



NRM North
Yearbook &
Annual Report
2020–21

NRM NORTH

YEARBOOK & ANNUAL REPORT

2020–21

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

03 6333 7777
admin@nrmnorth.org.au
nrmnorth.org.au

The NRM North Yearbook and Annual Report 2020-21 has been prepared with all due care and diligence using the best available information at the time of publication. NRM North holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within the document. Any decision made by other parties based on this report are the responsibility of those parties.

Cover image: The Tasmanian Government’s \$5 million Weeds Action Fund aims to tackle weeds impacting valuable agricultural and environmental assets and species including kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*). Photo : Jessie Stanley.

All unspecified images are credit of NRM North.

Printed on an environmentally responsible paper made Carbon Neutral and the fibre source is FSC (CoC) Recycled certified. The paper is manufactured from 100% post consumer recycled paper in a process chlorine free environment under the ISO 14001 environmental management system.

© Published by NRM North, September 2021

Contents

4	From the CEO	52	Annual Report
6	About Northern Tasmania	54	Chair’s Report
7	Northern Tasmania NRM Strategy 2015 - 2020 2030 Strategy Update NRM North Strategic Plan 2019-2023	56	Corporate Services Program
		60	COVID-19 Response
8	Water Program	61	Partnerships
12	Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program	62	NRM Strategy for Northern Tasmania + Sustainable Organisational Funding Model
20	River Health Action Plan	63	Operations and People Management
21	Tamar Action Grants	64	NRM North Staff
22	Stormwater Intrusion Program	65	Organisational Health
24	Land Program	66	Corporate Governance
28	Weeds Action Fund	68	NRM North Management Committee Members
29	Hillslope Erosion Project	69	Attendance at Management Committee and subcommittee meetings
30	Soil, Vegetation & Biodiversity On-Farm	70	Management Committee Payments
33	Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator	71	NRM North Management Committee Member Profiles
34	Biodiversity Program	72	Summary Financial Statements
38	Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project	73	Statement of Profit or Loss
39	Giant Freshwater Crayfish Project	74	Statement of Financial Position
40	Hooded Plover Project	75	Statement of Changes in Equity
41	Ringarooma Ramsar Project	76	Statement of Cash Flows
42	Saving Shy Susan Project	77	Notes to the Summary Financial Statements
43	Small Farm Living Project	78	Management Committee Declaration
44	Tasmanian Cat Management Project		
46	Aboriginal NRM		
50	Cultural Awareness		



NRM North CEO Report

Rosanna
Coombes

On behalf of the Management Committee and staff, it's my pleasure to present to you the 2021 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 and a selection of articles on projects and outcomes in each program. The Annual Report includes similar information specific to our Corporate Services Program and includes information on corporate performance and financial management.

The challenges of COVID-19

In the past year the shadow of COVID-19 has continued to hover over the country and while Tasmania has not experienced the debilitating outbreaks and lockdowns seen interstate, we have not escaped the flow on impacts. In late July 2020 staff returned to the office following several months of working remotely.

The team at NRM North quickly responded to new ways of community and landholder engagement to deliver many of our programs. Incorporating technology such as Zoom or Teams enabled staff to continue engagement with partners, and the creation of

webinars or educational videos replaced gatherings in-person. A slow shift back to some degree of normalcy with many protections and protocols in place has allowed us to deliver most of the planned activities. The corporate services team worked diligently to reimagine many processes and procedures to ensure the team, partners, and the community were as safe as possible.

One of the most significant impacts on the organisation has been our capacity to recruit new staff. At a time when NRM North has had significant success in securing new grant deeds or agreements to deliver projects, our ability to attract staff, particularly from the mainland, has been troublesome. For the first seven or eight months of the financial year, some positions had to be advertised several times to find suitable candidates. With a reliance on interstate applicants with specialist skills, it has also been problematic trying to find those willing to move to Tasmania to join the organisation. Several offers to top candidates were rejected due to uncertainty around whether they would be able to return to the mainland to visit family. This meant current staff were often doing double duty to stand up new projects until recruitments were finalised. While programs have been delivered successfully, it has put a strain on existing staff. In the last quarter of the year the organisation has been able to fill many open positions creating a palpable feeling of relief.

Confidence in the agricultural sector

Over the same period Tasmania's economy has rebounded, and seasonal conditions and commodity prices for agriculture products have been favourable. In June 2021, Rabobank's *Rural Confidence Survey* showed continued strong confidence within Australia's farming sector, with farm confidence in Tasmania leading the nation and at a six-year high. The survey reported a significant proportion of Tasmanian

farmers are confident that farming conditions will continue to improve over the next 12 months and some are forecasting another big production year.

This confidence bodes well for continued investment in on-farm infrastructure that supports productivity and improves management of nature resources. The availability of capital combined with a positive outlook unlocks opportunities to invest in a range of improvements such as fencing stock out of waterways, improvements in dairy effluent management systems, and revegetation or protection of remnant vegetation for productivity, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity benefits.

Government support for regional investment and increased funding for natural resource management

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Premier Peter Gutwein convened the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) to develop strategies to minimise COVID-19 impacts on the economy and our social fabric, and to ensure the Tasmanian community is well placed to meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. One of the many findings of PESRAC was the importance of investing in on-ground programs in regional communities. NRM North is well placed to support these findings.

Under the current grant deed, the Tasmanian Government supports NRM North with core funding of \$350,000 per year (over four years). The organisation then leverages that funding. Currently NRM North has agreements in place with a range of funding bodies to invest approximately \$35 million in natural resource management programs in the region in the same time frame. This leveraged investment generates the equivalent of \$100 million of economic activity - much of which supports regional communities in the north. The on-ground funding

supports wages for farm labour, materials purchased from rural supply stores, services from local contractors or consultants, and the flow on effect to the broader community.

Noting the important role that NRM North plays in improving natural resource management and supporting the economic health of regional communities, the Tasmanian Government, through Minister Guy Barnett and Minister Roger Jaensch, committed to increasing support to NRM North in FY 2022/23. The Management Committee wishes to express appreciation to the Ministers for their continued support.

Delivery of NRM outcomes

In the past 12 months 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 or activities:

- NRM North staff supported or volunteered at events held by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community including Mannalargenna Day and takara waranta.
- Staff contracted landholders to plant over 21,000 seedlings to create and enhance eastern barred bandicoot habitat and launched a booklet containing 5 professional garden designs aimed at creating urban refuges for EBB, receiving national media coverage.
- The organisation secured funding for a further two years for the Small Farm Living Program, through the Australian Government's Smart Farms Small Grants
- In 2021, NRM North received funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program to build on outcomes
- Staff worked with the City of Launceston, West Tamar Council and Meander Valley Council to identify and remediate 44 sewage intrusions (cross connected sewage into the stormwater system) resulting in the cessation of approximately five Olympic size swimming pools of raw sewage entering the Tamar estuary every year.
- Staff contracted an additional 168 km of riparian fencing to remove stock from waterways with 130 km of stock exclusion fencing completed this year. Since the inception of the Tamar Action grants program a total of 437 km of a target 725 km of stock exclusion fencing has been completed or is under contract to be completed. These improvements will exclude 15,000 beef cattle and 190,000 sheep and 7,000 dairy cows from waterways.
- In partnership with DairyTas, staff have contracted dairy effluent management improvements on 2,500 hectares to improve water quality leading to the Tamar estuary.
- NRM North has funded protection of 194 hectares of remnant vegetation on-farms through the Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farm project.
- On behalf of the Tasmanian Government, staff successfully delivered the Weeds Action Fund small grants program including funding for 26 one-year projects valued at \$200,000 and delivered the first round of targeted large grants to the value of \$600k /year over the next three years.

achieved through previous investment to safeguard the remaining wild sub-populations of Shy Susan.

- NRM North facilitated the adoption of the northern regional Cat Management Strategy with the TFGA, RSPCA, Just Cats, the Australian Veterinary Association, DPIPW, and all northern councils and started implementation of the plan.

These are a small sample of the activities and I encourage you to read the articles in the Yearbook to learn more about the work that the NRM North team has been up to in the past year.

Thank you

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our partners, Management Committee, and staff. 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 and development 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. This year has been particularly challenging with having to implement COVID-19 safe approaches and cover a significant number of open positions. Your passion, expertise, and agility drives 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 more than 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 148,000 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 km, 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 Island.

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 \$858m annually¹.

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 2019-20
<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/agriculture/agricultural-commodities-australia/latest-release>

About NRM North

The Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Association Inc., trading as NRM North, 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 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-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.



NRM Strategy for Northern Tasmania 2015 – 2020

The Natural Resource Management Strategy for Northern Tasmania is currently being reviewed, as required every five years under the *Natural Resource Management Act 2002*.

NRM North has developed a draft strategy for consultation, working closely with NRM South and the Cradle Coast Authority to ensure a high level of consistency across the three Tasmanian NRM strategies. This collaborative approach builds on the previous work of the three organisations and provides a framework to:

- improve ease-of-use and accessibility of the strategies for all stakeholders, particularly statewide and multi-region organisations;
- share information and other resources to enable a statewide or multi-region approach to measuring success;
- promote a united statewide approach to collectively contribute to delivering state and federal government policy and targets, and to respond to local expectations; and to
- consistently apply contemporary NRM planning practices.

2030 Strategy Update

The draft 2030 Natural Resource Management Strategy for Northern Tasmania provides a framework to facilitate sustainable management of northern Tasmania’s natural resources. Differing from previous regional strategies that identified NRM work across community, government and industry, this strategy identifies priorities and actions NRM North will seek to deliver in partnership with stakeholders. It is consistent with state and federal policies and priorities, and builds upon a shared commitment for:

- productive and sustainable land management;
- healthy and productive water and marine resources; and
- healthy, resilient, and biodiverse environments.

Current NRM North programs are identified in the NRM North Strategic Plan 2019-2023 (organisational strategy). Following the update and accreditation of the regional strategy, 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.



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, primary industries, and recreational amenity, and they support unique and diverse aquatic ecosystems.

The kanamaluka / Tamar estuary is a focal point for the city of Launceston and underpins the region’s social and economic values. The health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary has been a long-standing issue of concern in the community. The upper reaches of the estuary are under pressure from high loads of both diffuse (catchment) and point source pollutants including nutrients, sediments, metals, and pathogens.

Other important catchments in the region that support townships and face similar water quality pressures include the Brid and George catchments. There is an opportunity to work with 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 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 and point source 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 the load of diffuse pollutants entering waterways from dairying areas in the Meander, Brid and George catchments and grazing areas in the Brid, George, North Esk, Macquarie and Brumbys Lake catchments.

2020/21 Achievements

- Continued monitoring of estuary health through the Ecosystem Health Assessment Program.
- Facilitated capacity building for best practice stormwater management through soil and erosion control training and worked cooperatively with the Southern Stormwater Working Group to develop a statewide approach to stormwater management.
- Reviewed long-term data collected from the Lake Trevallyn Algal Bloom Monitoring Program to inform future monitoring and management.
- Built community knowledge and awareness through an educational video series and Tamar Discovery Day.
- Facilitated a technical review of sediment management options, to inform future management of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.

- Continued monitoring of coastal saltmarsh and bird species.
- Over 70% of identified sewage intrusions rectified and an additional 21 sewage cross-connections identified bringing the total to 44.
- 168 km of riparian fencing contracted, and 130 km of stock exclusion fencing delivered through Tamar Action Grants bringing the total to 254 km.

2021/22 Focus

- Continue monthly water quality monitoring of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.
- Continue to monitor Lake Trevallyn for blue-green algae and test a predictive model for blooms.
- Implement a biological monitoring program for the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.
- Collate and report on recreational water quality data from relevant sources.
- Develop an educational video series on human and natural values of the Tamar catchment.
- Engage councils and stakeholders in best practice stormwater management, particularly statewide planning provisions, soil and erosion control and water sensitive urban design.
- Continue to assist delivery of catchment works for the River Health Action Plan, including advice and input into scientific monitoring.
- Continue to deliver projects to reduce pathogens entering the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary by:
 - supporting dairy and grazing landholders to undertake riparian management activities and exclude stock from waterways through the Tamar Action Grants; and
 - supporting dairy farmers to improve dairy effluent management practices and reduce stock effluent from entering waterways.

Contact Jo Fearman
Title Operations Manager -
Water and Strategy
Email jfearman@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7792

Contact Jo Fearman
Title Operations Manager -
Water and Strategy
Email jfearman@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7792

Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program

The Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program was established in 2008 as a regional partnership between the agencies responsible for management of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers. 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 scientific understanding of the issues impacting the health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and its catchment 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 institutions, natural resource

management organisations and the community to monitor and report on waterway health, as well as coordinating activities to reduce pollutants entering waterways.

Did you know?

The long waterways of the TEER catchment make it the largest catchment in Tasmania, covering 10,000 m². It features the longest river in the state, the South Esk River, which flows into the longest navigable estuary in Australia, the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. All of this water is an important natural resource to northern Tasmania.

TEER Strategic Plan

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 develop policy recommendations and source investment for management of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.

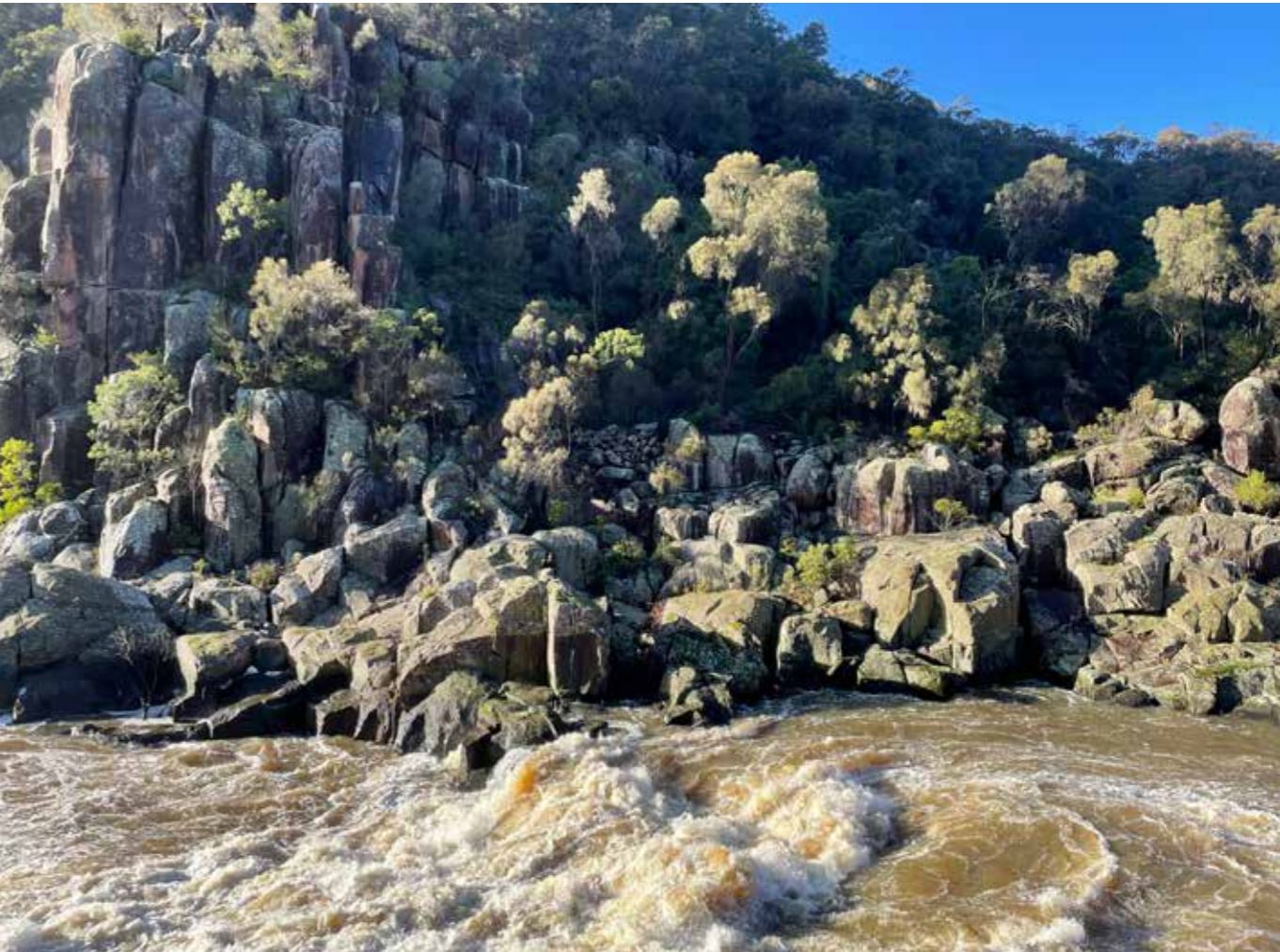
The role of the TEER Program is to improve understanding of the issues impacting waterway health to better identify and target priority areas requiring on-ground action. To achieve this, the TEER Strategic Plan 2020-2024 outlines three future directions:

- 1. Work together to support 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 core activities such as water quality monitoring as well as developing a greater focus on building community knowledge and awareness and enhancing biological monitoring.



The TEER Program works collaboratively with stakeholders to inform management and to improve the health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. Photo: Sam Jack.



Contact Sam Jack
Title TEER Scientific and
Technical Coordinator
Email sjack@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7778

TEER Ecosystem Health Assessment Program

The TEER Ecosystem Health Assessment Program (EHAP) undertakes monitoring at defined locations along the 70 km length of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary, from the Tamar Yacht Basin at the confluence of the North and South Esk Rivers to the estuary mouth at Low Head. Beginning biennial data collection in 2009, the EHAP transitioned into a program of continuous monitoring in 2016.

Every month, with logistical support from TasWater, samples are taken from 16 sites along the estuary and tested for a suite of water quality parameters. The data is collated and analysed to develop biennial report cards on ecosystem health, with the eighth Tamar Estuary Report Card planned for release in 2022. TEER data can also be accessed upon request by the community, research and industry organisations, for the purpose of undertaking investigations related to the estuary.

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



Water samples from the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary are collected monthly and tested for a suite of water quality parameters. Photo: Darren McPhee.

Contact Sam Jack
Title TEER Scientific and
Technical Coordinator
Email sjack@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7778

Lake Trevallyn Blue-Green Algae Monitoring

The Lake Trevallyn Algal Bloom Monitoring Program was formed in 2007 following a significant blue-green algal bloom. Since then, the program has conducted regular water sampling over the summer months to enable early detection of the risk of an algal bloom, and to improve understanding of environmental conditions that can lead to a bloom.

Blue-green algae are regularly present in Lake Trevallyn with fluctuating summer concentrations

dependent on environmental conditions. To date, there has not been a bloom like the one that occurred in 2007. Over the 2020-21 summer, wetter and cooler than average conditions along with dam releases and spill events, meant very few blue-green algae were detected during monitoring.

Key parameters during the monitoring season include:

- daily surface temperatures above 20°C until late February;
 - abundant supply of nitrogen and phosphorous;
 - moderate wind strength throughout the season; and
 - low residence time, high daily inflows and high winter, spring and summer spills.
- peak cell count of 133 cells/mL in late March;



Regular water sampling at Lake Trevallyn during summer months monitors blue-green algae levels and enables the early detection of a risk of a bloom. Photo: Sam Jack.

Contact Jo Fearman
Title Operations Manager -
Water and Strategy
Email jfearman@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7792

Contact Sam Jack
Title TEER Scientific and
Technical Coordinator
Email sjack@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7778

Sediment Management

The existence of mudflats is a natural feature of the upper kanamaluka / Tamar estuary, with early accounts describing a relatively shallow channel surrounded by extensive tidal flats and low tide wetlands. However, sedimentation of the estuary has been a concern of residents since early European settlement, and as early as the 1880’s, letters to the editor have made calls to ‘get rid of the mud’.

In recent years sediment raking has been used to manage sedimentation, however this practice ceased after an extensive review that found it ineffective in reducing the rate of sedimentation and that it had negative impacts on navigation and water quality. As the estuary channel restored its

pre-raking depth, sediment that had been pushed below the low tide level reaccumulated into visible mudflats. These changes led to renewed community concern over sedimentation along with many proposed options for managing sedimentation. Commissioned by the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (TEMT), the TEER Program undertook a comprehensive and independent analysis of the challenges, impacts and magnitude of costs of various proposed options for management of sedimentation in the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. Assessing eight proposed management options, the evaluation considered legislation, feasibility, effectiveness, flood risk, social impacts, environmental impacts, and costs for each proposal.

Given the natural processes that control sedimentation such as tidal flow and river flooding, the evaluation found that many of the proposed management options were not effective, had significant feasibility and legislative challenges, major environmental impacts, or large costs. Management options that acknowledged the natural processes of the estuary faced fewer challenges in implementation. The TEER evaluation did not recommend any options to TEMT but provided an evidence base to inform decision making. TEMT has developed a draft vision and will progress with stakeholder consultation on future management options to achieve positive social, economic, and environmental outcomes in managing the upper kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.



The TEER Program undertook a comprehensive and independent analysis of various proposed options for management of sedimentation in the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. Photo: Randall Langdon.

Stormwater Management

The TEER Program facilitates the Northern Tasmanian Stormwater Working Group (NTSWG), a forum of seven northern councils and TasWater that fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing on stormwater management and policy.

A key achievement this year has been the development of a draft statewide stormwater policy in collaboration with the Southern Stormwater Working Group. The policy has been drafted with the intent of standardising stormwater conditions for new developments to protect infrastructure, property, and natural assets.

The policy development process has been led by a core group of stormwater engineers from northern and southern councils and has been facilitated by the Derwent Estuary

Program and the TEER Program. The draft is being developed in consultation with the Environment Protection Authority Tasmania, the Local Government Association of Tasmania, a technical reference group of southern planners and water industry representatives from interstate.

The TEER Program has also facilitated soil and erosion control (S&EC) training for industry and council partners. The TEER Water

Quality Improvement Plan shows that 18% of sediment inputs to the kanamlauka / Tamar estuary catchment come from urban areas.

Industry training aims to upskill site supervisors and workers on best practices to reduce sediment and pollutant run-off from construction sites, while council S&EC training is provided to council planners and compliance officers, and council works crews.

Quick fact

The TEER Water Quality Improvement Plan shows that 18% of sediment inputs to the kanamlauka / Tamar estuary catchment come from urban areas.



Stormwater outfall at Blackstone Park. Photo: Sam Jack.

Contact Emma Ferguson
Title TEER Project Officer
Email eferguson@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7775

Tamar Discovery Day

An important focus of the TEER Program is community engagement to create a greater understanding of and care for the health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. Last year marked the third edition of the biennial Tamar Discovery Day, and despite the disruptions experienced from the pandemic during 2020, over 140 members of the community registered for the event held across two sessions in September.

The event immersed attendees in the natural wonders of the estuary and highlighted some of the issues affecting its environment, detailing actions we can take to better care for the waterway.

Engaging the youngest members of our community was central to the Tamar Discovery Day.

Representatives from Seahorse World, Petuna Aquaculture,

Hydro Tasmania, the University of Tasmania, Fish Care, the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Tamar NRM, the Tamar Island Wetlands Centre, and Plastic Free Launceston shared their knowledge of the estuary. Attendees heard from experts on topics such as the 2020 Tamar Estuary Report Card, King George Whiting, Gambusia at Tamar Island, sustainable recreational fishing, and how to live plastic free.

Catch it in the Catchment

The TEER Program and NRM North staff rolled up their sleeves for Tamar NRM's 2020 'Catch it in the Catchment', a community clean-up event that aligns with the TEER Program focus on 'working together for healthy waterways'.

The November week-long clean-up engaged local schools, community groups and businesses at multiple locations along the kanamaluka /

Tamar estuary. In total, 287 people collected a staggering 775 kg of rubbish during the week. NRM North staff collected six bags of rubbish from the banks of the North Esk River near the esplanade, weighing 46 kg. Many of the usual suspects were collected including plastic, metal cans, bottles, rubber, and cigarette butts, along with some rarer finds such as shoes, hubcaps and a car battery.

Rubbish can have a devastating impact on aquatic life through physical entrapment and creating intestinal blockages. Water quality can also be impacted through the release of chemicals as items break down. 'Catch it in the Catchment' provides an opportunity to engage a range of community groups, increase community understanding of the impacts of rubbish, and promote sustainable practices that can be implemented in everyday life.



NRM North staff collected 46 kg of rubbish from the banks of the North Esk River as part of the 'Catch it in the Catchment' event. Photo: Sam Jack.



River Health Action Plan – Catchment Works Program

In 2018, the Tasmanian and Australian governments jointly committed to funding recommendations from the River Health Action Plan - Catchment Works Program to improve the health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary with the primary goal of improving public health by reducing pathogen concentrations in Zone 1 (Launceston to Legana) by more than 4%.

NRM North was selected as the preferred provider for delivery of the plan’s catchment works program. With additional support secured through the Australian Government’s Tamar Estuary River Health Grant, a total investment of \$11.5 million over six years was secured to support

implementation of catchment works including:

- excluding stock access to waterways;
- rehabilitating riparian vegetation buffers;
- improving effluent management on dairy farms; and
- identifying and mitigating cross-connections in the separated stormwater systems across Launceston’s urban area.

Partnerships have been formed with the City of Launceston to deliver the Sewage Intrusion Program; DairyTas to deliver the

effluent improvement and extension program across the dairy industry; and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) to help engage and communicate through their association. Meander Valley and West Tamar councils have representation on technical and steering committees, working groups, and assessment panels, which help to inform and guide the program in achieving outcomes.

This project is supported with funding provided by the state and federal governments through the Launceston City Deal and the Australian Government’s Tamar Estuary River Health Grant.



Reducing pathogen loads to improve waterway health through stock exclusion measures is a core focus of the RHAP Program. Photo: Andrew Easton.

River Health Action Plan – Tamar Action Grants

The River Health Action Plan Tamar Action Grants continue to attract widespread interest from dairy and grazing landholders within the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) catchment to improve water quality by limiting stock access to waterways and reducing effluent runoff.

The program has now been open to dairy and grazing landholders for the last two years, with nine successful assessment rounds made available to support a range of funded activities including the installation of waterway fencing, provision of stock water, stock crossings, riparian revegetation, and effluent management upgrades on dairy farms.

In that time, NRM North has contracted 437 km of stock exclusion fencing across dairy and grazing properties, with over 254 km of fencing works already completed protecting 1,100 hectares of streamside riparian area. Within the dairy space, 2,500 hectares of milking platform has been contracted for improved effluent management.

Once all currently contracted works are complete, across the

kanamaluka / Tamar estuary catchment are complete, an estimated 12,000 cattle, 190,000 sheep and 1,500 dairy cows will be restricted from accessing waterways across the TEER catchment, resulting in a marked reduction in pathogens entering the estuary as well as an improvement in localised water quality and ecosystem health. NRM North Water Program Manager Jesse Webster said restricting large numbers of stock from waterways will have significant environmental improvements.

“Every approved project has the primary goal of reducing pathogens that enter the waterway by excluding stock, but once stock are removed, you will often see a significant improvement in the riparian vegetation which reduces potential bank erosion, allowing riverbanks to become more resilient to flood events, therefore decreasing sediment entering the waterway and improving water quality for everyone.”

Landholder interest has been strong, with applications for 63% of the 724 km target for stock exclusion approved in the first two years. Grant recipient Sam Archer from

‘Chester’ near Westwood has welcomed the funding, which will go towards the installation of 8 km of fencing, installing alternative watering points and planting 12 hectares of revegetation. The revegetation will improve the environment on the farm and provide valuable shelter belts for stock.

Mr Archer said fencing the waterways will provide the farm with stock management benefits, as well as broader environmental improvements.

“The exclusion of large numbers of stock from the waterways will not just benefit us, but there will be obvious water quality benefits for the community as well ... the grants are a great platform to provide positive outcomes for the environment and for landholders.”

Sam Archer

The program runs until June 2024.

This project is supported with funding provided by the state and federal governments through the Launceston City Deal and the Australian Government’s Tamar Estuary River Health Grant.

Quick facts

Since the inception of TAG in 2019, the Tamar Action Grants have:

- contracted 437 km of stock exclusion fencing
- protected 1,100 hectares of streamside
- contracted 2,500 hectares for improved effluent management on dairy farms
- This will exclude over 15,000 beef cattle and 190,000 sheep and 7,000 dairy cows from waterways



River Health Action Plan – Stormwater Intrusion Program

Remediation works to reduce sewage flow to the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary

NRM North's Stormwater Intrusion Program conducts actions to mitigate sewage intrusion into Launceston's separated stormwater systems to reduce pathogens entering the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.

Over the past two years, the program, which is part of the River Health Action Plan's - Catchment Works Program, has been methodically investigating the stormwater system across Launceston for suspected cross-connections with sewerage systems.

City of Launceston Program Manager Ed Hargreaves said sewage that is connected to the separated stormwater system has a big impact on our waterways.

“When houses are built or renovated, poor work practices or mistakes can result in sewage being plumbed into our separated stormwater system. Even a small number of these sewage intrusions can have a significant impact on the health of our waterways - in this case the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.”

Ed Hargreaves

Mr Hargreaves said sewage intrusions across 13 catchments in the greater Launceston area have been identified. Investigations have revealed not all toilets are properly connected to the sewage system. Through the 44 identified cross connections it is estimated that 13 megalitres of untreated sewerage has been entering Launceston's separated stormwater system each year due to incorrectly plumbed businesses and households. This is the equivalent of five Olympic sized swimming pools.

If the sewage from a residence or business is incorrectly connected to the stormwater system, it travels untreated through the stormwater system and into the estuary, which degrades water quality and creates

a public health issue for people using the waterway for recreational purposes.

When a cross-connection is identified, the owner of the property is informed and given assistance to rectify the problem. This usually requires the sewer pipe to be dug up and correctly reconnected to a sewage main that will direct it to the treatment plant.

The benefits for recreational users of the upper estuary will be significant, with the program estimated to reduce pathogen concentrations in the upper estuary by nearly 15%.

NRM North Water Program Manager Jesse Webster, who oversees the program, said there is a common misunderstanding of how the majority of Launceston's stormwater system works.

“Launceston has two infrastructure systems that deal with waste water, these are a separated stormwater and sewage system and a combined stormwater and sewage system ... people often criticise the combined sewage system for spilling into the estuary during rainfall, however, no one really considers that everyday there are pathogens heading directly into our waterways through the separated stormwater system.”

Of the 13 stormwater catchments that have now been investigated, 44 cross-connections have been identified. Significant progress has been made with 75% of these rectified. Remediation works will continue throughout 2021.

The River Health Action Plan is an initiative of the Launceston City Deal.

Contact Jesse Webster
Title Water Program Manager
Email jwebster@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7785



Ed Hargreaves from City of Launceston conducts water sampling next to the Tailrace for the RHAP program. Sewage and stormwater cross-connections are being identified and rectified across Launceston to improve the health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. Photo: Jesse Webster.





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, producing 42% of the \$2.92 billion gross value of Tasmania’s agriculture¹.

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.

¹Tasmanian Agri-Food Scorecard 2018-19
<https://dpiwwe.tas.gov.au/agriculture/facts-figures/tasmanian-agri-food-scorecards>

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.

2020/21 Achievements

- 75 farmers attended Pasture, Carbon & Credit\$ events.
- Hosted field days and a new trial on Flinders Island for the soil acidification strategy and published results in a report.
- Soil carbon trial conducted with Southern Farming Systems.
- Erosion Economic Calculator launched at the Ag Innovation expo.
- Protected 194 hectares of remnant vegetation on-farms through the Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farms Project.
- Break O’Day Council contracted NRM North to deliver the Drought Weeds project.
- Successful delivery of Stage 2 Small Grants and Targeted Large Grants as part of the Tasmanian Government’s \$5M Weeds Action Fund.

2021/22 Focus

- Continue the new hillslope erosion trial at Jetsonville and other trials.
- Support the pilot and roll out of the Australian Government’s Agricultural Stewardship Package including:
 - Carbon + Biodiversity carbon sequestration program;
 - Enhancing remnant vegetation stewardship payments; and
 - The Farm Biodiversity Scheme.
- Support delivery of the Future Drought Fund’s Drought Innovation Hub (TIA) and Drought NRM Landscapes project (NRM South) through partnerships.
- Continue efforts to improve agricultural and natural assets with the removal of invasive weeds through delivery of the Tasmanian Government’s \$5M Weeds Action Fund.



Contact Raelene Mibus
Title WAF Coordinator
Email rmibus@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7779

Contact Adrian James
Title Land Program Coordinator
Email ajames@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7777

Weeds Action Fund

The Tasmanian Weeds Action Fund (WAF) is a \$5 million Tasmanian Government initiative that supports farmers and other community organisations tackle weeds that are impacting valuable agricultural and environmental assets. Stage 2 of the Weeds Action Fund is delivered by NRM North.

Funded until 2024, a key principle of the WAF is the concept of ‘shared responsibility’, with landowners, local government and the broader community being encouraged to work together to stop the spread, and where possible, eradicate priority weeds that impact their land.

In February 2021, 63 landholders applied for funding under the Small Grants Round. WAF Coordinator Dr Raelene Mibus said applications were received from a diverse range of candidates, such as local government, businesses, private landholders, community groups, and catchment groups. Many of the projects also represent broad partnerships of landholders working to collectively manage priority weeds.

“Weeds know no borders. Many of the successful projects demonstrate how working together is necessary to control weeds that span property boundaries and land tenures.”

Chair of the fund Ian Sauer is pleased by the community response to the strategic and targeted focus on tackling priority weeds.

“We are pleased with the suite of high quality projects that have been identified for funding. These projects demonstrate high levels of co-investment from project partners and a commitment to the shared responsibility for on-ground weed management.”

Ian Sauer

The focus of many Small Grant projects is detecting and eradicating invasive exotic grasses like Chilean needle grass and serrated

tussock - both highly invasive grasses that threaten the grazing industry. Mr Sauer said the calibre of applications is encouraging.. Mr Sauer said the calibre of applications is encouraging.

“Quality applications articulated long-term management plans and provided co-investment, indicating a genuine and serious commitment to tackling weeds and getting outcomes over the long term.”

Those interested in multi-property cross-tenure weed projects are encouraged to seek support through Large Grant rounds. For updates on future rounds register via the NRM North WAF webpage.

Quick facts

NRM North is responsible for the statewide delivery of the Weeds Action Fund Stage 2 and has:

- *built relationships with delivery partners across the state including DPIPW, NRM South, Cradle Coast Authority, TFGA and industry stakeholders*
- *invested \$200,000 in 26 Small Grant projects in Weeds Action Fund Stage 2*
- *commenced the roll out of Targeted Large Grants for nine target weeds, investing \$600,000 each year for three years, supporting 14 projects statewide*



Chilean needle grass is a target species under the Tasmanian Government’s \$5M Weeds Action Fund. Photo: Jessie Stanley.

Hillslope Erosion Project

NRM North’s Hillslope Erosion Project aims to increase awareness of hillslope erosion risks and to increase the adoption of best practice mitigation techniques to minimise future soil erosion.

Tasmania’s most productive vegetable growing areas have long suffered from significant hillslope erosion due to high rainfall, sloping paddocks, and crops that require bare seed beds. The loss of nutrient-rich topsoil and a reduction in depth to subsoil can incur significant costs to productivity.

In the last two years, trial sites have been established near Deloraine and Scottsdale to investigate the cost-benefit ratio of different hillslope erosion mitigation methods such as cover cropping, deep ripping and ripper-mulching. The trial at

Weetah near Deloraine revealed dense groundcover was the most cost-effective and beneficial defence against productivity loss due to erosion.

Land Program Coordinator Adrian James said the trial at Jetsonville near Scottsdale has been hampered by inclement weather.

“Heavy rain throughout autumn and the start of winter made it too difficult to use machines in the trial ... the boggy conditions meant manual labour was required - this was both time consuming and physically challenging.”

Despite the lack of activity on the site during the June event, a small group of farmers and students from Scottsdale High School enjoyed the BBQ breakfast and discussed how

the trial design would be adapted to cope with the wet conditions.

As the whole trial paddock had recently been contour-ripped, some treatments in a new trial planned for the latter half of 2021 will include full-term and early terminated cover crops on contour-ripped ground. These techniques were not included in the previous trial.

There will be greater efficiencies in assessing the cost-benefit ratio of erosion control methods in the new trial due to the development of NRM North’s Erosion Economic Calculator.

The Hillslope Erosion Project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program.



The Hillslope Erosion Project investigates the cost-benefit ratio of erosion mitigation techniques at various trial sites including Jetsonville. Photo: Adrian James.

Contact Adrian James
Title Land Program Coordinator
Email ajames@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7777

Soil Carbon and Soil Acidity

Pasture-based agricultural industries (dairy, red meat, wool) are by far the largest rural industries in the NRM North region, both in terms of land use and economic value creation. Given most of our region's productive land is under pastures, NRM North's projects addressing some of the underlying soil issues and capitalising on untapped opportunities are important contributions to the regional economy, as well as the health of our natural resources.

Soil Acidification Project

NRM North's Soil Acidification Project aims to increase awareness of soil acidification and its effects on productivity, and to promote practices to ameliorate and reduce the likelihood of soil acidification.



Trials of superfine lime on pastures in the north east and Fingal Valley have been undertaken as part of the Soil Acidification Project. Photo: Adrian James.

Soil acidification trials established in the north east, Flinders Island and Fingal Valley aim to determine if superfine lime products work better than regular lime products to address subsoil acidity when surface-applied on pasture.

NRM North's Land Program Coordinator Adrian James said the trials provide valuable data.

"... the trials are demonstrating more benefits for farmers, such as increased feed production and pasture quality."

Adrian James

NRM North published a report on the acidification trials in June 2021. Two and a half years after a high rate of superfine lime was applied on 15 pastures, significant pH increases were only observed in the top 50mm of soil. While this was disappointing in terms of addressing subsoil acidity, pasture monitoring indicated that liming increased topsoil calcium availability, pasture metabolizable energy and pasture species composition changes.

Across the pastures assessed by consultant Eric Hall, the limed strips shared a change including fewer flat weeds and weedy grasses, and more subclover and white clover.

Soil Carbon Projects

The soil carbon trials across the northern region aim to demonstrate the capacity of species-diverse pastures to sequester more carbon than simple grass and clover pastures. The project is being delivered through field days, farm tours, trials and workshops to observe soil carbon benefits, and to engage with key pasture and soil experts. Early results indicate that if well managed, a highly diverse sown pasture can produce more feed and build more soil carbon than a simple pasture, but these potential benefits are easily lost through inappropriate spraying.

In April 2021, 75 farmers attended 'Pastures, Carbon and Credit\$' workshops in Scottsdale and Westbury. General Manager of the Wilmot Cattle Company (NSW) Stuart Austin spoke about building up soil carbon through intensively grazed pastures on a large-scale, and selling millions of dollars of carbon offsets to Microsoft as an additional revenue to compliment the company's main businesses - beef production. He said the workshops were a great networking opportunity for farmers and stakeholders.

"I really enjoyed coming down, the workshops had great participant engagement and hearing that some Tasmanian producers are already carbon neutral really made my day."



Soil carbon trials investigate the benefits of species-diverse pastures over simple grass and clovers as fodder crops. Photo: Adrian James.

Manager of Meat and Livestock Australia's Carbon Neutral 2030 Program, Margaret Jewell, delivered a presentation on livestock emissions and carbon neutral pathways. The 'Pastures, Carbon and Credit\$' workshops are available on our website and social media page. The pasture project is due for final results in two years' time.

NRM North's Land Program also has a project focusing on soil carbon in cropping systems which often involves tillage. Some areas in Tasmania have been cultivated for up to 200 years. This long history of tillage and fallows has led to significant declines in soil carbon and overall soil health. NRM North's Soil Carbon – Crops Project aims to improve carbon flow into the soil in cropping systems through the adoption of various practices demonstrated and investigated through trials, such as drainage, manure incorporation and sowing in wet periods.

The project is delivered by Southern Farming Systems (Tasmanian branch). These projects are funded through the Australian Government's Regional Land Partnerships.

Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farm Project

The Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farm Project has been developed to improve biodiversity through the protection of remnant vegetation, and planting a variety of native species to enhance agricultural productivity and to provide habitat for threatened fauna.

Agriculture comprises a significant proportion of land in the NRM North region. These productive rural landscapes are used by threatened animals like the Tasmanian Wedge-tailed eagle, spotted-tailed quoll and eastern barred bandicoot.

NRM North's Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farms Project provides incentive funding to farmers to fence off remnant native vegetation, especially threatened vegetation communities. Funding is targeted towards areas with large-scale historic clearing and

threatened mammal species, including the Northern Midlands, the north east coastal plain, and Flinders Island.

In 2020-21, the project supported the protection of over 185 hectares of native vegetation. An event on Flinders Island, where revegetation works have been undertaken, provided farmers with the opportunity to inspect the sites and discuss different revegetation techniques and species. NRM North Land Program Coordinator Adrian James said the benefits of revegetation are widespread.

"As well as creating a safe habitat for threatened species, revegetation activities and the protection of remnant vegetation enhance agricultural productivity by providing shade, shelter and wind protection and mitigating dry land salinity."

Adrian James

The project has additional public benefits such as water and air quality improvements, and facilitates a targeted community grant process to promote the adoption of enhanced on-farm vegetation and biodiversity management practices. The project also supports a farmer extension program to build landholder skills and capacity to undertake native vegetation management. Funding has been designated for more farms to undertake activities to protect remnant vegetation in the 2021-22 financial year.

This project is funded by the Australian Government's Regional Land Partnerships.



Revegetation and protection of native plant species to enhance agricultural productivity and to provide habitat for threatened fauna is a core focus of the Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farm Project. Photo: Rob Burnett.

Contact Adrian James
Title Land Program Coordinator
Email ajames@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7777

Contact Christine Plummer
Title RALF / Ag Officer
Email cplummer@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7777

Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot

Northern Tasmania was only one of six NRM Regions in Australia nominated to participate in a pilot to improve on-farm biodiversity and carbon abatement under the Australian Government’s Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot. NRM North was pleased to be selected to partner with the Australian Government on the pilot project.

Announced in April 2021, the pilot is part of the Australian Government’s \$34 million Agriculture Stewardship Package which aims to develop a market mechanism that rewards farmers for improving biodiversity on their land.

Working with the Australian National University, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment created the pilot as a first test in whether biodiversity payments would encourage farmers to participate in carbon offset plantings of mixed, native vegetation, designed to provide additional benefits for biodiversity conservation. The plantings would also benefit farmers by providing shelter for livestock, improving soil moisture and reducing erosion.

With the pilot active in the region and only two months for applications to be submitted, NRM North’s Land Program quickly adapted to the opportunity, providing information to farmers through various methods including the NRM North website and social media platforms, radio,

webinars, workshops, field days, AgFest, farm visits and one-on-one advice. Farmers in the region have responded with some excellent project proposals, including large-scale farm revegetation works that link nearby bush with riparian areas and remnant old paddock trees.

The next pilot due under the Agriculture Stewardship Package will be incentivised protection and enhancement of existing native vegetation on farms.

The pilot is funded through the Australian Government’s Agriculture Stewardship Package.



The Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot encourages farmers to improve biodiversity through revegetation and regeneration. Photo: Adrian James.

Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator

The role of the Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) is to engage and inform farming communities and agricultural industries within northern Tasmania about emerging ideas, innovative practices, funding opportunities and relevant government policy to help improve long-term sustainability, productivity and profitability in agriculture.

Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitators disseminate information through various mechanisms including workshops and farm demonstrations, agricultural industry events, and through partnerships with diverse organisations and businesses servicing the rural community.

Networking has been a core component of the RALF program. In 2020-21 when the borders were open, networks were used to attract interstate keynote presenters to

the Pastures, Carbon & Credit\$ events. This year, partnerships with Tasmanian and interstate soil and fertiliser experts facilitated the creation of the Tasmanian Erosion Economic Calculator enabling farmers and agronomists to understand the financial risks of erosion. Launching the calculator in May this year, Land Program Coordinator Adrian James said it is a valuable tool.

“The calculator estimates the cost of lost carbon and nutrients, lost future yield potential, and the combined cost over a 10-year period. The loss of fertile topsoil can incur significant costs to farm productivity that haven’t traditionally been accounted for.”

The erosion economic calculator and fact sheet, and other useful resources are available on our website www.nrmnorth.org.au/land.

Other examples of activities carried out in 2020-21 include:

- promoting opportunities and providing practical advice to farmers about grants and funding such as Smart Farming grants and the Carbon + Biodiversity Pilot; and
- keeping NRM North up to date with industry and community issues through working groups on rural resilience such as the Future Drought Fund.

By 2023, partnerships created and projects carried out through the RALF will deliver positive outcomes by connecting industry, grower and community groups to address common issues.

This project is funded through the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program.



Working with farmers to improve agricultural outcomes is a key focus of the RALF project. Photo: Rob Burnett.

Biodiversity Program

Program Aim

To maintain and enhance landscape function for biodiversity, with a focus on protecting habitat for species and ecological communities 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 actions 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 engagement 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 crayfish and eastern barred bandicoot; and
- Ramsar sites including the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site.

2020/21 Achievements

- Created or restored 13 hectares of eastern barred bandicoot habitat and 5 km of waterway habitat for giant freshwater crayfish through the National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program.
- Launched the urban engagement component of the eastern barred bandicoot project, including the development of the 'Urban Refuges garden designs booklet to support the creation of habitat in suburbs and townships.
- Secured funding for a further two years of the Small Farm Living Program, through the Australian Government's Smart Farms Small Grants.
- A Cat Management Strategy for the northern region was completed and endorsed by 12 partner organisations including eight local councils. This document will guide individual and collaborative actions for improved management of domestic and stray cats, through education, shared facilities, compliance and research.
- The 'Defending the Hood' project supported volunteer nest wardens to monitor the success of nesting hooded plovers on east coast beaches. A population survey of shorebirds on the east coast and Flinders Island was also completed.
- A Water Quality Improvement Plan has been developed to inform actions within and upstream of the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site.

2021/22 Focus

- Continue on-ground actions in partnership with landholders and communities for the National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships projects including eastern barred bandicoot, giant freshwater crayfish 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 crayfish.
- Continue the nest warden program for hooded plover and support ongoing control of coastal weeds impacting priority hooded plover habitat sites.
- Expand the Small Farm Living program, with a focus on workshops and events including the biennial Small Farm Living Field Day planned for September 2021.
- Increase participation of local government and urban/peri-urban residents in the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project, developing a network of refuges for the threatened species in target suburbs and townships.
- Implement on-ground conservation and ongoing monitoring for critically endangered plant Shy Susan (*Tetratheca gunnii*) which exists only in the Beaconsfield Hills.
- Implement high priority actions and continue to support community education initiatives for responsible cat ownership in collaboration with local councils and key stakeholders.



Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project

Safeguarding northern Tasmania as a refuge for eastern barred bandicoot and other threatened species and communities

NRM North's Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project seeks to create, enhance, and protect habitat for the threatened species in northern Tasmania. A key focus is to improve the population trajectory and to reduce threats to the species through community education and engagement.

The preferred habitat for the eastern barred bandicoot is grassy woodland and native perennial grasslands - areas that are largely used for agricultural activity, which can result in habitat being heavily degraded or destroyed. Eastern barred bandicoot populations have declined across much of Tasmania, with most remnant habitat occurring on private land, rather than in protected areas such as national parks.

NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator Stephen Izzard said landholder engagement is a valuable conservation measure.

"Eastern barred bandicoots are a species that can happily co-exist alongside humans ... Well watered lawns and paddocks provide excellent feeding grounds for bandicoots, and they can reproduce quickly when conditions are good."

The response from the community has been overwhelming, with 46 rural landholders engaged in on-ground works such as revegetation and fencing stock out of remnant habitat. Many more have committed to changing land management practices. On the ground, 28 hectares of revegetation and 25 hectares of remnant protection was scheduled for completion by June 30, 2021, with a total of 94 hectares of works currently under contract from an overall project target of 110 hectares.

Since 2019, the project has been working with rural property owners in the West Tamar region and parts of the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands to protect and create vital habitat for the species. Recently, the focus has turned to improving habitat and creating a safe refuge in the urban and peri-urban areas of Riverside, Legana, Perth, Longford, Hadspen, Carrick and Exeter.

West Tamar Council Reserves Supervisor Jamie Smith is facilitating the creation of a display garden and habitat corridor on the high-profile Windsor Park Precinct site at Riverside. He said it is a great way to educate the community about creating a safe habitat for the

Contact Stephen Izzard
Title Biodiversity Coordinator
Email sizzard@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7794

eastern barred bandicoot and other native animals in urban and peri-urban areas.

"We are in a unique position at the Windsor Precinct to have the eastern barred bandicoot living in the vicinity, and with the natural surroundings of the parkland, we can educate the public and work with NRM North to promote the project."

Jamie Smith

In June 2021, NRM North released a booklet containing five professionally designed "Urban Refuge" gardens for eastern barred bandicoots and other wildlife to guide residents who want to create their own backyard habitat. The increased focus on urban areas, ongoing engagement in rural areas, and the commencement of two PhD research projects on the threatened species (supported by NRM North), has put the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project in a strong position to achieve targets, despite many challenges including those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This project is supported through funding by the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program.

Quick facts

In 2020-21, the team behind the eastern barred bandicoot (EBB) project...

- *Planted over 21,000 seedlings to create and enhance EBB habitat*
- *Protected over 22 hectares of remnant habitat from livestock browsing damage*
- *Launched a booklet containing 5 professional garden designs aimed at creating urban refuges for EBB, receiving national media coverage.*



Native species planted at the Windsor Precinct in Riverside will improve habitat for the eastern barred bandicoot. Photo: Stephen Izzard.

Giant Freshwater Crayfish Project

Partnerships for giant freshwater crayfish recovery in north east Tasmania

The Partnerships for Giant Freshwater Crayfish Recovery Project aims to expand the distribution of remaining populations of this iconic species in the Pipers, Brid and Boobyalla catchments in north east Tasmania. Activities include the improvement of waterway health and habitat availability by fencing livestock out of waterways, controlling riverbank weeds, establishing native riverbank vegetation, and installing off-stream water points for livestock.

The giant freshwater crayfish (*Astacopsis gouldi*) is the largest freshwater invertebrate in the world, growing to over 80 cm in length. Endemic to northern Tasmania, it is found in rivers that flow into Bass Strait, with the exception of the Tamar catchment and the Arthur catchment in the state's north west.

Once a common sight in northern Tasmania, the species is now listed as vulnerable under both the *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Giant freshwater crayfish face threats from habitat loss and disturbance, siltation of waterways, poaching, and climate change, with populations in the north east experiencing the largest declines.

Giant freshwater crayfish expert Todd Walsh said locating a healthy population of the giant freshwater crayfish in the Boobyalla catchment is an encouraging sign of species recovery.

"The north east has enormous sedimentation issues in almost all of the major catchments. The discovery of a healthy population along a large stretch of river cannot be underestimated for the long-term future of this species in its eastern range."

Todd Walsh

Since the inception of the Giant Freshwater Crayfish Project in 2018, a total of 10 km of high-priority river reaches have been protected and/or rehabilitated. A further 3 km of river restoration within priority reaches is contracted for completion within the project lifetime. To date, the project has worked with 15 landholders within priority stream reaches across the Pipers, Brid and Boobyalla catchments who have implemented on-ground conservation actions for the giant freshwater crayfish.

NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator Lauren Bird said working with landholders to improve river management

practices is an important step in the species' recovery.

"While vegetation is incredibly important to the health of the crayfish, so is reducing sediment accumulation in waterways. Sediment may come from upstream stock access, paddock runoff, forestry and mining practices, and riverbank erosion."

The project also facilitates a citizen science program that aims to identify areas with suitable habitat for giant freshwater crayfish populations by training community volunteers to undertake habitat assessments and water quality monitoring. Since the start of the project, 65 community members have been trained with the skills and knowledge to begin collecting data. Demand for training days continues to grow, with overwhelming enthusiasm from the community to learn more about the species, its threats and to become involved in the project.

The Partnerships for Giant Freshwater Crayfish Recovery Project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program.

Contact Lauren Bird
Title Biodiversity Coordinator
Email lbird@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7774



Todd Walsh assesses juvenile crayfish populations and habitat conditions in the Boobyalla catchment. Photo: Lauren Bird.

Hooded Plover Project

Reducing threats to hooded plover habitat and population

NRM North's Hooded Plover Project aims to increase understanding of the status, locations and trends of hooded plover breeding populations in northern Tasmania, and to prevent further decline of the threatened species at priority sites where management actions are implemented.

The NRM North region provides habitat for at least 20% of the hooded plover (*Thinornis rubricollis rubricollis*) population, however, a continuous decline has been observed in the habitat and number of mature adults, particularly in mainland populations. Tasmania is believed to be home to approximately half of the remaining population of hooded plovers.

Collaborating with community groups and government agencies is key to coordinating action to protect vulnerable nest sites from disturbance caused by weed invasion, dogs, human activity, and vehicles on beaches. NRM North Biodiversity Program Manager Kate Thorn, said initiatives like the site warden program are an important conservation activity.

“Three seasons of a site warden program have now been completed on the east coast. NRM North is supporting local communities to protect and improve fledgling survival at a minimum of four priority nesting sites over five breeding seasons by increasing awareness and reducing human disturbance.”

Kate Thorn

NRM North supported an alliance of community groups, the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, and Break O'Day Council to develop and install signage over the summer season to promote awareness of beach-nesting birds, and appropriate usage of beaches to contribute to their conservation.

Managing beach weeds that affect nesting habitat is another important aspect of the project. Monitoring the success of previous weed control work has been undertaken, and sea spurge control is underway on the east coast. Planning for priority weed management on Flinders Island beaches continues. Engaging with the community to increase awareness of these vulnerable birds and managing coastal weeds in known breeding areas will improve nesting habitat and breeding attempts.

Monitoring and data gathering plays a significant role in the project, with results used to get a better understanding of the threatened species' distribution and behaviour. Every two years, the Hooded Plover Project undertakes a survey of hooded plover and other beach-nesting birds on Tasmania's east coast and on Flinders Island to confirm population numbers,

Contact Kate Thorn
Title Biodiversity Program Manager
Email kthorn@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7777

identify threats, and prioritise areas for on-ground investment. In November 2020, volunteers and staff from NRM North covered 140 km of beach over 10 days. Ms Thorn said the surveys provide valuable data.

“This data not only provides a trend over the project period, but also contributes to Birdlife Australia's national dataset for beach-nesting birds.”

NRM North will continue to engage the community to raise awareness of threats to the hooded plover and protection strategies through temporary beach signage, events, and digital communications.

The Hooded Plover Project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program.



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

Ringarooma Ramsar Project

Reducing threats to the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site

NRM North's Ringarooma Ramsar Project aims to protect the ecological character of the Floodplain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site by improving and protecting the condition of the site's floodplain, wetlands and swamp forest (*Melaleuca ericifolia*).

The 3,500 hectare site in Tasmania's north east is one of five internationally important wetlands found in the NRM North region and one of only 10 Ramsar wetlands in Tasmania. This year marks 50 years since the signing of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance. The convention was established to halt the global loss of wetlands and to conserve those that remain through wise use and management.

All states and territories in Australia have laws to protect water, significant wetlands, and native plants and animals. The Floodplain

Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site is a zone of high biodiversity that supports rare and valuable species, and provides habitat for threatened bird and plant species.

Significant progress has been made on identifying key actions that can be taken to reduce the impact of adjacent agricultural activity and runoff on the internationally listed site. As part of the development of a Water Quality Improvement Plan, water sampling results were considered, together with land use data, to identify problem pollutants reaching the wetland system and the relative contribution from different parts of the catchment. The plan then sets out recommended actions that will provide the greatest and most cost-effective improvements in water quality through changes in farm infrastructure and agricultural practices, which are now being discussed with landholders in the area with a view to implementation during 2021/22.

Contact Kate Thorn
Title Biodiversity Program Manager
Email kthorn@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7777

In 2020/21, regular, heavy rainfall associated with a La Niña climate pattern presented significant challenges for collecting data in spring and summer, with unusually high water levels on site. This led to the majority of field surveys and weed control work being postponed. However, early survey work has provided a basis for prioritising weed management actions and identified the locations of several threatened flora species.

Detailed investigations and planning are continuing, which will inform upcoming actions to improve water quality, and protect sensitive vegetation and wetland types.

This project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program.



The Floodplain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site is a zone of high biodiversity that supports rare and valuable species. Photo: Sam Jack.

Contact Lauren Bird
Title Biodiversity Coordinator
Email lbird@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7774

Saving Shy Susan Project

Shy Susan (*Tetratheca gunnii*) is a native, purple flowering herb that is endemic to Tasmania. It only occurs on serpentine soils in the Dazzler Range near Beaconsfield, and is listed as critically endangered under the *Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Whilst serpentine outcrops occupy 530 hectares in the Beaconsfield area, the known sub-populations of Shy Susan occupy a combined area of less than one hectare and the species was listed as extinct until its rediscovery in 1986.

A delicate, scrambling understorey species, Shy Susan often co-occurs with other endemic threatened species such as pretty heath (*Epacris virgata*) and creeping dustymiller (*Spyridium obcordatum*).

Since its rediscovery, Shy Susan has been the focus of significant recovery efforts including in-situ and ex-situ conservation activities. In 2021, NRM North received funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program to build on the outcomes achieved through previous investment. The Saving Shy Susan Project aims to safeguard the remaining wild sub-populations of Shy Susan as well as securing a viable genetic collection of the species.

NRM North is working with specialist botanists, public land managers, and the local Beaconsfield community to strengthen protection measures, promote the health of vegetation communities, and trial and monitor interventions considered most likely to improve the species' conservation trajectory at known sub-population sites, and supplement the existing ex-situ insurance population of the species.

Ecologist Oberon Carter from DPIPW's Threatened Species

and Conservation Program said widespread support for the project is encouraging.

"It's exciting to be a part of a species recovery project that has received as much focus, investment and long-term planning as Shy Susan."

Oberon Carter

Shy Susan is threatened by either too frequent or too infrequent fire regimes, from native wildlife, particularly after fire, and habitat disturbance and the introduction of weeds and disease (e.g. root rot fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi*) from illegal firewood harvesting, off-road vehicle use, and mineral exploration.

NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator Lauren Bird said the project is vital for the long-term conservation of the species.

"Through this project, we have the opportunity to establish an adaptive management plan specific to Shy Susan that ensures the trajectory of the population in the wild is

stabilised or improved not just for the duration of funding, but well into the future."

Since the project commenced in March 2021, NRM North staff and botanists from the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens have worked to expand the insurance population of Shy Susan, held at the Botanic Gardens, to 30 potential genotypes. In May, the first meeting of a technical reference group for the species was held between research experts and key stakeholders who provided consensus on key conservation decisions and the development of the Shy Susan Adaptive Management Plan. The plan will also be accompanied by a monitoring plan which will be developed prior to the spring survey season.

The Saving Shy Susan Project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program



The Saving Shy Susan Project aims to safeguard the remaining wild sub-populations of the critically endangered species, endemic to Beaconsfield, Tasmania. Photo: Lauren Bird.

Small Farm Living Project

The Small Farm Living project supports and empowers small farm and rural lifestyle landholders in the northern region to take informed and strategic approaches to managing natural resources on their properties. The project delivers activities tailored for smallholders, providing skills development and education about best practice land management across peri-urban and rural areas.

In 2020-21, the project attracted widespread interest from small landholders at various events including the Tasmanian Garlic and Tomato Festival, Tamar NRM's land capability, suitability and sustainability workshop, and the Tamar Action Grants' 'river fencing on small properties' workshop.

The project maintains a database of more than 700 small property owners who have expressed an interest in improved land management topics relevant to the project. Demand for resources and information on best-practice management continues to grow, with an increasing number of small landholders eager to implement change.

Earlier this year, NRM North secured an additional two years of funding for the Small Farm Living Project through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program. During this period, the project will focus on building awareness, knowledge, skills and networks to improve land management practices and mitigate key risks to productive landscapes and natural areas in northern Tasmania. The primary objective is to increase the number of small farm landholders implementing best-practice management.

Various workshops held throughout the year provide small landholders with the opportunity to gain awareness, knowledge and skills

for improved land management practices. NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator Lauren Bird said the events are a valuable tool for mitigating risk as well.

"Recent biosecurity outbreaks, including fruit fly and blueberry rust, highlight the potential threat posed by small properties and the need for better awareness and effective management and control of future outbreaks."

Key topics for event delivery include biosecurity, property future proofing and resilience, habitat management, waterway management, mitigating weed and feral animal threats, and land and soil management.

In September this year, the 5th biennial Small Farm Living Field Day will return to 'Sonoma Lodge' in Lilydale. Delivered in partnership with Lilydale Landcare, the event will feature a range of stallholders and presentations and is expected to attract record crowds of small

landholders from across the state to learn about how to best manage their properties to be 'future-proofed and sustainable.'

The previous Small Farm Living Field Day held in 2019 attracted an unprecedented crowd of over 400 people. Lilydale Landcare President Nigel Russell said with growing numbers of new landholders in the community, it is fantastic to be able to bring this event back to Lilydale in 2021.

"The Small Farm Living Field Day is a great opportunity for people to gain information on good farm management and how they can adopt new methods on their own properties."

Nigel Russell

The Small Farm Living project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships Program.



The primary objective of the Small Farm Living Project is to increase the number of small farm landholders implementing best-practice management. Photo: Lauren Bird.

Contact Darren McPhee
Title Regional Cat Management Coordinator
Email dmcphee@nrmnorth.org.au
Phone 03 6333 7788

Tasmanian Cat Management Project

The Tasmanian Cat Management Project is a statewide initiative supported by NRM North to promote and facilitate responsible cat ownership and to further the objectives of the Tasmanian Cat Management Plan (2017 – 2022) by developing partnerships with local government and other key stakeholders.

Established in 2018, the Tasmanian Government-funded project is delivered through Cradle Coast Authority, Kingborough Council and NRM North, each employing Regional Cat Management Coordinators.

Amendments to the *Cat Management Act 2009* to improve responsible cat ownership and effective management of cats have now been proclaimed, with some provisions commencing in March 2021 and others to get underway in March 2022. They include compulsory microchipping and desexing of cats, a limit of four cats per household, and the ability for people in urban areas to trap a cat on their property.

The three Regional Cat Management Coordinators have played a pivotal role in communicating the changes through regional cat management working groups with representatives from Biosecurity Tasmania, local government and key stakeholder groups. The coordinators have also collaborated with the Department of

Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment to inform the community about the changes through the TassieCat website.

Just Cats is a designated cat management facility for the northern region. Founder Rachel Beech said changes to the *Cat Management Act 2009* support effective management and responsible ownership of cats.

“Changes to the legislation are a positive and necessary step forward for cat management in Tasmania. Just Cats will be working closely with NRM North and the Northern Regional Working Group to ensure the community is properly informed about the changes.”

Rachel Beech

At a regional level, key activities over the last 12 months have included finalising and obtaining partner endorsement for the Northern Regional Cat Management Strategy 2020-2030. The strategy has been developed to provide a long-term framework for partner organisations to voluntarily contribute, collaborate and align cat management efforts towards agreed and shared outcomes. It covers a range of activities from compliance and on-ground management of cats, to community education and ongoing data gathering on cat management issues to monitor change.

Flinders Council and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) are new partners to the strategy, with councillors from Flinders Island and the and both the Wool Council and the Wildlife Firearms Committee of the TFGA endorsing the strategy in 2021.

Policy Officer and TFGA representative on the Northern Regional Cat Management Working Group, Bonnie Kenner, said it is important to support the project given the impact cats have on agriculture.

“Cat-borne diseases pose an ongoing threat to agricultural practices in Tasmania. The TFGA will collaborate with the working group to educate the community about how to mitigate that threat, and how to maintain best practice for the management of cats on primary production land.”

Implementation of the strategy will continue over the next 12 months, with a focus on educating and informing the community about changes to the legislation and supporting northern councils to undertake cat management initiatives.

This project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Tasmanian Government.



The Tasmanian Cat Management Project promotes responsible cat ownership facilitated by partnerships with local government and key stakeholders.





Aboriginal NRM

Program Aim

The aim of the Aboriginal NRM Program is to work with the Aboriginal community to manage natural values on country and enhance awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage in natural resource management.

The Big Picture

The NRM North region encompasses the lands of several traditional owner groups. NRM North acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians and their deep spiritual attachment to country, and values the knowledge and contribution Aboriginal people make towards natural resource management. NRM North recognises that Aboriginal cultural values and land management practices are of great significance 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 Aboriginal community to facilitate natural resource management on country and improve awareness and consideration of Aboriginal cultural heritage in natural resource management planning, use and development.

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

- increasing Aboriginal community capacity to implement Healthy Country Plans and provide opportunities for continuation of tunapri and cultural knowledge;

- supporting the Aboriginal community to implement priority actions for the management of cultural and natural values and Healthy Country Plans;
- supporting the Aboriginal community to protect heritage sites and landscapes outside of land management plans; and
- supporting the Aboriginal community to raise awareness with land managers, planners and recreational users to increase knowledge and recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage values in natural resource management.

2020/21 Achievements

- Undertook internal planning to continue embedding reconciliation actions into NRM North's operations and organisational ethos.
- Staff members attended various events, exhibitions and activities held in Launceston as part of Reconciliation Week.
- Provided financial and/or staff resource support to the following events:
 - Mannalargenna Day, December 2020
 - takara waranta - walk with us, February 2021

2021/22 Focus

- Continue to work towards a deeper relationship with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations to work together for country.
- Encourage and support NRM North staff members to participate in events and activities that provide a greater awareness and understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Continue to support and participate in regional events such as Mannalargenna Day and takara waranta.



Acknowledgement

NRM North acknowledges the Tasmanian Aboriginal people are the Traditional Owners of the land we live and work on. We respect and value the strong physical and spiritual links Aboriginal people have with country and acknowledge their custodianship of the islands that make up Tasmania for over 1,600 generations (over 40,000 years).

Cultural Awareness

The 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. Strategic planning has been undertaken for reconciliation actions for NRM North as an alternative to embarking on a formal Reconciliation Action Plan process. This covers internal activities such as:

- cultural training and awareness for staff and management committee members;
- respect and acknowledge protocols for Aboriginal people and culture;
- procurement and employment policies; and

- liaising with Aboriginal partners and organisations.

Key partners in the delivery of the program include the Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT), the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC), melythina tiakana warrana 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, including through participation in Mannalargenna Day and takara waranta (walk with us).

Mannalargenna Day celebrates the life of revered Aboriginal clan leader and warrior, Mannalargenna of Tebrakunna Country in Tasmania's north east. In December 2020,

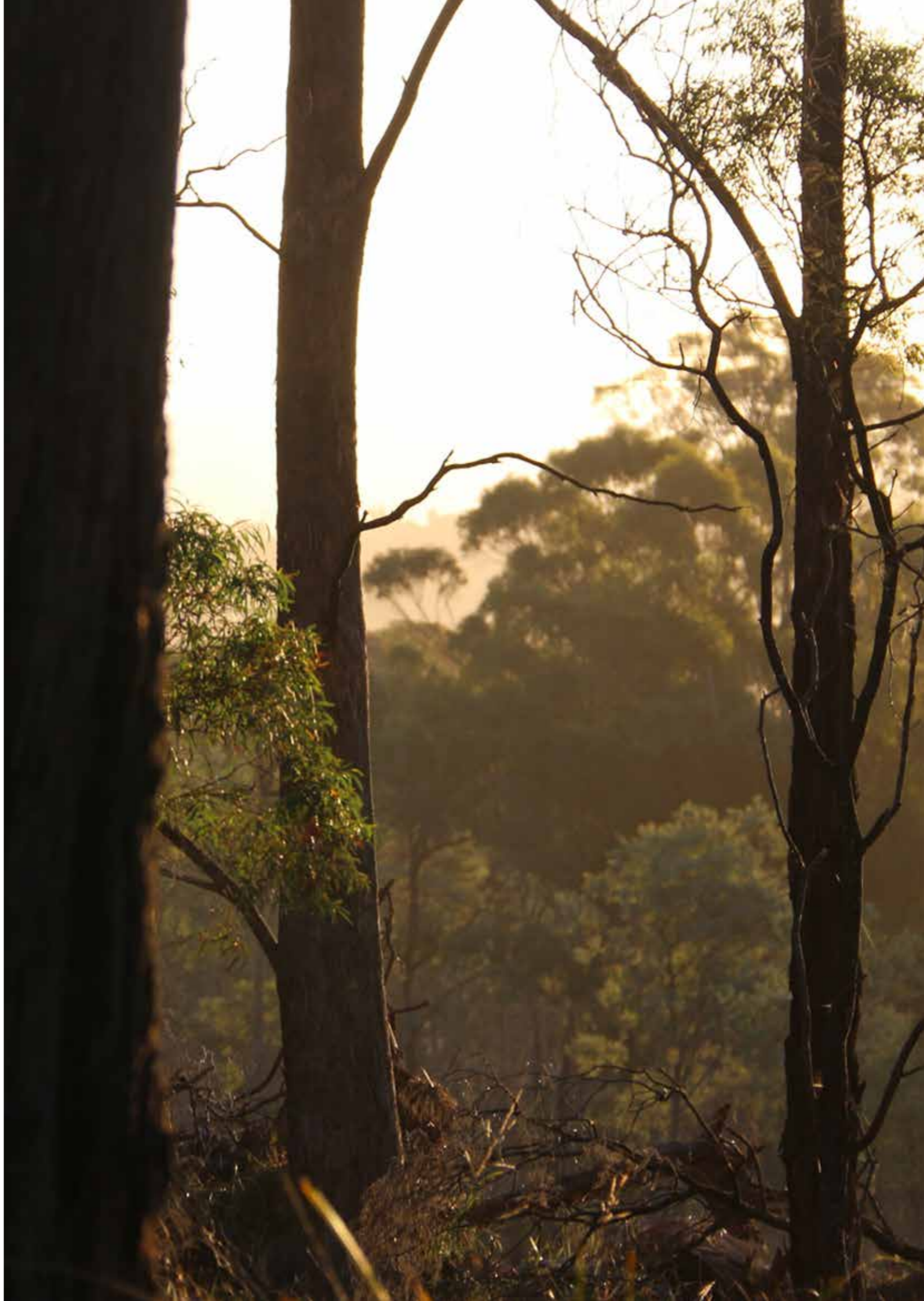
NRM North provided financial and volunteer support for Mannalargenna Day which attracted nearly 400 people including Hon. Kate Warner AC, Premier Peter Gutwein and Roger Jaensch MP. NRM North's support for Mannalargenna Day was kindly acknowledged by MTWAC Directors and the Circle of Elders. NRM North also supported takara waranta at Punchbowl in February 2021 which is a celebration of storytelling, knowledge sharing, skills, and music.

Cultural events provide 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.

NRM North also engages Aboriginal Elders at various events, such as the biennial Small Farm Living Field Day, who generously impart traditional skills and values.



Aboriginal Elders, including Aunty Patsy Cameron AO, share valuable skills and knowledge at various events including NRM North's Small Farm Living Field Day. Photo: NRM North.





Annual Report

The 2021 Annual Report provides a summary of the actions taken during FY20-21 to address the key objectives in the Corporate Services Program.

NRM North Chair’s Report - 2021

Carnermemalettenener or *where is your country?* was a common greeting amongst first peoples as they travelled over northern Tasmania tens of thousands of years ago. The *Lettermairrener* from the Tamar Valley and other North Midlands peoples were very mobile. They fished and hunted the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary intensively. They wintered near George Town then spent the spring around Pipers River. They spent summer on Ben Lomond but by late January were back at the kanamaluka / Tamar in time for the arrival of the mutton birds or *yolla*. They also hunted kangaroos at Norfolk Plains with the local *Panninher* people. The North Midlands peoples seem to have met close to Launceston at Paterson’s Plains where kangaroos were plentiful. The coastal plains people of the northeast (including the Furneaux Islands) are also nearby - Aunty Patsy Cameron has written a new children’s book, *Sea Country*, which tells the stories of these people and their well-watered landscapes.

Carnermemalettenener? Today northern Tasmania is similarly sought after for its environment and economic opportunities. People from overcrowded and paralysed cities interstate are relocating to regional Australia, and northern Tasmania is attracting many of them. During COVID-19, Premier Peter Gutwein established an Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) and committed to implement its recommendations. PESRAC used the OECD *Better Life Index* to measure and identify issues that contribute to wellness. A survey of 3500 Tasmanians revealed that environment should be one of five priorities for recovery. The environment is not seen as a standalone issue, but one which underscores our concerns for jobs and income, health, housing, and community. Environmental wellbeing was defined by those surveyed as strong, sustainable, and authentic, reflecting world’s best practice. It included but transcended our renewable energy ambitions and ‘Branding Tasmania’.

COVID-19 has given all of us an opportunity to study more closely our own backyard.

Tasmanians generally have affirmed their appreciation for our natural as well as social landscapes. While there has been contraction in some parts of the economy such as tourism and hospitality, there has also been opportunity for growth in other sectors including Tasmania’s growing renewable energy profile, urban development, and major infrastructure. Despite COVID-19 pressures, NRM North has been in a strong position over the last year and our opportunities to achieve our core goals are growing.

This year is also the golden jubilee of the signing of the first international treaty to protect world ecosystems: the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Australia was an early signatory to the Convention. Ten of Australia’s 66 listed sites are in Tasmania and most of those are in the northern region. There is renewed interest in these wetlands for both their scientific and cultural values. Vishnu

Prahalad from the University of Tasmania believes wetlands will have an increasingly significant role to play in carbon sequestration and climate disruption mitigation. I congratulate the state government on the recent commitment for a nearly \$3 million upgrade to the boardwalk of our local Tamar Island Wetlands Centre, allowing the community to experience and appreciate the values of local wetlands firsthand.

Funding support for NRM North from our government and non-government partners has grown in recent years. In the 2021 state election campaign NRM North, Cradle Coast Authority NRM and NRM South received bipartisan commitment from the major political parties for longer term funding. Over the last twelve months there has been a strong commitment from the three NRM organisations in Tasmania to work closely together to present an efficient and productive approach to government. This has been reciprocated by the Tasmanian Government and increasingly by the Australian Government.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment from our relevant state Ministers Barnett, Ferguson, and Jaensch to work strategically with NRM North in implementing major environmental outcomes that support agriculture, tourism, and other sectors. We look forward to continuing to work with government (including our local council partners) to implement our forward strategies and to contribute to regional planning more broadly across Tasmania.

We are also working with partner organisations in the rural sector to achieve productivity, profitability and sustainability gains for the environment. NRM North works daily with farmers to achieve healthy productive and natural landscapes. We are committed to working with agricultural organisations across the state to achieve shared goals and program outcomes. With the incorporation in 2020 of NRM Regions Australia, we now have a nationwide NRM network which works directly with other national organisations and the Federal

Government to promote high quality environmental outcomes in the agriculture, environment and natural resources portfolios.

NRM North is in a strong position both organisationally and financially at a time of tremendous interest in growing Tasmania beyond COVID-19. I would like to express my appreciation to our highly skilled Management Committee and to our staff for the superb work which they do every day to meet the challenges for the organisation and for the region. We have an outstanding team led by CEO Rosanna Coombes. Despite lockdowns and border closures, she leads a team whose reputation has reached beyond state borders. NRM North is now widely regarded as one of the best NRM organisations in Australia.

Pamela Allan
Pamela Allan, Chair





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 NRM bodies in the state, and one of 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 recognising the value proposition of NRM North and seeking to partner on programs;
- NRM North demonstrating 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.

2020/21 Achievements

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

- Managed COVID-19 response with development of policies, plans, and procedures to ensure safety of staff, Management Committee members, partners and the community, while ensuring continued delivery of programs and acquiring a ‘COVID-19-Safe Workplace’ designation.
- Worked towards best practice governance with a focus on reviewing and updating contract related documents, internal policies, and procedures.
- Enhanced branding through improvements to communications platforms including website, webinars and video production.
- 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.
- Completed a skills audit of the Management Committee.
- Successfully completed National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships program audit.

- Expanded program delivery by:
 - securing a \$99,000 grant to support the Small Farm Living Program;
 - securing an additional \$50,000 to continue conservation activities for Shy Susan; and
 - executing a \$50,000 work order to support the Carbon+Biodiversity Pilot rollout.
- Supported partnership programs including:
 - support for TEMT; and
 - a baseline water monitoring program to underpin RHAP.
- Supported regional collaboration with the:
 - TFGA’s Landcare Action Grant program;
 - West Tamar Landcare Group for eastern barred bandicoot recovery and awareness;
 - Tasmanian Land Conservancy on delivery of the eastern barred bandicoot project;
 - TFGA, DairyTas, and regional councils on delivery of RHAP Catchment Works project; and
 - Australian Veterinary Association, local government authorities, and cat management facilities to implement the Northern Tasmania Regional Cat Management Strategy.

2021/22 Focus

In 2021/2022, NRM North will focus on the following areas of the Corporate Services Program:

- Partner with NRM South and Cradle Coast Authority to finalise the 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.
- Develop a Management 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.
- Focus on embedding and improving corporate governance, project management and corporate governance frameworks.

COVID-19 Response

NRM North moved quickly in 2020 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.

NRM North transitioned staff back to the workplace in July 2020 following the adoption of an overarching policy and the development and implementation of a series of procedures to ensure staff and visitor safety. The procedures include social distancing, adequate hygiene measures, and strategies to support remote working arrangements.

The safety of our volunteers, employees and visitors remains our utmost priority. In April 2021 NRM North introduced the use of the *Check In Tas* QR system at its office and external events, with all staff and visitors required to use the system where possible. The *Check In Tas* QR app is a Tasmanian Government system to record register and store contact details. The information is held securely with the Tasmanian Department of Health in the event contact tracing is required due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the community.

NRM North continues to monitor and adapt its guidelines for field work and engagement with partners, landholders, and committee members. 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 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-19-Safe Workplace.

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



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 Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce with a comprehensive scientific review of eight proposed methods to manage sediment in the upper reaches of the estuary. The study did not provide a recommendation on a way forward, but evaluated the costs, legislative and feasibility challenges, impacts on bathymetry, and the environmental and social impacts associated with each option. This study is available on the NRM North website. TasPorts also joined the TEER Program this year as a new partner. They are responsible for managing the port facilities in the estuary and make an important contribution to management of the estuary.
- 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 to promote responsible cat ownership, protection of sensitive habitats, and the management of stray and roaming cats. 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 kanamaluka / 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 separated stormwater system in the Launceston urban area. Over the past 18 months, these programs have resulted in:
 - approximately 6,000 cattle and 130,000 sheep excluded from waterways;
 - removal of 13.2ML of sewage (equivalent to five Olympic size swimming pools) from entering the estuary annually by identifying and remediating cross-connections in the greater Launceston municipal area; and
 - modelling completed by IsNRM has indicated that the sewage intrusion program has reduced median

pathogen concentrations in Zone 1 of the estuary by 13% with a delivery cost of less than \$450,000.

- The delivery of threatened species projects 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 crayfish.
- NRM North is working 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 longstanding 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 National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships 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 32 farmers 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.

Draft 2030 Northern Tasmanian NRM Strategy

Ensure the Northern Tasmanian NRM 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 existing iteration of the strategies covers the period from 2015 to 2020. This year, the three NRM bodies continued to work together to review the current strategies ensuring the methodology and framework used to prepare the 2030 plans are consistent across the state.

There are many factors that have changed, or the emphasis and importance of planning for certain scenarios has intensified, since

the strategies were last prepared. The importance of these factors has been tested and will be further developed through ongoing community and stakeholder engagement.

Important priorities that have been identified include 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 statewide scale; the role of climate and resilience; and the role

of traditional land management practices in the landscape.

A draft 2030 Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Strategy was delivered to the Tasmanian Government and the Australian Government on 30 June 2021. Following comment from government, NRM North anticipates the community and stakeholder engagement process will continue in the latter part of 2021. The final version of the strategy will be submitted to state and federal governments by 31 December 2021 for final review before launch in early 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:

- Australian Government Smart Farms \$99,000 grant to support the NRM North Small Farm Living Program;
- Australian Government \$50,000 work order to continue conservation activities for Shy Susan; and
- executed an Australian Government work order for \$50,000 to support the rollout of the Carbon+Biodiversity Agricultural Stewardship Program.

Combined with other previously secured agreements and deeds, this will put NRM North in the position of delivering approximately \$35.9 million 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 \$110 million.

Operations and People Management

Central office
NRM North has its main office at 63-65 Cameron Street, Launceston. The office provides good working conditions, adequate space and is conveniently located in the hub of the CBD.

Operational funding
During 2020-21, 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 *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (Amendments 2018)*. The

Australian Government’s National Landcare Program - Regional Land Partnerships program 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 source additional funding to deliver outcomes against the NRM North Strategic Plan.

In April 2021, the Tasmanian Government committed to an increase in core operational funding to \$466,000 per year beginning in July 2022 through June 2025.

Personnel
Throughout 2020-21, NRM North personnel provided critical support for the development and implementation of natural resource management programs in the region. This support includes effective stakeholder and industry engagement, business administration and management, partnership development, and communications. NRM North staff members are employed on fixed term contracts with terms and conditions that comply with relevant legislation.



Staffing as at 30 June 2021

Position	Incumbent	Commencement Date
Chief Executive Officer	Rosanna Coombes	4 January 2016
Corporate Services Manager	Jenni Kew	31 March 2020
Operations Manager – Land & Biodiversity	Andrew Baldwin	7 March 2007
Operations Manager – Water & Strategy	Jo Fearman	25 March 2019
Finance Coordinator / Executive Assistant	Sarah Presnell	10 May 2010
Administration Coordinator	Denise Colvin	8 September 2003
Communications Coordinator	Biba Archer	18 June 2018
Communications Coordinator	Ashleigh Walker	11 June 2019
Communications Coordinator	Jessie Stanley	1 July 2020
Biodiversity Program Manager	Kate Thorn	6 August 2012
Biodiversity Coordinator	Vacant	
Biodiversity Coordinator	Lauren Bird	29 October 2018
Biodiversity Coordinator	Stephen Izzard	5 October 2020
Business Manager	Vacant	
Cat Management Coordinator	Darren McPhee	26 October 2020
Water Program Manager	Jesse Webster	17 November 2014
Catchment Coordinator	Andrew Easton	14 January 2019
Catchment Coordinator	Michaela Rathbone	28 June 2021
Catchment Coordinator	Vacant	
Land Program Manager	Adrian James	20 November 2020
Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator/ Agriculture Officer	Christine Plummer	28 June 2021
TEER Program Manager	Vacant	
TEER Scientific & Technical Coordinator	Sam Jack	10 February 2020
TEER Project Officer	Emma Ferguson	17 May 2021
Weeds Action Fund Coordinator	Raelene Mibus	14 Sept 2020

Not all staff are full-time employees, the total full-time equivalent is 22.6 employees.

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;
- social committee and team building;
- cultural awareness;
- Employee Assistance Program; and
- annual NRM North staff performance assessment.



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 NRM for the northern region;
- prepare a regional strategy for the northern region;

- facilitate the implementation of the regional strategy;
- promote NRM principles;
- facilitate planning and integration of NRM 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 NRM.

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 Environment portfolio overseen by Minister Roger Jaensch including the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program, and the River Health Action Plan Catchment Works Program under the Launceston City Deal overseen by Minister 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 NRM North 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 as at 30 June 2021, 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.

Management Committee skills audit

In June 2021, NRM North engaged an external consultant to conduct a skills audit of the Management Committee to evaluate the range of skills, experience, and qualifications of current committee members, and to ensure compliance with statutory requirements of the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002 (Amendments 2018)*.

Report findings note that the skills, knowledge, and experience identified during the audit indicates NRM North has a diversity of competencies and strengths to meet current and future opportunities and challenges. The report also finds that the geographic distribution of members meets the intent of the Act, and gender diversity is evenly split between men (5) and women (5).



Management Committee Members

Management Committee members as at 30 June 2021

Member	Association Status	Committee Term	Date Appointed / Reappointed
Dr. Joanna Ellison	Group B	4 years	September 2020
Mr. Stuart Blom	Group B	4 Years	September 2020
Ms. Mandy Shepherd	Group B	4 Years	September 2020
Mr. Royce Aldred	Group B	4 Years	September 2020
Hon. Professor Pamela Allan	Group B	4 years	September 2019
Mr. Michael Walsh	Group B	4 years	September 2019
Mr. Peter Sattler	Group B	4 Years	September 2019
Mr. Peter Curley	Group B	4 Years	September 2019
Ms. Louise Clark	Group B	4 Years	September 2017
Ms. Leanne Sherriff	Group B	4 Years	September 2017

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 three subcommittees operated in 2020-21 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 Blom (Chair), Mandy Shepherd, Peter Sattler, Pamela Allan, Louise Clark.

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 takes appropriate action to set the overall standards for quality financial reporting and sound business practices.

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.

In August 2020, the subcommittee conducted the CEO’s annual performance review with the support of an independent executive consultant.

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

Attendance at Management Committee and subcommittee meetings

Attendance by Management Committee members at NRM North Management Committee and subcommittee meetings held during the year ended 30 June 2021

Management Committee Members 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021	Management Committee		Governance & Policy Subcommittee		Audit & Finance Subcommittee		CEO Review Committee	
	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended	Held	Attended
Hon. Professor Pamela Allan	6	6	3	3	5	4	1	1
Dr. Joanna Ellison	6	5					1	1
Mr. Stuart Blom	6	5	3	3				
Ms. Amanda Shepherd	6	4	3	3				
Mr. Michael Walsh	6	5			5	5		
Mr. Peter Sattler	6	6	3	2				
Mr. Royce Aldred	6	6			5	3		
Ms. Louise Clark	6	3	3	0				
Ms. Leanne Sherriff	6	5			5	1		
Mr. Peter Curley	6	6					1	1
Honni Pitt – Independent Representative					5	4		



Management Committee Payments

Remuneration of Committee Members as at 30 June 2021

Management Committee Members as at 30 June 2020	Sitting Fees	Travel Payments	Total
Pamela Allan	\$7,080.00		\$7,080.00
Michael Walsh	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00
Dr Joanna Ellison	\$850.00	\$13.50	\$863.50
Stuart Blom	\$830.00		\$830.00
Amanda Shepherd	\$765.00		\$765.00
Peter Sattler	\$1,105.00	\$343.62	\$1,448.62
Royce Aldred	\$1,105.00		\$1,105.00
Louise Clark			
Leanne Sherriff	\$850.00		\$850.00
Peter Curley	\$1,020.00		\$1,020.00
Honni Pitt	\$85.00		\$85.00
TOTAL	\$14,690.00	\$357.12	\$15,047.12

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.

NRM North Management Committee Member Profiles

Honorable 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, Planning and Spatial Sciences, UTAS
- Member, Tamar NRM Reference Group
- Subject Editor, Wetlands Ecology and Management
- PhD (UCal Berkeley); MSc (Simon Fraser University); MA (Cambridge University)

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
- 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

- Operations Manager (north west), TasWater
- 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
- Member, QVMAG Advisory Board

Ms. Leanne Sherriff Cressy

- Industry Development Team Leader, Pinion Advisory
- Palmerston Coopworth
- Tasmanian Leaders Program, graduate 2013
- Member, Tasmanian Red Meat Steering Committee
- Member, Threatened Species Community Review Committee
- Member, Northern Midlands Council Community Recycling 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 2021.

Summary Financial Statements

The concise financial report is an extract from the full financial statements of NRM North for the year ended 30 June 2021.

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 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
Revenue			
Government grants	2	3,654,566	3,850,006
Corporate contribution	2	346,986	331,277
Interest received		23,314	33,467
Other income		50,500	53,302
		4,075,366	4,268,052
Expenses			
Employee benefits expense		1,763,153	1,589,568
Professional services		161,522	200,352
Communications and information technology		72,084	97,725
Contract services		1,654,578	1,852,623
Travelling and motor vehicle		53,867	53,976
Depreciation		140,466	132,214
Interest paid		6,012	8,159
Other operating expenses		346,799	300,841
		4,198,481	4,235,457
Net surplus/(deficit)		(123,115)	32,595
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		(123,115)	32,595

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		3,892,411	3,646,765
Trade and other receivables		631,628	829,189
Prepayments		31,577	19,303
Total current assets		4,555,615	4,495,257
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment		31,770	41,493
Right-of-use assets		124,173	206,079
Total non-current assets		155,943	247,572
TOTAL ASSETS		4,711,558	4,742,829
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Contract liabilities	2	2,687,397	2,433,777
Trade and other payables		264,196	354,547
Lease liabilities		144,259	214,747
Provisions		165,404	180,075
Total current liabilities		3,261,256	3,183,145
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions		33,967	20,235
Total non-current liabilities		33,967	20,235
TOTAL LIABILITIES		3,295,223	3,203,380
NET ASSETS		1,416,335	1,539,449
EQUITY			
Reserves		1,340,701	1,463,815
Retained earnings		75,634	75,634
TOTAL EQUITY		1,416,335	1,539,449

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Operating Reserve \$	Retained Earnings \$	Capital Reserve \$	Contingency Reserve \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2020	1,038,815	75,634	75,000	350,000	1,539,449
Total comprehensive income for the year	-	(123,115)	-	-	(123,115)
Transfers to and from reserves	(123,115)	123,115	-	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2021	915,700	75,634	75,000	350,000	1,416,334
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 for the year	-	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



Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2021

	Note	2021 \$	2020 \$
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from government and corporate partners		4,456,728	5,035,270
Contract payments		(1,654,578)	(1,619,591)
Payments to employees		(1,763,153)	(1,560,012)
Payments to suppliers		(737,835)	(632,362)
Other income		50,500	53,302
Interest received		23,314	34,981
Interest paid		(6,012)	(8,159)
GST refunded/(remitted)		(3,995)	(150,037)
Net cashflows from operating activities		364,969	1,153,392
Cash flows from investing activities			
Acquisition of plant and equipment		(8,481)	(14,819)
Net cashflows from investing activities		(8,481)	(14,819)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Repayment of lease liability		(110,842)	(106,359)
Net cashflows from financing activities		(110,842)	(106,359)
Net increase/decrease in cash held		245,646	1,032,214
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		3,646,765	2,614,551
Cash at the end of the financial year		3,892,411	3,646,765

Notes to the Summary Financial Statements

30 June 2021

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 2021.

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.

The satisfaction of performance obligations is compared against

expenditure incurred to date, as management consider this to be a reasonable estimation of performance obligations satisfied. 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.

	Opening balance \$	Funding received \$	Revenue recognition \$	Closing balance \$
Government funding				
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Regional Land Partnership)	797,140	1,467,437	(1,166,137)	1,098,440
Department Primary Industry Parks Wildlife and Environment (Core Funding)	-	350,000	(350,000)	-
Commonwealth Government (Catchment Works)	563,818	500,000	(673,809)	390,009
Department of State Growth (Catchment Works)	592,717	1,000,000	(957,060)	635,657
Department of State Growth (Event Monitoring)	40,000	-	(32,700)	7,300
Department Primary Industry Parks Wildlife and Environment (Cat Management Program)	37,451	120,000	(97,785)	59,666
Department Primary Industry Parks Wildlife and Environment (Weeds Action Fund)	-	207,564	(176,602)	30,962
Department Primary Industry Parks Wildlife and Environment (Devolved Grants)	-	200,000	(199,868)	132
Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment (Small Farms)	-	99,200	(605)	98,595
	2,031,125	3,944,201	(3,654,566)	2,320,761
Corporate contributions				
Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Partnership	402,652	284,970	(325,907)	361,715
Council Contributions (Drought Weeds Officer)	-	26,000	(21,079)	4,921
	402,652	310,970	(346,986)	366,636
	2,433,777	4,255,171	(4,001,552)	2,687,397

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 2021;
- gives a true and fair view of NRM North’s financial position as at 30 June 2021 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 Pamela Allan
Pamela Allan

Position Chairperson

Dated 25 August 2021



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 2021, 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 2021.

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*, 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
CROWE AUDIT AUSTRALIA

Malcolm Matthews

Launceston
Date: 27/8/21

Partner

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

The title ‘Partner’ conveys that the person is a senior member within their respective division, and is among the group of persons who hold an equity interest (shareholder) in its parent entity, Findex Group Limited. The only professional service offering which is conducted by a partnership is the Crowe Australasia external audit division. All other professional services offered by Findex Group Limited are conducted by a privately owned organisation and/or its subsidiaries.

Findex (Aust) Pty Ltd, trading as Crowe Australasia is a member of Crowe Global, a Swiss Verein. Each member firm of Crowe Global is a separate and independent legal entity. Findex (Aust) Pty Ltd and its affiliates are not responsible or liable for any acts or omissions of Crowe Global or any other member of Crowe Global. Crowe Global does not render any professional services and does not have an ownership or partnership interest in Findex (Aust) Pty Ltd. Services are provided by Crowe Audit Australia, an affiliate of Findex (Aust) Pty Ltd.
© 2021 Findex (Aust) Pty Ltd



Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource
Management Association Inc.

63-65 Cameron Street
Launceston TAS 7250

03 6333 7777
admin@nrmnorth.org.au
nrmnorth.org.au