation of sharing cultural knowledge;
- supporting the implementation of priority actions for the management of cultural and natural values and Healthy Country Plans;
- supporting communities in the NRM North region to protect heritage sites and landscapes outside of land management plans; and
- supporting communities to raise awareness with land managers, planners, and recreational users to increase knowledge and recognition of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage values in natural resource management.

2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Established a coordinator role for the Aboriginal NRM Program within the Biodiversity team at NRM North, with a new staff member commencing the role in August 2019.
- Re-established relationships with key community groups in the region, including the truwana Rangers, Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT) and melythina tiakana warana Aboriginal Corporation (mtwAC).
- Participated in Mannalargenna Day 2019 with mtwAC.
- Planned for future on-ground works and activities with mtwAC and ALCT, with implementation postponed due to COVID-19.
- Undertook internal planning to continue embedding reconciliation actions into NRM North’s operations and organisational ethos.

2020/21 FOCUS

- Continue to work towards a deeper relationship with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations to work together for country.
- Support on-ground activities (including those rescheduled due to COVID-19), including:
 - maintenance and improvements at tebrakunna cultural gardens; and
 - galaxias surveys with truwana Rangers on truwana/ Cape Barren Island with aquatic invertebrate expert John Gooderham.
- Continue to support and participate in regional events such as Mannalargenna Day.



Raising awareness about Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage is strong focus of the Aboriginal NRM Program.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

NRM North's Aboriginal NRM Program is delivered through a range of mechanisms including the provision of training and capacity building for Tasmanian Aboriginal people and communities; providing support for implementation of Healthy Country Plans; and facilitating Tasmanian Aboriginal communities to engage with land managers, planners and recreational users to raise awareness about Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The strategic focus of the Aboriginal NRM Program is to work in collaboration with Tasmanian Aboriginal communities to care for country, and to improve awareness and consideration of Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage in natural resource management planning, use, and development.

Key partners in delivery of the program include the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT), the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC), melythina tiakana warana Aboriginal Corporation (mtwAC), the Flinders Island Aboriginal Association Incorporated (FIAAI), and other members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community not affiliated with an organisation.

NRM North continues to maintain and foster cultural awareness for staff members and members of the NRM North Management Committee, with participation in Mannalargenna Day and takara waranta (walk with us).

Mannalargenna Day celebrates the life of Aboriginal clan leader and warrior, Mannalargenna of the north east. In 2019 NRM North staff attended and were privileged to share in the celebrations of survival, participating in ceremony, listening to panel discussions, and practicing twining as a guest. NRM North's Monique Case volunteered at the event. The

Program will be seeking greater staff participation and support for Mannalargenna Day 2020.

takara waranta, a celebration of storytelling, knowledge sharing, skills, and music, was held at Punchbowl Reserve near Launceston in February this year. Premier Peter Gutwein, Tasmanian Governor Kate Warner, City of Launceston Mayor Albert Van Zetten and Elders Aunty Netty and Aunty Wendal were among the guests.

NRM North's Sam Jack, who attended the inaugural event, said takara waranta celebrates coming together.

"We have a lot to learn ... events like takara waranta highlight the importance of cultural education and understanding."

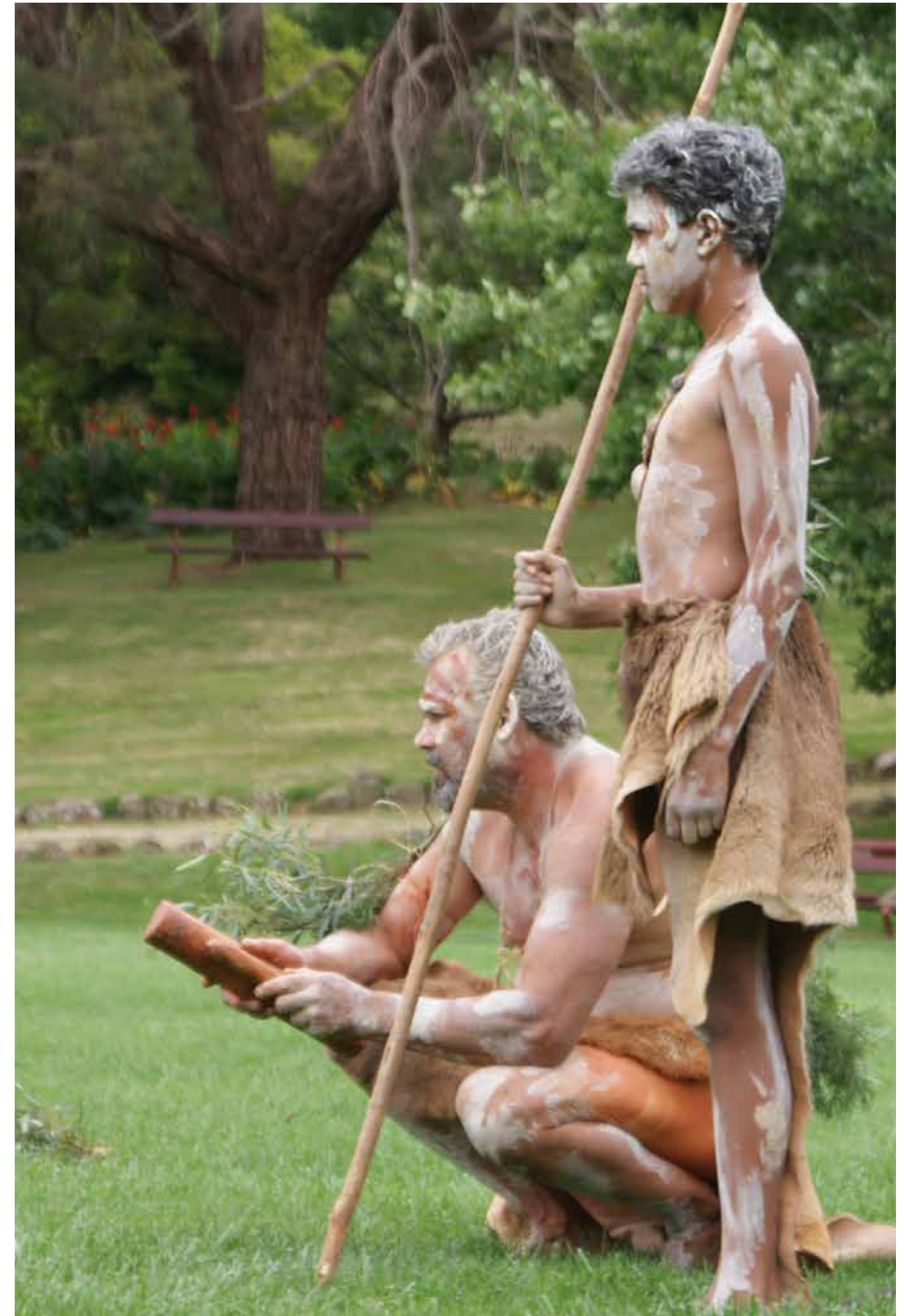
Sam Jack

Participation at cultural events provides an opportunity for NRM North staff to gain valuable insights from Elders who generously share knowledge and cultural skills and traditions, taking the time to come together to educate and make connections.

Since the commencement of a new Aboriginal NRM Program coordinator in August 2019, establishing relationships with existing key partners has been fundamental in planning for activities, with discussions in progress for working with communities on tebrakunna cultural gardens, galaxias survey support on truwana/ Cape Barren Island, and supporting attendance at the National Indigenous Fire Workshop. Several events and on-ground activities planned for 2020 have been postponed due to the implications of COVID-19, however we anticipate implementation during the 2020/21 financial year.



Premier Peter Gutwein, Tasmanian Governor Kate Warner, City of Launceston Mayor Albert Van Zetten with Trowunna Aboriginal Cultural Services dancers: Sheldon, Jason and Tyane Thomas, and Jarrod Hughes at the inaugural takara waranta at Punchbowl Reserve this year. Photo: Monique Case.



Participation at cultural events, such as takara waranta at Punchbowl Reserve, provides an opportunity for NRM North staff to gain valuable insights into cultural skills and traditions and to make connections. Photo: Monique Case.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a clump of dark, rich soil. The soil is teeming with life, including several earthworms and plant roots. The person's left hand, wearing a brown leather watch with a gold-colored case, is visible. The background is a blurred green field under a blue sky.

ANNUAL REPORT

The 2020 Annual Report provides a summary of actions taken during FY19-20 to address the key objectives in the Corporate Services Program.

NRM NORTH CHAIR’S REPORT - 2020

It is with great pleasure that I submit my inaugural Chair’s Report for the 2019-2020 Annual Report. In my career, I have had a long-standing connection to supporting and promoting natural resource management principles and ideals and I am pleased to continue my journey with NRM North and the northern Tasmanian community.

The past year has been one to remember for many reasons. We started the year witnessing extended droughts and bushfires interstate that gave way to local, intermittent flooding only to be followed by the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic. While Tasmania was marginally impacted this year by drought and fire, we have not escaped the significant impacts to our economy and society of the pandemic. These forces continue to influence the way in which we need to manage our business, our economy, and natural resources in the region.

NRM North is about to embark on an update to the Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Strategy and I am looking forward to seeing the outcomes of the planning process. Staff will be collaborating with other Tasmanian NRM regional bodies to address natural resource management challenges at both a state and regional level. In the next six months, we will be meeting with stakeholders and the community to identify priorities for action over the next five years. It will be an opportunity to explore how we develop and implement programs

that enhance our capacity to adapt to external forces such as climate change, that drive impacts like longer fire seasons, less predictable rainfall, more extreme weather events, and changing habitat, species prevalence and mix. The strategy review process is critical as it will influence the programs we implement in coming years.

An outstanding feature of NRM North’s work is the strength of our partnership with other organisations and the work we do with landholders to implement on-ground works. This year the team has worked closely with landholders to deliver natural resource management results such as water quality improvements in the Tamar catchment, improvements in habitat for threatened species including giant freshwater lobster, hooded plover, and eastern barred bandicoot, and extending best practice soil management practices for farmers. These stories and more are recounted in the Yearbook and I encourage you to review them.

A continuing challenge for our organisation is to maintain and enhance our financial sustainability and to continue to leverage the core funding we receive from the state government to deliver services outlined in the Tasmanian NRM Act. I am pleased to say that NRM North is currently on a strong financial footing. For the period from 2018/19 to 2023/24, NRM North has been able to nearly double program funding to deliver on-ground outcomes compared to the previous

five-year period. Not only do these funds create natural resource management outcomes, the programs continue to deliver much needed funding into the northern regional economy to support jobs, which is more important now than ever. In fact, the funding that NRM North will bring to the north of the state in the current five-year cycle will generate approximately \$70 million of economic activity.

This trend of expanding our portfolio has continued this year. NRM North has attracted additional funding to:

- address threats to the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site;
- extend work to protect threatened and endangered plant species (Shy Susan);
- support the state government’s \$5M Weeds Action Fund; and
- secure an additional \$5M from the Australian Government to improve water quality in the Tamar catchment through excluding stock from waterways, improving dairy effluent management, and working with councils to address cross-connections of sewerage into the stormwater system.

We continue to explore opportunities to secure funding to improve outcomes in the northern region.

The impact of COVID-19 on many businesses in our state has been devastating. While NRM North has not escaped the widespread implications of the pandemic, we are fortunate that few activities have been put on hold or modified due to social distancing requirements and the reduction in gathering sizes. At the onset of COVID-19, NRM North moved swiftly to accommodate remote working arrangements for staff, adopting online technology for meetings and webinars which resulted in very limited impacts to our business. Interestingly, the pandemic has created a successful real-world test of our business continuity strategies implemented in recent years to move to the cloud and invest in portable technology to allow our staff to work offsite.

I am fortunate to have a highly professional committee that brings a wealth of experience and skills to the table. I would like to express my appreciation to the members of the Management Committee for their dedication and commitment to the organisation and the community. I value your input and your expertise and look forward to working with you in the years to come. I would also like to thank the staff of NRM North who continue to develop and implement programs that make our northern home a better place to live.

Pamela Allan
Pamela Allan
Chair



The River Health Action Plan focuses on actions to decrease pathogens entering waterways. Funded actions seek to exclude stock from streams and rehabilitate riparian vegetation buffers on grazing properties and ensure better effluent management on dairy farms.

CORPORATE SERVICES PROGRAM

The fifth pillar of the NRM North Strategic Plan 2019-2023,
is the Corporate Services Program.

PROGRAM AIM

To maintain a sustainable organisation that delivers strategic
NRM results for the community and demonstrates best practice
business management and governance.

THE BIG PICTURE

The Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Association Inc., trading as NRM North, is an incorporated association established in 2003 in response to the Tasmanian Government’s Natural Resource Management Framework and its enabling legislation, the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (Amendments 2018)*. NRM North is one of three endorsed NRM bodies in the state, and one of approximately 54 nationally. The Management Committee, organisational management team, and staff strive for best practice governance, program delivery, and a thriving, sustainable organisation to deliver NRM outcomes for the community.

STRATEGIC FOCUS

From 2019 to 2023, the Corporate Services pillar is focused on eight key outcome areas including:

- ensuring the Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Strategy 2015-2020 remains relevant and reflects the needs of the community;
- partners recognise the value proposition of NRM North and seek to partner on programs;
- NRM North demonstrates business outcomes through implementation of the NRM North Strategic Plan (Strategy to Action);
- ensuring the Management Committee is recognised as an efficient governing body and through best practice governance, structure, and policy, and maintains required skills;
- creating a culture of innovation and business excellence;
- securing information management systems that allow the organisation to monitor performance, and supports engagement and partnerships;
- ensuring a viable, long-term and sustainable organisational funding model; and
- implementing a best practice staff performance management system that supports professional development and provides rewards and recognition.



The Tamar Action Grants assist farmers to fence stock out of waterways to improve water quality.

2019/20 ACHIEVEMENTS

The following points detail the key achievements in the past 12 months for the Corporate Services Program:

- Managed NRM North’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic including the development of policies and procedures to ensure safety of staff, Management Committee members, partners, and the community, while ensuring continued delivery of programs.
- Recruited a new Chair of the NRM North Management Committee.
- Improved communications platforms including the NRM North website, webinars and video production, enhancing the organisation’s branding.
- Partnered with NRM South and Cradle Coast Authority to review and update regional NRM strategies.
- Two Management Committee members were supported to complete governance training through the Australian Institute of Company Directors.
- Expanded program delivery by:
 - securing a \$5M grant deed with the Australian Government for the delivery of the RHAP Catchment Works project;
 - securing an \$870,000 work order under the Australian Government’s RLP program to address threats to the Ringarooma Ramsar site;

- successful tender for the delivery of Stage 2 of the Tasmanian Government’s Weeds Action Fund 2020 – 2023; and
- securing ongoing support from partners for the TEER Program with partnership agreements executed for the next four years.
- Supported partnership programs including:
 - support for the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce; and
 - facilitation of a baseline water monitoring program to underpin the RHAP.
- Supported regional collaboration by:
 - participating in the assessment panel for the TFGA’s Landcare Action Grant program;
 - executing an MOU with West Tamar Landcare Group to enhance community awareness and species recovery for eastern barred bandicoot;
 - partnering with the TFGA, DairyTas and regional councils on delivery of the RHAP Catchment Works project;
 - collaboration with the Tasmanian Land Conservancy on delivery of the eastern barred bandicoot project; and
 - partnering with Huon Aquaculture on citizen science activities supporting giant freshwater lobster habitat restoration.

2020/21 FOCUS

In 2020/2021, NRM North will focus on the following areas of the Corporate Services Program:

- Partner with NRM South and Cradle Coast Authority to review and update regional NRM strategies including:
 1. identifying alignment of the strategy with Australian Government priorities;
 2. ensuring strategies meet Tasmanian Government accreditation criteria;
 3. strategies to address resilience and climate change; and
 4. engage key stakeholders, community, and partner organisations.

- Update the Management Committee skills audit, develop a committee performance evaluation process, onboard new members, and complete governance training for selected committee members.
- Finalise enhancements of information technology upgrades including revisions of SharePoint, enQuire and financial management systems.
- Review of organisational policy register, with a focus on workplace health and safety, risk management, information management, privacy and personal information and financial management policies.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

NRM North moved quickly to protect the health and safety of staff with the implementation of a range of measures after COVID-19 was declared a national health emergency, and federal and state governments began to implement restrictions relating to non-essential businesses, school closures, travel restrictions and health warnings to vulnerable people.

Key measures include the adoption of an overarching policy dealing with coronavirus in the workplace followed by the development and implementation of a series of procedures to ensure staff and visitor safety. The procedures include social distancing, hygiene, and strategies to support remote working arrangements.

As restrictions increased, on April 4 2020, NRM North moved to close the main office and transition staff to working from remote locations (mostly from home). NRM North implemented strict guidelines for field work and engagement with partners, landholders, and committee members. NRM North management worked with funding bodies to discuss implications for project delivery and implement practices and processes to limit funding implications that might impact project outcomes. In addition, NRM North offered partner organisations flexible invoicing options to ensure cashflow was maintained to key subcontractors regardless of whether delivery had occurred.

On 8 May 2020, the Australian Government released a three-stage plan to outline the relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions placed on the community. In response to the federal plan, the Tasmanian Government released its own three-staged plan to document the “Road to Recovery”, outlining how Tasmania would relax restrictions in line with national timeframes and advice from Tasmania’s health department.

NRM North has developed the COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Return to Work plan to align with the Australian Government’s National COVID-19 Safe Work Principles and WorkSafe Tasmania COVID-19 Safe Workplaces Framework, standards, and guidelines. The return to work plan includes a risk assessment, management actions, and several subordinate plans that address hygiene, workplace practices, and employee obligations. With this safety infrastructure in place, NRM North is designated as a COVID-Safe Workplace.

In July, the NRM North CEO announced a plan to transition staff back to the workplace by 20 July 2020.

Management will maintain a watching brief on further developments that may change the working arrangements in the new fiscal year.



Tasmania is the last stronghold of the threatened hooded plover. Photo: Kim Wormald, lirrallirra.com.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partners recognise the value proposition of NRM North and seek to partner on program delivery.

Most of the programs NRM North implements rely on partnerships with other organisations or landholders for delivery of outcomes. In the past year, NRM North has worked closely with all levels of government, industry bodies, other regional and sub-regional natural resource management organisations, community volunteers, and allied environmental organisations. NRM North also works collaboratively with farmers and individual landholders to implement actions on-ground; this is where the majority of transformational results occur.

While there are many partnerships NRM North maintains, examples from the past year include:

- The TEER Program supported the City of Launceston and the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce with scientific reviews of two methods to manage sediment in the upper reaches of the estuary. The first study evaluated the effectiveness of sediment raking; the second review considered several scenarios of releasing flows from Trevallyn Dam. The results of these studies are available on the NRM North website.
- With funding from the state government, NRM North is managing a collaborative project with councils and key partners involved in cat management in northern Tasmania. In the past year, members of the Northern Cat Management Working Group drafted a cat management strategy that includes actions for responsible cat management, protection of sensitive habitats, and provision of cat shelter facilities. Partners are beginning to implement elements of the strategy across the region.
- Working with peak agricultural bodies (TFGA and DairyTas) and five of the region’s local councils, NRM North is implementing three key programs to reduce pathogens in the upper Tamar estuary from diffuse sources. The first element assists grazing landholders to fence stock out of waterways; the second element assists dairy farmers to fence cattle out of waterways and improve dairy effluent management; and the third element is an investigation of cross-connections of sewerage systems into the stormwater system in the Launceston urban area. Over the past 18 months, these programs have resulted in approximately 42,000 cattle and 150,000 sheep excluded from waterways, 10% of dairy farms implementing improved effluent management practices, and an assessment and remediation of cross-connections in the Launceston municipal area.
- The delivery of threatened species programs relies heavily on the implementation of on-ground works by landholders in the catchment. In addition, broader partnerships are helping to expand the reach of programs to address threats to eastern barred bandicoot and giant freshwater lobster.
- Over the past few years, NRM North has formed a partnership with Huon Aquaculture to encourage citizen scientists to participate in monitoring programs for giant freshwater lobster. Huon Aquaculture has provided generous donations of monitoring and safety equipment to ensure citizens participating in programs have the scientific tools necessary to monitor water quality and are safe while doing their work.
- To encourage community and landholder engagement, NRM North has signed an MOU with the West Tamar Landcare group to assist in implementing on-ground works to improve the trajectory for eastern barred bandicoot in the state’s north. The landcare group has a long-standing history of implementing high quality projects in the West Tamar, and continues to promote best practice habitat management with landholders in the area.
- With funding from the Australian Government’s Regional Land Partnership program, NRM North conducts trials to demonstrate best practice soil management practices to reduce soil acidification, wind erosion, and increase soil carbon. These demonstration trials are conducted in partnership with 25 famers across the region. Farmers set aside land for the trials and assist in the application of various treatments. As results are achieved, participating farmers share data and economic analysis derived from the trials to help others in the region evaluate the practices that assist in improving soil management on-farm.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
STRATEGY FOR NORTHERN TASMANIA

Ensure the Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Strategy remains relevant and reflects the needs of the community.

One of the key statutory responsibilities of the three NRM bodies in Tasmania is to prepare, implement and maintain a natural resource management strategy for each region. The current iteration of the strategies covers the period from 2015 to 2020. This year, the three NRM bodies embarked on a review of the current strategies and are working closely together to ensure commonality in the methodology and framework used to prepare the 2020 to 2025 plans.

Many factors influencing the development of the strategies have changed or the emphasis and importance of planning for certain scenarios has intensified since the strategies were last prepared. Some of the factors that will play a significant role in the community and stakeholder engagement will include the role of climate change and resilience, the requirement of the Australian Government to have an investment portfolio identified to guide future funding, partnerships with state government and other entities in the delivery of on-ground works, identifying how the NRM bodies can work together to provide outcomes at a regional and state-wide scale, and the role of traditional land management practices in the landscape.

The three NRM bodies had planned to begin community and stakeholder engagement in the latter half of FY 19/20, however those plans have been delayed due to social distancing requirements for COVID-19. NRM North anticipates the community and stakeholder engagement process will proceed in the latter part of 2020 providing gathering restrictions remain favourable. A draft Natural Resource Management Strategy for Northern Tasmania must be delivered to the Tasmanian Government by June 2021 and to the Australian Government by January 2022.

SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATIONAL
FUNDING MODEL

NRM North has a viable, long-term and sustainable organisational funding model.

Staff have worked diligently to identify and secure opportunities to diversify NRM North’s funding model to set the organisation up for a viable long-term future. For the period from 2018/19 to 2023/24, NRM North has been able to nearly double program funding compared to the previous five-year period. To continue to grow and develop our portfolio of projects, NRM North has, in the past year, secured the following funding to continue its works:

- an additional \$870,000 over four years to address threats to the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site through the Regional Land Partnership program;
- secured a grant deed for the Australian Government’s \$5M contribution to the River Health Action Plan over the next four years;
- supported the delivery of Stage 2 of the Tasmanian Government’s \$5M Weeds Action Fund over the next three years;
- secured a four-year Partnership Agreement of approximately \$1M for the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program; and
- staff are currently in negotiation with the Australian Government for an additional \$50,000 grant to continue works to address threats to Shy Susan (*Tetratheca gunii*) over the next three years.

This will put NRM North in the position of delivering approximately \$26M of funding into the NRM sector in northern Tasmania in the current five-year period. This investment creates an economic stimulus in the region of approximately \$70M.

OPERATIONS AND PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Central office

NRM North has its main office at 63-65 Cameron Street, Launceston. The office provides suitable working conditions, adequate space and is conveniently located in the hub of the CBD. The boardroom is made available to community groups for meetings.

Operational funding

During 2019-20, NRM North received \$350,000 of funding for its baseline organisational operations from the Tasmanian Government to deliver its statutory roles. This core funding remains critical to effectively carry out the regional committee’s functions under the NRM Act. The Australian Government’s Regional Land Partnerships also provides operational funding as a percentage of funding received. Operational funding is enough to provide baseline

support to the organisation but does not provide funding for project delivery. Staff must continually work to source additional funding to deliver outcomes against the Natural Resource Management Strategy for Northern Tasmania.

Personnel

Throughout 2019-20, NRM North personnel provided critical support for the development and implementation of natural resource management programs in the region. This support includes effective stakeholder engagement, business administration and management, partnership development, devolved grants, and communication. Staff members are employed on terms and conditions determined by NRM North.



NRM North facilitates a range of measures to improve waterway health including assisting farmers to install stock-exclusion fencing.

STAFFING AS AT 30 JUNE 2020

Position	Incumbent	Commencement Date
Chief Executive Officer	Rosanna Coombes	4 January 2016
Operations Manager	Eleanor Hetharia	9 August 2019
Corporate Services Manager	Fiona George	23 July 2008
Finance Coordinator / Executive Assistant	Sarah Presnell	10 May 2010
Administration Coordinator	Denise Colvin	8 September 2003
Business Manager	Jenni Kew	31 March 2020
Communications Coordinator	Biba Archer	18 June 2018
Communications Coordinator	Ashleigh Walker	11 June 2019
Biodiversity Program Manager	Kate Thorn	6 August 2012
Biodiversity Coordinator	Jo Lyll	28 January 2020
Biodiversity Coordinator	Lauren Bird	29 October 2018
Biodiversity Coordinator	Monique Case	1 August 2019
Cat Management Coordinator	VACANT	
Strategic Programs Manager	Andrew Baldwin	7 March 2007
Catchment Coordinator	Jesse Webster	17 November 2014
Catchment Coordinator	Andrew Easton	14 January 2019
Catchment Coordinator	Brett de Hayr	29 April 2019
Land Program Manager & RALF Facilitator	VACANT	
Agricultural Project Officer	Peter Heading	11 November 2013
TEER Program Manager	Jo-Anne Fearman	25 March 2019
TEER Scientific & Technical Coordinator	Sam Jack	10 February 2020
TEER Project Officer	Darcie Leong	7 January 2019

Not all staff are full time employees, the total full time equivalent is 15.7 employees.

STAFF MEMBERS WHO RESIGNED OR COMPLETED CONTRACTS DURING 2019/2020

Incumbent	Position	Completion / Resignation Date
Derek Hamer	Biodiversity Coordinator	18 July 2019
Toni Furlonge	TEER Scientific & Technical Coordinator	7 November 2019
Adrian James	Land Program Manager / RALF Facilitator	9 April 2020
Shane Westley	Regional Cat Management Coordinator	23 April 2020
Robyn Allchin	Biodiversity Coordinator	25 June 2020

ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

NRM North strives to promote a friendly, supportive, and continual learning environment for staff members. As well as providing ongoing health and wellbeing and professional learning opportunities, an annual review of programs and procedures is conducted to maintain a healthy working environment for all staff members.

To ensure NRM North remains a healthy working environment, the following processes include but are not limited to:

- NRM North Employee Handbook;
- Health and Wellbeing Program;
- staff induction procedures;
- team development and training opportunities;
- team building;
- cultural awareness;
- Employee Assistance Program; and
- annual NRM North staff performance assessment.



Threatened swamp paperbark (*Melaleuca ericifolia*) forest and saltmarsh communities bordering onto the Strzelecki National Park, Flinders Island. The creek and vegetation at the site will be protected from stock access through support from the Vegetation On-Farms sub-project. Photo: Lauren Bird.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Enabling legislation

NRM North is an independent non-statutory body constituted and operating under the provisions of the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (2018 Amendments)*. Reporting, accountability, and other rules for operation are set out in the *Tasmanian Incorporated Associations Act 1964*.

Functions of NRM North

NRM North’s primary functions as determined by the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (2018 Amendments)* are to:

- identify priorities for natural resource management for the northern region;
- prepare a regional strategy for the northern region;
- facilitate the implementation of the regional strategy;
- promote natural resource management principles;
- facilitate the integration of natural resource management and planning activities for the region;
- seek, manage and allocate funds according to the regional strategy;
- coordinate the northern region’s participation in national and state programs relating to NRM;

- monitor and evaluate the implementation of the northern regional strategy; and
- develop and implement processes to ensure appropriate education and training in natural resource management.

Responsible Minister

The Honorable Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water, is the current Minister with oversight of the natural resource management portfolio.

Under the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (2018 Amendments)*, the Minister has the power to:

- declare a managing body or committee of an incorporated association or body corporate as a regional committee; and
- appoint the Chairperson of the regional committee.

In addition, NRM North delivers programs in the portfolios of other Ministers including the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program under the Environment portfolio overseen by Minister Roger Jaensch, and the River Health Action Plan Catchment Works Program under the Launceston City Deal and State Growth portfolio overseen by Minister Michael Ferguson.

Accountability to parliament

NRM North is accountable to the Minister and, through the Minister, to the Parliament of Tasmania. Under the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (2018 Amendments)*, the Minister must table NRM North’s annual report in Parliament.

The Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for the oversight of the business affairs of NRM North and ensuring appropriate management is in place to carry out its objectives and functions. The Management Committee sets the strategic direction of the organisation and ensures that NRM North as an organisation meets all required areas of compliance and performance.

Management Committee meetings

The Management Committee meets for a minimum of six scheduled meetings within a financial year. The Management Committee has out of session processes in place to address specific matters that require attention between scheduled meetings.

Composition of the Management Committee

Section 9 (3) of the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (2018 Amendments)* outlines the requirements of the composition of a regional committee. In compliance with the Act at 30 June 2020, the NRM North Management Committee had 10 sitting

members with skills across best-practice governance, business administration, legal and contractual issues, and the achievement of natural resource management and conservation outcomes.

In March 2019, James Walch announced he would step down as the Chair of the Management Committee at the annual general meeting, having served for five years. The Management Committee began an open recruitment process to identify a new Chair. In October 2019, the Management Committee elected Professor Pamela Allan as the new Chair of the Management Committee and recommended the appointment to Minister Barnett. In March 2020, Minister Barnett confirmed the appointment of the Chair-elect.

Chair Allan has an extensive background in natural resource management and community engagement. For 17 years Professor Allan was a member of the New South Wales Parliament and NSW Minister for the Environment for five years. Professor Allan has worked with the waste industry as a strategic policy consultant, chaired local and regional planning panels, stood as a member of numerous community boards, and chaired the Keep Australia Beautiful not-for-profit organisation in NSW. Professor Allan has an extensive career in education and is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Technology, Environment and Design with the University of Tasmania. In 2019, Prof. Allan was appointed by the then-Minister for Local Government, Hon. Peter Gutwein MP, as a member of the Local Government Act Review Reference Group.



Protecting natural resources is a core focus of NRM North.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NRM North Management Committee members as at 30 June 2020

Member	Association Status	Committee Term	Date Appointed / Reappointed
Hon. Professor Pamela Allan	Group B	4 years	September 2019
Mr. Michael Walsh	Group B	4 years	September 2019
Dr. Joanna Ellison	Group B	4 years	September 2016
Mr. Stuart Blom	Group B	4 Years	September 2016
Ms. Mandy Shepherd	Group B	4 Years	September 2016
Mr. Peter Sattler	Group B	4 Years	September 2019
Mr. Royce Aldred	Group B	4 Years	September 2016
Ms. Louise Clark	Group B	4 Years	September 2017
Ms. Leanne Sherriff	Group B	4 Years	September 2017
Mr. Peter Curley	Group B	4 Years	September 2019

SUBCOMMITTEES

The Management Committee has delegated authority to subcommittees to undertake duties and provide recommendations for action. All matters considered and determined by subcommittees are submitted to the Management Committee for information and, where appropriate, ratification and decision. The following four subcommittees operated in 2019-20 to assist the Management Committee to fulfil its functions effectively.

Governance and Policy Subcommittee

The Governance and Policy Subcommittee is responsible for ensuring that NRM North’s governance policies and procedures comply with legislation and current best practice standards. The subcommittee reviews these policies regularly and makes recommendations to the Management Committee.

The subcommittee helps to set the overall corporate ‘tone’, business practices, and ethical behaviour of the organisation.

Members: Stuart Bloom (Chair), Mandy Shepherd, Peter Sattler, Pamela Allan.

Audit and Finance Subcommittee

The Audit and Finance Subcommittee is responsible to the Management Committee for NRM North’s financial reports including the appropriateness of accounting policies and principles used by the organisation. External auditors are responsible for auditing the Association’s financial reports.

The subcommittee will take appropriate action to set the overall standards for quality financial reporting and sound business practices.

At the 2019 AGM, Karen Van der Aa stepped down as the independent member of the Audit and Finance Subcommittee. In recognition of her years of service to the subcommittee, the Management Committee and Association passed a vote of thanks and appreciation for Ms. Van der Aa’s time and contributions.

The subcommittee welcomed Honni Pitt as the new independent subcommittee member. Ms. Pitt has 20 years’ experience in banking and corporate accounting. Ms Pitt has post graduate qualifications in applied finance from Charles Sturt University and a bachelor’s degree majoring in accounting and commerce from the University of Tasmania. She is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and New Zealand and has held board positions in many organisations, including not-for-profit organisations.

Members: Michael Walsh (Chair), Royce Aldred, Pamela Allan, Leanne Sherriff, Honni Pitt (Independent Member).

CEO Performance Review Subcommittee

The CEO Performance Review Subcommittee’s primary responsibility is to oversee the NRM North Chief Executive Officer’s performance review process on behalf of the Management Committee and to provide recommendations to the Management Committee regarding the CEO’s annual evaluation.

The subcommittee is currently conducting the CEO’s annual performance review with the support of an independent executive consultant.

Members: Pamela Allan (Chair), Joanna Ellison, Peter Curley.



Invasive weed African boxthorn (*Lycium ferocissimum*) poses a threat to agricultural productivity.Photo: DPIPWE.

ATTENDANCE AT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Details of attendance by Management Committee members at NRM North Management Committee and subcommittee meetings held during the year ended 30 June 2020 are as follows:

Management Committee Members 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020	Management Committee		Governance & Policy Subcommittee		Audit & Finance Subcommittee		CEO Review Committee	
	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended
Mr. James Walch	6	1	1	1				
Hon. Professor Pamela Allan	6	5	1		4	1	1	1
Dr. Joanna Ellison	6	6					1	1
Mr. Stuart Blom	6	6	1	1				
Ms. Amanda Shepherd	6	5	1	1				
Mr. Michael Walsh	6	4			4	4		
Mr. Peter Sattler	6	5	1	1				
Mr. Royce Aldred	6	6			4	4		
Ms. Louise Clark	6	4						
Ms. Leanne Sherriff	6	4			4	3		
Mr. Peter Curley	6	6					1	1
Karen van Der Aa Independent Representative					4	1		
Honni Pitt – Independent Representative					4	2		

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PAYMENTS

Management Committee sitting fees and travel payments during the year ended 30 June 2020 are as follows:

Management Committee Members as at 30 June 2020	Sitting Fees	Travel Payments	Total
James Walch	\$519.50	\$148.50	\$668.00
Pamela Allan	\$4,252.00		\$4,252.00
Michael Walsh	\$1,280.00		\$1,280.00
Dr Joanna Ellison	\$1,020.00	\$40.50	\$1,060.50
Stuart Blom	\$1,170.00		\$1,170.00
Amanda Shepherd	\$935.00		\$935.00
Peter Sattler	\$935.00	\$171.00	\$1,106.00
Royce Aldred	\$1,352.00	\$77.00	\$1,429.00
Louise Clark	\$0	\$0	\$0
Leanne Sherriff	\$850.00		\$850.00
Peter Curley	\$850.00		\$850.00
Karen Van der Aa	\$85.00		\$85.00
Honni Pitt	\$255.00		\$255.00
TOTAL	\$13,503.50	\$437.00	\$13,940.50

Conflicts of interest

The Management Committee has a policy in place for the disclosure and resolution of any matter that may give rise to actual or potential conflicts between the interests of a Management Committee member and those of NRM North.

Ethical standards

NRM North aims to conduct its business with the highest standard of personal and corporate integrity. The NRM North Management Committee and personnel have adopted Codes of Conduct outlining the standards of personal and corporate behaviour that Management Committee members and personnel observe.

Remuneration of board member delegates

Members who are self-employed or not otherwise remunerated for attending NRM North Management Committee meetings may claim sitting fees in accordance with Department of Industrial Relations Policy *“Remuneration of Part-time Chairs and Members of Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities” (12 May 2003)*. NRM North meetings include those meetings that a Management Committee member has been given delegation by the Management Committee to attend on behalf of NRM North.

Significant travel costs associated with meeting attendance may be reimbursed in accordance with Tasmanian Government Directive *Department of Industrial Relations Directive No. 06/04 “Motor Vehicle Allowances” (September 04)*.

NRM NORTH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBER PROFILES

Hon. Professor Pamela Allan

Launceston

- Tasmanian NRM Chair of Chairs
- Adjunct Professor, School of Technology, Environment & Design, UTAS
- Member, Reference Group for Review of Tasmania’s Local Government Legislation, 2019
- Chair, NSW South Regional Planning Panel
- Strategic Policy Consultant (environment)
- Member, Launceston Historical Society

Mr Michael Walsh

Launceston

- CPA Finance Professional
- Australian Institute of Company Directors, graduate
- Financial Controller, Timberlands Pacific Pty Ltd
- Bachelor of Business, UTAS
- Member, Friends of Four Mile Creek (Coast Care Group)

Dr Joanna Ellison

Bridgenorth

- Associate Professor, Geography and Spatial Sciences, UTAS
- Associate Head, Learning and Teaching UTAS School of Technology, Environments and Design
- Member, Tamar NRM Reference Group
- Public Officer, Northern Tasmanian Eventing Club
- Subject Editor, Wetlands Ecology and Management

Ms Amanda Shepherd

Launceston

- General Manager, Theatre North Inc
- Australian Institute of Company Directors, graduate

Mr Stuart Blom

Launceston

- Director, Rae & Partners Lawyers
- Director, National Automobile Museum of Tasmania
- Committee member, Bank of Heritage Isle Advisory Committee
- Australian Institute of Company Directors, member and graduate

Mr Peter Sattler

Bridport

- Farmer, beef cattle and potatoes
- Member, Bridport Lions Club
- Dorset NRM representative on the Scottsdale Irrigation Scheme
- Member, Great Forester Catchment Management Consultative Group

Mr Royce Aldred

Launceston

- Trade Waste Contracts Manager, TasWater
- Director, City Mission
- Committee member, Australian Water Association TAS Branch
- Bachelor of Technology (Environment), UTAS
- Australian Institute of Company Directors, graduate

Ms Louise Clark

Launceston

- Community Relations Specialist, Bell Bay Aluminium
- Bachelor of Law, UTAS
- Tasmanian Leaders Program Graduate 2009
- Deputy Chair, Regional Development Australia, Tasmania Committee
- QVMAG Advisory Board Member

Ms Leanne Sherriff

Cressy

- Senior Consultant, Macquarie Franklin, specialising in NRM, extension and red meat production
- Palmerston Coopworth
- Tasmanian Leaders Program Graduate 2013
- Member Tasmanian Red Meat Steering Committee
- Member Threatened Species Community Review Committee

Mr Peter Curley

Launceston

- Environmental Assessment Coordinator DPIPWE Parks & Wildlife Service
- Secretary Exeter & Gravelly Beach Advisory Group, West Tamar Council
- Bachelor of Science (Ecology), University of Queensland
- Graduate Diploma Natural Resource Management, University of New England

SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the Year Ended 30 June 2020

SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The concise financial report is an extract from the full financial statements of NRM North for the year ended 30 June 2020.

The financial statements and specific disclosures included in the concise financial report have been derived from the financial report.

The concise financial report cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of NRM North as the financial report.

Further financial information can be obtained from the financial report. The financial report is available free of charge, on request to NRM North.

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Revenue			
Government grants	2	3,850,006	1,910,820
Corporate contribution	2	331,277	281,927
Interest received		33,467	46,373
Other income		53,302	29,917
		4,268,052	2,269,037
Expenses			
Employee benefits expense		1,589,568	1,297,610
Professional services		200,352	202,271
Communications and information technology		97,725	97,654
Contract services		1,852,623	321,961
Travelling and motor vehicle		53,976	82,055
Depreciation		132,214	7,299
Interest paid		8,159	-
Other operating expenses		300,841	189,600
		4,235,457	2,198,450
Net surplus/(deficit)		32,595	70,587
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		32,595	70,587

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		3,646,765	2,614,551
Trade and other receivables		829,189	898,394
Prepayments		19,303	18,499
Total current assets		4,495,257	3,531,444
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment		41,493	43,861
Right-of-use assets		206,079	-
Total non-current assets		247,572	43,861
TOTAL ASSETS		4,742,829	3,575,305
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Contract liabilities	2	2,433,777	1,712,813
Trade and other payables		354,547	189,931
Lease liabilities		214,747	-
Provisions		180,075	160,137
Total current liabilities		3,183,145	2,062,881
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions		20,235	10,617
Total non-current liabilities		20,235	10,617
TOTAL LIABILITIES		3,203,380	2,073,498
NET ASSETS		1,539,449	1,501,807
EQUITY			
Reserves		1,463,815	1,431,220
Retained earnings		75,634	70,587
TOTAL EQUITY		1,539,449	1,501,807

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Operating Reserve \$	Retained Earnings \$	Capital Reserve \$	Contingency Reserve \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2019	1,006,220	70,587	75,000	350,000	1,501,807
Prior period adjustments	-	5,047	-	-	5,047
Total comprehensive income	-	32,595	-	-	32,595
Transfers to and from reserves	32,595	(32,595)	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2020	1,038,815	75,634	75,000	350,000	1,539,449
Balance at 1 July 2018	723,350	282,870	75,000	350,000	1,431,220
Total comprehensive income	-	70,587	-	-	70,587
Drawdown for acquisition of capital items	-	43,167	(43,167)	-	-
Transfers to and from reserves	282,870	(326,037)	43,167	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2019	1,006,220	70,587	75,000	350,000	1,501,807



Hooded plover wardens (Natalie Walter, Michael Toowsey, and Sybil Pike) installing temporary nest fencing with signage, on a busy east coast beach. Photo: Dr Elizabeth Znidersic.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

For the year ended 30 June 2020

	Note	2020 \$	2019 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from government and corporate partners		5,035,270	2,999,893
Contract payments		(1,619,591)	(593,124)
Payments to employees		(1,560,012)	(1,311,563)
Payments to suppliers		(632,362)	(589,256)
Other income		53,302	29,917
Interest received		34,981	99,583
Interest paid		(8,159)	-
GST refunded/(remitted)		(150,037)	(23,637)
Net cashflows from operating activities		1,153,392	611,813
Cash flows from investing activities			
Acquisition of plant and equipment		(14,819)	(43,167)
Net cashflows from investing activities		(14,819)	(43,167)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease liability		(106,359)	-
Net cashflows from financing activities		(106,359)	-
Net increase/decrease in cash held		1,032,214	568,646
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		2,614,551	2,045,905
Cash at the end of the financial year		3,646,765	2,614,551

NOTES TO THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 30 June 2020

1. Basis of Preparation of Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements are an extract from the full financial statements of NRM North for the year ended 30 June 2020.

The financial report covers NRM North as an individual entity. NRM North is an incorporated association in Tasmania under the *Associations Incorporations Act 1964* and operates as a not-for-profit entity. NRM North is a registered charity under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

2. Funding revenue

Grant funding received by NRM North is generally provided for the purpose of achieving specified

outcomes. NRM North manage these outcomes through procurement processes where service providers or landholders are contracted by NRM North to deliver agreed services, and funds paid under those contracts are conditional upon successful completion of milestones and reporting targets.

Where the performance obligations relating to funding received under contract has yet to be met, the unsatisfied portion is set aside as a liability representing outstanding commitments. NRM North anticipates that the conditions attached to all amounts of funding received but not yet spent will be satisfied in accordance with the funding requirements. Management assessed that several minor funding contracts were incorrectly set aside as a liability in the 2019 financial year. An adjusting entry was processed in the 2020 financial year to correct this error.

	Opening balance \$	Funding received \$	Revenue recognition \$	Closing balance \$
Government Funding				
Regional Land Partnership	346,305	1,528,304	(1,077,469)	797,140
State core funding	-	350,000	(350,000)	-
Tamar Estuary River Health Grant	726,643	500,000	(1,226,643)	-
Commonwealth Catchment funding	-	1,000,000	(436,182)	563,818
Department of State Growth	189,585	1,000,000	(596,868)	592,717
Baseline event funding	-	40,000	-	40,000
Regional Cat Management Program	80,295	120,000	(162,844)	37,451
	1,342,826	4,538,304	(3,850,006)	2,031,125
Corporate contributions				
Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers	302,137	368,989	(268,474)	402,652
Myer Foundation	62,803	-	(62,803)	-
	364,940	368,989	(331,277)	402,652
	1,707,766	4,907,293	(4,181,283)	2,433,777

3. Adoption of New and Amended Accounting Standards

In the current year, NRM North has adopted all of the new and revised Standards and Interpretations issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board that are relevant to its operations and effective for the current annual reporting period. These include:

AASB 16 Leases

AASB 16 introduces a single lessee accounting model and requires a lessee to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases with a term of more than 12 months, unless the underlying asset is of low value. A lessee is required to recognise a right-of-use asset representing its right to use the underlying leased asset and a lease liability representing its obligations to make lease payments.

In contracts where NRM North is a lessee, NRM North recognises a right-of-use asset and lease liability at the commencement date of the lease, unless the short-term or low-value exemption is applied.

NRM North has applied this standard from 1 July 2019 using a retrospective approach (partial) with cumulative catch-up. This does not require NRM North to restate comparative figures, but does require the presentation of both qualitative and quantitative disclosures for affected items, along with a corresponding adjustment to the opening balance of Accumulated surpluses for transitional effects of re-measurement.

AASB 16 has resulted in most of NRM North’s operating leases being brought onto the statement of financial position. There are limited exceptions relating to short-term leases and low-value assets.

The calculation of the lease liability has taken into account appropriate discount rates, assumptions about the lease term, and increases in lease payments. A corresponding right to use assets has been recognised, which has been depreciated over the term of the lease. Rent expense is no longer shown. The profit and loss impact of the leases has been through depreciation and interest charges. In the Statement of Cash Flows lease payments has been shown as cash flows from financing activities instead of operating activities.

Impact of the new definition of a lease

NRM North has made use of the practical expedient available on transition to AASB 16 not to reassess whether a contract is or contains a lease. Instead contracts containing a lease under AASB 17 or Interpretation 4 at transition will continue to be applied to those contracts entered or modified before 1 January 2019.

The change in definition of a lease mainly relates to the concept of control. AASB 16 determines whether a contract contains a lease on the basis of whether the customer has the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time in exchange for consideration. This is in contrast to the focus on ‘risks and rewards’ in AASB 117 and Interpretation 4.

Impact of lessee accounting

AASB 16 changes how NRM North accounts for leases previously classified as operating leases under AASB 17, which were not recorded within the statement of financial position.

Applying AASB 16, for all leases, NRM North:

- a) Recognises right-of-use of assets and lease liabilities in the statement of financial position, initially measured at the present value of the future lease payments;
- b) Recognises depreciation of right-of-use assets and interest on lease liabilities in profit or loss;
- c) Separates the total amount of cash paid into a principal portion (presented within financing activities) and interest (presented within financing activities) in the statement of cash flows.

Lease incentives (e.g. rent-free period) are recognised as part of the measurement of the right-of-use assets and lease liabilities whereas under AASB 117 they resulted into the recognition of a lease incentive, amortised as a reduction of rental expenses generally on a straight-line basis.

Under AASB 16, right-of-use assets are tested for impairment in accordance with AASB 136.

Transition

On transition to AASB16, NRM North recognised additional right-of-use assets and additional lease liabilities. The impact on transition is summarised below.

1 July 2019	\$
Right-of-use assets	321,106
Lease liabilities	(321,106)
Accumulated surpluses	-



Preservation of the threatened hooded plover is a key focus of NRM North. Photo: Kim Wormald, lirrallirra.com.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE DECLARATION

In the opinion of the management committee, the financial report:

- as described in note 1 to the financial statements, the summary financial statements are an extract from the full financial statements of NRM North for the year ended 30 June 2020;
- gives a true and fair view of NRM North’s financial position as at 30 June 2020 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that NRM North will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed P. Allan
Pamela Allan

Position Chairperson

Dated 19 August 2020



RHAP catchment actions are expected to reduce sediment and nutrient loads entering the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary, with the added benefit of reducing streamside erosion.



Crowe Audit Australia
ABN 84 006 466 351
62 Paterson Street
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
PO Box 1000
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250
Main +61 (0) 6323 1222
Fax +61 (0) 6323 1231
www.crowe.com.au

NRM North
Independent Auditor’s Report to the Members of NRM North

Report of the Independent Auditor on the Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements, which comprise the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2020, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cashflows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial report of NRM North for the year ended 30 June 2020.

Opinion

In our opinion, the accompanying summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report, on the basis described in Note 1.

Summary Financial Statements

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by *Australian Accounting Standards – Reduced Disclosure Requirements* and the *Natural Resource Management Act (Tasmania) 2002* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor’s report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor’s report thereon.

Responsibilities of the Management Committee for the Summary Financial Statements

The management committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the summary financial statements on the basis described in Note 1.

Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Summary Financial Statements

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the summary financial statements are consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 *Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements*.

CROWE AUDIT AUSTRALIA

Malcolm Matthews

Partner

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Launceston

Date: 20 August 2020



Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource
Management Association Inc.

63-65 Cameron Street
Launceston TAS 7250
P: 03 6333 7777
F: 03 6334 2822

nrmnorth.org.au