NRM North

Yearbook & Annual Report 2022–23

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 keep it that way by providing leadership to ensure the sound management of the region's natural resources continues; by developing programs that recognise the need to balance the environmental, economic and social needs of the people of the region; and working in partnership with all stakeholders to determine appropriate investment and cost-sharing strategies in the management of our natural resources.

Overview	8
Water Program	16
Land Program	34
Biodiversity Program	48
Sustainability Program	58
Annual Report	62
Corporate Services Program	66
Summary Financial Statements	88

Acknowledgement of the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the Traditional and Original Owners of this land

We pay respect to the Traditional Owners of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Aboriginal people, and acknowledge their continued survival and connection with their land, sea and sky Country that spans millennia.

We acknowledge the many Nations of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, past and present, as the traditional and ongoing owners of their respective countries within Tasmania and the islands.

We pay respect to those who have passed and acknowledge today's Aboriginal people who are the custodians of this land.

We acknowledge that all land, sea, and sky Country holds cultural values that provide strong and continuing significance to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. We acknowledge that Tasmanian Aboriginal people are part of a continuous culture that holds traditional knowledge about the ecosystems we all depend on. The landscapes of Tasmania have been shaped by Aboriginal management of plants, animals, and water (particularly using fire).

We acknowledge that colonisation and migration has caused injustice for Aboriginal people and impacted the living cultural landscape. This has created a legacy that we seek to improve.

We are working to integrate Aboriginal cultural heritage and knowledge in natural resource management, and to develop better understanding of the cultural, environmental, social and economic dimensions of the region's natural resources from the perspective of Aboriginal people.

Through our work, we aim to reflect these values by recognising that Tasmanian Aboriginal people determine both the boundaries for the sharing of their cultural heritage and opportunities for participation in NRM activities that embrace and support their aspirations. We pay respect to Tasmanian Aboriginal people's requirements to own, care and manage Country by aligning our strategic priorities to Tasmanian Aboriginal people's land, sea and sky Country priorities.

The NRM North Yearbook and Annual Report 2022/23 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 decisions made by other parties based on this report are the responsibility of those parties.

Cover photo: Dedicated volunteers have joined NRM North staff to plant native seedlings at Summerlea Farm in Lilydale to repair and restore the riverbank to improve habitat for the giant freshwater crayfish. Community engagement and partnerships is a key component of NRM North projects. Photo: Liz Mahnken.

All unspecified images are property of NRM North.

The NRM North Yearbook and Annual Report 2022/23 is printed on an environmentally responsible FSC certified recycled paper. The paper is manufactured from 100% post consumer recycled fibre and processed without the use of any additional chlorine or chlorine compounds.

© Published by NRM North, September 2023.

Northern Tasmanian Natural
Resource Management Association Inc.
63-65 Cameron Street, Launceston TAS 7250
03 6333 7777 | admin@mrnnorth.org.au | nrmnorth.org.au

CEO Welcome

"I AM THRILLED TO WORK WITH SUCH A MOTIVATED AND CAPABLE COMMITTEE."

Dr Jo Fearman

On behalf of the Management Committee and staff, I commend to you our 2023 NRM North Yearbook and Annual Report, which features the diverse and meaningful achievements of the organisation over the past financial year.

This year has been a year of transition. The Australian Government released its Nature Positive Plan at the end of 2022, which signals an increased focus on nature repair and biodiversity outcomes alongside efforts to reduce carbon emissions through market mechanisms. Climatic conditions have transitioned from several years of La Nina weather patterns, with unseasonal rain and major flooding in 2022, to a warm and dry winter and projections of El Nino for the coming year - a real reminder of the need to build capacity and resilience into land management practices as our climate patterns continue to experience major change.

For NRM North, the organisation has wrapped up seven major 5-year projects for threatened species and sustainable agriculture, and is developing new project proposals for the next iteration of Australian Government investment into natural resource management. We have also moved into a new area of operations with the transition of the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Program, from its 15-year history auspiced by the City of Launceston, which is now hosted by NRM North.

Reflecting on the range of outcomes achieved this year, I am pleased to share some of the highlights from the past 12 months.

New estuary monitoring and catchment report card

The Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program has significantly enhanced its monitoring and reporting on waterway health by launching a new biological monitoring program for the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary, as well as developing methods and a Freshwater Report Card outlining the health of the rivers in the catchment. These new initiatives will provide valuable data and information to enhance our understanding of waterway health and inform management of the estuary and catchment. The community is invited to get involved by contributing to photo monitoring at sites along the estuary, including the Tamar Island wetlands.

This year I would particularly like to acknowledge the contribution of the outgoing TEER Program Chair, Mr Rolph Vos, for his leadership of the program over the past seven years, and welcome Mr Michael Stretton as interim Chair. We offer our sincere thanks for their important contributions to the program.

Reducing pathogens and improving catchment health

Our continued investment to remove stock from waterways has resulted in another major year of implementation, with 115 kilometres of stock fencing and 2,667 hectares of improved effluent management completed through the Tamar Action Grants. This represents completion of 79 per cent of our fencing target and 89 per cent of our dairy effluent target.

A mid-program evaluation showed that, with the investment delivered to March 2023, the River Health Action Plan – Catchment Works Program has already achieved a 7.3 per cent reduction in pathogen concentrations in the estuary, well above the 4.7 per cent target. This is despite major flooding throughout the catchment in October 2022 that impacted landholders' ability to install fencing.

In addition to pathogen reductions, these catchment works are achieving secondary benefits such as reductions in nitrogen (22 per cent), phosphorous (28 per cent) and sediment (14 per cent) loads, and enabling environmental works for projects such as habitat restoration and the translocation of Swan Galaxiids.

Improving the trajectory of threatened species and communities

This has been the final year for our 5-year projects focused on improving the trajectory of threatened species. These projects have achieved significant outcomes for important and iconic species in the northern Tasmanian region.

Survey results have shown positive signs for the recovery of the giant freshwater crayfish with more than 17 kilometres of riparian habitat improved along northern waterways over the last five years.

Our eastern barred bandicoots have 125 hectares of protected or restored habitat thanks to the efforts of 65 landholders; and 42 urban gardens have been created to increase connectivity in urban landscapes.

On the east coast, a team of dedicated volunteers has been working to improve breeding success for hooded plovers through our Nest Warden Program and annual nest protection fencing, which is enhanced by weed control on over 60 kilometres of beaches.

Internationally listed for its unique values, the wetland complex of the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site has had over 120 hectares of weeds removed and 6.5 kilometres of waterways rehabilitated.

Increasing agricultural sustainability and stewardship

Our work with farmers in the region has been focused on understanding and enhancing management of soils and vegetation on-farms. Our Soil Extension Program captured expert advice in soil and land management, developing three Decision Support Tools to assist landholders in better understanding soil test results and managing nutrients and soil drainage.

The Weeds Action Fund approved 16 new projects with the support of Cradle Coast NRM and NRM South, to contain or eradicate weeds that pose a threat to agricultural and environmental assets across the state.

Over 700 hectares of native vegetation and biodiversity values were protected on-farms, which is 10 times greater than was originally planned. This represents a significant contribution to private land conservation in the region.

On Country

Our work with Traditional Owners and Tasmanian Aboriginal communities this year has seen us continue our support for Mannalargenna Day, and support the Tebrakunna Rangers Workforce Development Program through opportunities to participate in projects on-Country such as revegetation activities. Traditional knowledge holders were also engaged in sharing traditional land management practices on-farm in northern Tasmania.

Resource Recovery and Circular Economy

The first initiative of the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Program has been to open a round of resource recovery and circular economy grants, aimed at supporting businesses and not-for-profit organisations to develop the circular economy in the region. Informing development of the next 5-year regional strategy, the program is actively engaging with stakeholders and the community to understand opportunities and barriers to reducing waste and improving resource recovery.

Thank you

Another transition this year has been the resignation of our previous Chief Executive Officer, Rosanna Coombes, and appointment of a new CEO. I extend my sincere thanks to the NRM North Management Committee for the appointment as Chief Executive Officer, and I am thrilled to work with such a motivated and capable committee.

NRM North, and natural resource management generally, is all about people. Whether we are providing extension services to farmers to increase their understanding of soil health, offering incentives to fence stock out of waterways, supporting businesses to reduce waste, or securing habitat for threatened species like the giant freshwater crayfish, we can't do any of it without a committed community that is enthusiastic about our natural environment. It is a privilege to work with our knowledgeable and passionate team every day, and I'm looking forward to an exciting and sustainable future for NRM North in Tasmania.

Dr Jo Fearman, CEO

Overview

About northern Tasmania

The area defined as the northern region of Tasmania covers 19,800 km² and is bounded by outstanding and picturesque landscapes from Bass Strait and 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.

Approximately 156,000 people live in the region, with the major urban areas based around Launceston and the Tamar Valley. The valley is dissected by the iconic kanamaluka/Tamar estuary. At 70 kilometres, it is Australia's longest navigable estuary carrying the combined flows from over 10,000 km² including the waters from the North Esk, South Esk, Meander, Brumbys Lake and Macquarie rivers.

The many smaller towns that service the rural and coastal communities include numerous Aboriginal cultural sites, historic colonial villages, and coastal settlements.

The region is governed by the eight municipal councils: City of Launceston, Break O'Day, Dorset, George Town, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, West Tamar, and Flinders (covering the eastern Bass Strait islands).

Much of the region's wealth is derived from industries such as agriculture, viticulture, forestry, tourism, fishing, aquaculture and recreation – all of which depend on our natural resources. Regional agriculture alone generates more than $912 million annually.[1]

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.

1.ABS Launceston and North East | Region summary | Data by region | Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)

About NRM North

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

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

The organisation is overseen by the NRM North Management Committee to ensure the continuation of sound business and best practice in natural resource management. NRM North's vision is to be the leading non-government organisation in natural resource management across northern Tasmania, and to undertake collaborative action for healthy landscapes and seascapes, protected natural values, and sustainable livelihoods and lifestyles.

Our vision for natural resource management is applied through the following principles:

stewardship

promote and enable the growth and uptake of knowledge, capabilities and practices that supports the natural environment and productive landscapes to sustain productivity, profitability and healthy functioning

participation

actively establish and nurture partnerships and collaborations as the preferred operating arrangement for the planning and implementation of regional, cross-regional and local NRM programs, projects and activities

risk & resilience

facilitate access to information that enables people to anticipate challenges, avoid or resist impacts, and recover without loss of economic, social or environmental functional capability or capacity, especially in relation to the direct and indirect consequences of changing regional climate conditions

Aboriginal culture & knowledge

appropriately and respectfully recognise and engage with Tasmanian Aboriginal people around natural resource management knowledge, perspectives, and practices.

influence

work with planners and policy developers to inform regional environmental and agricultural initiatives at state and federal levels

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 the four program pillars:

Water

Land

Biodiversity

Corporate Services

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

Themes & Asset Classes

Themes

Land, Water, and Biodiversity are the key Themes adopted to provide the structure of the regional 2030 NRM Strategies at a statewide scale. These Themes are consistent with state and national policies and priorities and build upon a shared commitment to address the key issues confronting productive and environmental landscapes and achieve lasting and meaningful outcomes.

Asset Classes

Within each of the Themes, specific Asset Classes are identified to provide a structure that focuses on action and investment in priority areas. The Asset Classes for Water are Rivers, Floodplains and Estuaries; Wetlands and other Waterbodies; and Coastal and Marine Areas. Asset Classes for Land are Healthy Country; Resilient Landscapes; and Soils and Vegetation. Asset Classes for Biodiversity are Important Biodiversity Areas; Threatened and Important Species; and Threatened and Important Ecological Communities. Asset Classes for each project area are represented in respective reports.

Water

The Water Theme encompasses Tasmania's key water assets, which include rivers and estuaries, wetlands and waterbodies, and coastal and marine systems. Tasmania's water assets are essential for clean drinking water, biodiversity, and supporting aquatic ecosystem health (freshwater, wetlands, estuarine, marine). They support multiple primary industries including irrigation for agricultural production, fisheries and aquaculture production, industrial use, recreation, and tourism. They also support community-dependent infrastructure systems for hydroelectric power generation, drinking water supply and wastewater treatment, ports, and marine traffic.

Protection and management of water resources is closely linked with land management, including some actions listed in the Land Theme (e.g., soil and erosion management and resilient landscapes) and Biodiversity Theme (e.g., aquatic threatened species and important vegetation communities, including riparian vegetation). The delivery of actions across all Themes will contribute to the health of Tasmania's water resources.

The movement of fresh surface and groundwaters through the landscape supports ecological, economic, and social values. Ecological values of catchments and estuaries, and current and emerging threats in receiving waters are used to identify Priorities and Actions for rivers, floodplains, and estuaries.

Wetlands and other waterbodies include internationally recognised wetlands of significance under the Ramsar Convention, which support high-value ecological communities. Nationally and regionally important wetlands and other water bodies are recognised for their conservation value.

Coastal and marine areas encompass a wide variety of landscapes and habitat types. Important coastal and marine areas can be identified by high value habitats or species. To enhance ecological, social, and economic values, identified Actions will build resilience to pressures and emerging threats across regional Priorities.

Land

The Land Theme identifies how NRM organisations partner with land managers to support sustainable natural and production landscapes and industries in a changing environment. NRM North aims to respect and acknowledge Aboriginal understanding of land and Country, conserve natural, cultural and production values associated with these assets, and to build capacity and develop resilience across these assets to protect them from ongoing and emerging threats.

Impacts to natural and cultural values, soil condition, and vegetation are projected due to changes to land use, management practices and biosecurity threats. Asset Classes of Healthy Country, Resilient Landscapes and Soils and Vegetation have been developed to address these issues.

Supporting Tasmanian Aboriginal people to increase capacity to manage, access or heal Country, based on self-determined priorities.

Building the capacity of land managers to address the risk of adverse events, protect natural capital, and take advantage of opportunities for production industries in the face of challenges such as climate change, weeds, pests and diseases.

Supporting land managers to improve soil condition and manage vegetation cover to improve natural values, biodiversity, and production outcomes and mitigate emerging risks.

Biodiversity

The Biodiversity Theme encompasses the full variety of life found in the state, including all species of plants, animals, fungi, microorganisms, and the ecosystems in which they live. While biodiversity refers to all living things, the NRM organisations focus on natural assets native to the state.

By protecting and conserving areas that support biodiversity, the diversity of genes, species, communities, and ecosystems is also maintained. Tasmania's NRM organisations work with partners to achieve shared strategic outcomes. Community and partner involvement in biodiversity programs range from monitoring, research, and on-ground restoration activities.

There is overlap between the Biodiversity, Land and Water Themes, including the maintenance of biodiversity on-farms and resilient landscapes (Land Theme) and the prioritisation of Ramsar sites and aquatic and coastal habitats that support threatened species and ecological communities (Water Theme). The delivery of actions across all Themes will contribute to the health of Tasmania's biodiversity resources.

Important biodiversity areas are significant because they are home to a diversity of biota and include formally recognised sites such as World Heritage Areas, important reserves, recognised biodiversity hotspots or Key Biodiversity Areas.

Threatened species include species listed under the EPBC Act and TSP Act. Important species recognises that there are regionally or locally important species, as well as emerging threatened species.

Threatened ecological communities include the communities listed under the EPBC Act and NC Act. Regionally or locally important and emerging priority ecological communities are also recognised.

Water Program

Program Aim

The aim of the Water Program is to maintain and enhance ecosystem health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Brid and George catchments through water quality improvements.

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.

Achievements 2022/2023

Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program

The following points outline key goals achieved in the 2022/23 financial year:

- developed and released the 2023 Freshwater Report Card for the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers catchment
- successfully launched and began implementation of a pilot Biological Monitoring Program for the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary
- collaborated with the Derwent Estuary Program to develop a best-practice reference document for Erosion and Sediment Control in Tasmania
- built community knowledge and awareness of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary through facilitation of the 2022 Tamar Discovery Day
- facilitated training on Water Sensitive Urban Design to partner councils by an industry leading consultant
- completed monitoring in Lake Trevallyn during the summer months to assess the risk of blue-green algal blooms.

River Health Action Plan – Catchment Works Program

The following points outline key goals achieved in the 2022/23 financial year:

- held two successful floodplain fencing workshops for landholders providing information on riverine processes, fencing design, riparian revegetation and management as well as support services for flood-affected farmers
- supported funding increases for current and new projects in response to increased market pressure across the industry
- conducted a flood impact survey of Tamar Action Grant projects to raise awareness of and promote access to information and recovery funding, and to determine the impact on program delivery
- completed 28 sample days (seven rain events) for the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary Baseline Event Monitoring Project
- partnered with NRM South to complete the translocation of 120 Swan Galaxias to Evercreech Rivulet and Delvins Creek near Mathinna to establish new populations to better protect the species from invasive fish predation
- partnered with NRM South to complete weed management and riparian revegetation works along a 400 m section of Dairy Creek near Cressy to improve habitat for a small population of Galaxias
- completed 115 kms of stock fencing across dairy and grazing for the Tamar Action Grants.

Biological monitoring along the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.

Moving Forward

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.

In 2023/24 the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program will:

continue

monthly water quality monitoring of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary

complete

monitoring of blue-green algae in Lake Trevallyn

implement

the pilot Biological Monitoring Program for the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary

deliver

the 2024 Tamar Estuary Report Card

engage

councils and stakeholders in best practice stormwater management, particularly statewide planning provisions, soil and erosion control, and water sensitive urban design

assist

delivery of catchment works for the River Health Action Plan, including advice and input into scientific monitoring.

In 2023/24 the River Health Action Plan – Catchment Works Program will 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

helping

dairy farmers to improve dairy effluent management practices and reduce stock effluent from entering waterways.

Tamar Estuary & Esk Rivers Program

Darren McPhee, TEER Program Manager

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.

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.

The kanamaluka / Tamar estuary is a focal point for the city of Launceston and underpins the region's social and economic values.

TEER Strategic Plan & Governance

Darren McPhee, TEER Program Manager

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 estuary.

The role of the TEER Program is to improve our understanding of issues impacting waterway health to identify and target priority areas and 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 in the estuary and Lake Trevallyn, as well as enhancing biological monitoring and reporting on the health of freshwater systems, and a greater focus on building community knowledge and awareness.

The kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers catchment is the largest catchment in Tasmania.

Ecosystem Health Assessment Program

Sam Jack, TEER Scientific and Technical Coordinator

The overarching goal of the Ecosystem Health Assessment Program (EHAP) continues to be the provision of high-quality data and analyses to support evidence-based management of, and investment in the estuary. Each month, the program undertakes water quality monitoring at 16 sites along the full length of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. The program is one of the longest ongoing water quality monitoring initiatives for a major waterway in Tasmania, with 2023 marking 15 years since monitoring commenced. In total, 36 water quality indicators are sampled, which equates to between 2,000 and 2,500 datapoints collected each month including measures of heavy metals and nutrient concentrations, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, and pH levels.

The data is valuable to a variety of users including government agencies, regulatory authorities, academic institutions, industry, and the broader community. The data is used for a range of purposes including ecological baseline studies, biophysical investigations, and the establishment of Default Guideline Values and Water Quality Objectives, amongst others. In the last financial year, the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies (IMAS) and the Australian Centre for Research on Separation Science (ACROSS) at UTAS have both relied on EHAP data to support PhD research projects investigating the relationship between the terrestrial flows of organic matter and nutrients, and their influence on phytoplankton and water catchment management solutions using remote nitrite and nitrate analysers.

A key publication that relies on EHAP data is the biennial kanamaluka / Tamar Estuary Report Card. Most recently published in 2022 (the 8th edition), the publication aims to inform the community about the state of water quality in five functional zones, using a simplified grading system and explanation of key trends. The next report card is due to be released in 2024.

The TEER Program and partners are grateful to TasWater for the provision and maintenance of a vessel to undertake long-term estuary monitoring. The North Esk boat has for many years provided a reliable and stable platform from which to collect grab samples, and to deploy a multiparameter sonde for physico-chemical profiling of the water column. In an average year, the vessel provides more than 80 hours of service to the program.

The EHAP Program is one of the longest ongoing water quality monitoring initiatives for a major waterway in Tasmania.

Biological Monitoring

Sam Jack, TEER Scientific and Technical Coordinator

In May 2023 the TEER Program successfully launched a unique pilot Biological Monitoring Program for the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary to build on long-term EHAP water quality monitoring. The program is also designed to expand our understanding of the biological health of the estuary which is important given the environmental, economic, and social benefits a healthy estuary provides.

As an important part of the TEER Program's data collection, the pilot Biological Monitoring Program will assess emergent tidal wetlands, seagrass meadows, bird populations, and population trends for the invasive fish species *Gambusia holbrooki*. Community members are encouraged to take part through four Fluker Posts installed at emergent tidal wetland habitats. TEER Program Manager Darren McPhee said the Fluker Posts will allow the public to contribute photos from the same location over time.

"Understanding how the ecosystem is changing is necessary for effective management. For emergent tidal wetlands, general changes can be captured through repeat photography. We know these areas are important to the community and we are excited to provide the opportunity for people to contribute to monitoring our local wetlands," said Mr McPhee.

The Fluker Posts with educational signage about each wetland type are installed at the Tailrace boardwalk, Windsor Precinct freshwater wetland, Tamar Island Wetlands Reserve, and George Town kanamaluka Trail.

With data provided by Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service volunteer John Duggin, and Birdlife Tasmania volunteer Ralph Cooper, the Biological Monitoring Program will monitor changes through time to give a greater understanding of the waterway.

Minister for Environment and Climate Change Roger Jaensch said it's important to have a comprehensive understanding the changes.

"The biological values of the kanamaluka are important not only to the species that rely on them, but to the community as well," Minister Jaensch said.

The TEER Program has been working with partners and external organisations to monitor these indicators. The results will inform our understanding of the health of the estuarine ecosystem, how it has changed, and how we should manage these values in the future.

Did you know that Middle Island Conservation Area, on the south-eastern shoreline of Port Dalrymple, contains two rare treasures?

This stretch of shoreline accounts for ~60% of the remaining saltmarsh habitat within the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary, and ~90% of the succulent saline herbland.

Fringing the saltmarsh is Melaleuca swamp forest, a threatened plant community that is the largest patch (~23 ha) fringing the estuary.

Succulent saline herbland fringing Melaleuca swamp forest.

2023 Freshwater Report Card

Darren McPhee, TEER Program Manager

The kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers catchment is the largest catchment in Tasmania, covering nearly 15 per cent of Tasmania's landmass. The North and South Esk rivers drain into the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary, which extends approximately 70 kilometres from Launceston to Bass Strait. The region sustains a diverse range of land uses including grazing, dairy, cropping, plantation and native forestry, mining, heavy industry, urban, rural residential and nature conservation areas. Launceston is a major urban centre in the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers catchment, with a population of around 90,000 people. The region provides substantial input to Tasmania's economy as well as sustaining key ecological assets and communities.

Published every four years, the TEER Freshwater Report Card provides a snapshot of freshwater ecosystem condition designed for a general community audience. It aims to educate the community about environmental and ecological factors that may affect freshwater condition, with successive report cards providing an ongoing assessment of changes in condition over time.

The 2023 Freshwater Report Card has been produced using four years of data (July 2018 to June 2022) provided by TEER Program partners. The data has been collected as part of routine sampling. Grades in this report card have been calculated for three measures of ecosystem health:

- aquatic habitat – based on analysis of water quality data for dissolved oxygen saturation, turbidity, total nitrogen, total phosphorus and nitrate + nitrite (NOx)
- aquatic life – based on analysis of macroinvertebrate sampling
- riparian habitat – based on an assessment of condition and extent of native riparian vegetation.

Freshwater ecosystem condition refers to the health status of the rivers and creeks that flow into the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. This captures the health of habitat provided by the river or creek (aquatic habitat), the health of vegetation adjacent to the waterway (riparian habitat), and the animals and plants that rely on the waterways for habitat (aquatic life).

These factors are interrelated with the health of one component impacting on, and being impacted by, the others. Freshwater ecosystem health varies from good to fair across the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers catchment, with upland areas in better condition than lowland areas in the same sub-catchment. Better ecosystem health is generally associated with less urban and agricultural development and a higher proportion of forested areas.

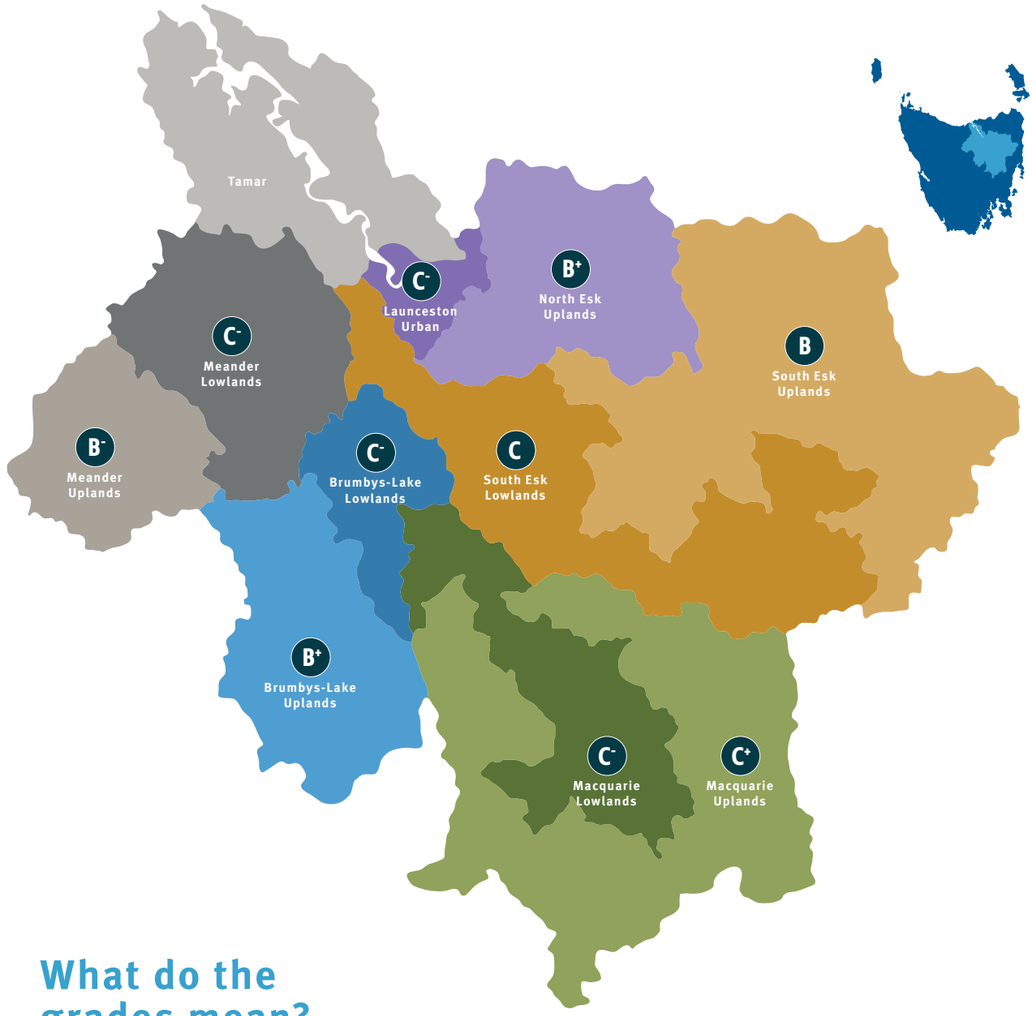
Aquatic habitat is assessed based on water quality, which ranges between fair to excellent across the catchment. Aquatic habitat condition is better than riparian habitat in all zones.

Differences between aquatic habitat and aquatic life condition in each zone are mixed. Reduced riparian habitat condition is a driver of overall poorer freshwater ecosystem condition. The range of riparian habitat grades is lower than those for aquatic life and aquatic habitat, with grades varying from fair to very poor across reporting zones. None of the zones received a grade of good or excellent for riparian habitat. Lowland and urban areas where land has been cleared for development generally have the lowest riparian habitat grades. Aquatic life is affected by instream habitat and riparian habitat. Instream habitat in some parts of the freshwater system will have been degraded by clearing of riparian vegetation, increased algal growth, and smothering by sediment.

Modification of flow regimes through the loss of pervious areas which slow surface runoff, or through construction of dams upstream and regulation of flows, can also have a significant impact on aquatic life. These factors are likely to be influencing aquatic life grades in Launceston urban areas, Brumbys-Lake Lowlands, and the South Esk Lowlands, where aquatic life was rated as poor or fair.

Activities to protect and improve riparian vegetation and instream habitat should be a focus to improve freshwater ecosystem health across the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers catchment.

To download a copy of the 2023 TEER Freshwater Report Card visit teer.org.au/freshwaterreportcard



What do the grades mean?

Freshwater Report Card grades ('A' to 'E') are generated for 10 zones of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers catchment for three ecosystem health indicators (aquatic life, aquatic habitat, riparian habitat) and overall. The diagram above shows the overall grade for each catchment. Grades for aquatic life and aquatic habitat are based on average condition across monitoring sites in each zone while riparian habitat is assessed across the entire reach of rivers and creeks in the zone.

A Excellent

Conditions at most monitoring sites or for the majority of river reaches reflect high conservation status and/or show minimal impacts of disturbance.

B Good

Most sites or river reaches have some impairment or disturbance impacts but the condition represents a healthy modified condition.

C Fair

Most but not all sites or reaches have a substantial level of disturbance or impairment with the zone having a mix of healthy, minimally impacted areas, and degraded reaches.

D Poor

Sites or reaches are a mix of substantially and severely impacted with very few sites or reaches in a healthy condition.

E Very poor

Most sites or reaches have severe impairment or are severely degraded through disturbance.

+ –

'+' and '–' signs are included to indicate smaller changes within the bands of the grade scores.

Stormwater Management

Sam Jack, TEER Scientific and Technical Coordinator

The TEER Program works with partners to protect, restore, and enhance the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and Esk rivers systems. One of the sources of pollutants to our waterways is urban stormwater. Mitigating these pollutants can result in substantial water quality improvements.

Urban areas typically have a higher proportion of sealed surfaces like roofs, roads, and car parking, which result in runoff during rain events. In addition, without suitable controls, runoff from industrial, commercial, and residential activities can carry a considerable load of sediment - often originating from building and construction sites.

The TEER Program works with partners and the building and construction industry to avoid loss of sediment and other pollutants through improved practices (facilitated by the Northern Tasmanian Stormwater Working Group [NTSWG]) to provide advocacy for better stormwater planning and management, and training and educational resources to councils and industry.

Development-related pollutants result in increased turbidity, which threatens aquatic plants and animals, creates blockages, damages public infrastructure, reduces amenity, and increases risk of flooding. The cost of rehabilitation or restoration works far exceeds the cost of managing the problem at source.

The NTSWG provides an opportunity for open discussion on a range of stormwater related topics, including the damaging October 2022 floods, acceptable specifications for piping in civil works, and the economic cost of sediment loss.

Council staff inspect a bioretention basin in Kings Meadows during the 2022 Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) training day.

In November 2022, stormwater expert Murray Powell (Director of Optimal Stormwater, Secretary of Stormwater NSW, and author of *NSW Guidelines for the Maintenance of Stormwater Treatment Measures*) provided a day of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) training to staff from several northern councils which included site visits to a number of gross pollutant traps around Launceston, which prompted an audit of urban pollution control infrastructure and urban waterway management. In collaboration with Master Builders Tasmania, the TEER Program provided erosion and sediment control (E&SC) training to the building and construction community covering the rationale for E&SC, an overview of the available types of erosion and sediment control measures, and when it was appropriate to use them.

A major achievement for the TEER Program was the production of a revised and expanded E&SC resource for Tasmania, produced in collaboration with the Derwent Estuary Program (DEP). The publication, *Erosion and Sediment Control – Fundamentals for Development in Tasmania,* is an updated best practice guide to E&SC in Tasmania and replaces the original *Soil and Water Management on Building and Construction Sites* factsheet series, published in 2009. It provides a comprehensive resource to inform private or public development activities that disturb ground and result in possible sediment loss from a site. The publication has been designed to complement the *Tasmanian Stormwater Policy Guidance and Standards for Development,* published in collaboration with the DEP and the Local Government Association Tasmania in 2021, which provides the framework for establishing stormwater water quality targets.

Stormwater pollutants such as oil, grease, fuels, fertilisers, herbicides, pesticides, detergents, chemicals, litter, and heavy metals, which aren't naturally found in our waterways, can be toxic and dangerous even in small amounts. Without effective treatment, pollutants are transported directly into natural waterways. These pollutants can be harmful to people and aquatic organisms and can impact on the health and natural beauty of our waterways.

Council staff inspect a gross pollutant trap (GPT) at the Launceston Waste Centre as part of the WSUD training day.

Lake Trevallyn Blue-Green Algae Monitoring

Emma Ferguson, TEER Program Coordinator

Lake Trevallyn is an important water resource for Launceston - utilised for drinking water and generating hydroelectricity, as well as being a popular space for recreation during summer months. While warmer weather is ideal for water activities such as swimming and kayaking, it also increases the likelihood of an algal bloom forming. Although blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) naturally occur within water bodies, in certain conditions their numbers can increase dramatically to bloom proportions, with some species being toxic.

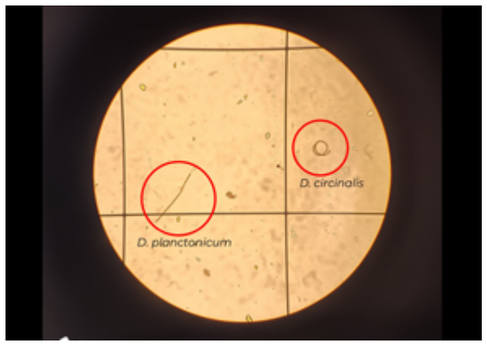
During the summer months of 2006/07, a significant algal bloom developed in Lake Trevallyn, with subsequent blooms occurring in the summers of 2007/08 and 2008/09. In response, the Lake Trevallyn Blue-Green Algae Monitoring Program was formed in 2007 to monitor algal concentrations, provide an early warning to the community in the event of an algal bloom, and to increase our understanding of the conditions that drive algal bloom formation in Lake Trevallyn. Water samples are collected weekly throughout the monitoring season which extends from November to April each year. Samples taken from the Lake Trevallyn boat ramp and Blackstone Beach are used to measure algal concentrations, nutrient levels, and pathogens. Water quality data is also collected at both onshore sites, and at a third site on the lake using a telemetry buoy that collects measurements every 15 minutes through the water column.

The 2022/23 monitoring season concluded at the end of April 2023, with no bloom being detected.

Monitoring at the lake commenced 16 years ago and continues to provide important information about parameters that influence algal concentrations, such as water temperature and stratification (where there is a difference in water temperature between the surface and at a depth of 10 metres). Water temperatures above 20 degrees Celsius are known to stimulate algal growth. This temperature threshold was exceeded regularly between late December 2022 and late January 2023. There was no water temperature stratification during this period however, and very few algal cells observed.

Algal cell concentrations peaked at 686 cells/mL in April 2023, which was well below the alert level of 2000 cells/mL that would signal a potential bloom event. The peak cell count occurred uncharacteristically late in the season when water temperature had cooled to approximately 14 degrees Celsius. The dominant algal species observed was *Dilochospermum planctonicum*, in contrast to *Dilochospermum circinalis* which has historically been the dominant species. These unexpected differences observed between the current and previous monitoring seasons highlights the value of ongoing data collection relating to factors that potentially contribute to algal bloom formation.

Increased knowledge of the relationship between parameters (including nutrients, pH, wind speed, and flow events that 'flush' the lake) and algal cell concentrations will help to better understand specific drivers and more accurately predict the likelihood of an algal bloom formation at Lake Trevallyn.



Cyanobacteria naturally occur in water bodies.

Lake Trevallyn boat ramp is one of two onshore monitoring sites.

Community Engagement & Education

Emma Ferguson, TEER Program Coordinator

The health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary and its catchments is important to local communities, who have strong connections with the waterways through cultural customs, recreation, and an appreciation for the natural values of aquatic ecosystems.

Feedback shows community members want to increase their understanding of the catchment and estuarine systems, and to be kept up to date with monitoring and management activities.

In September 2022, the biennial Tamar Discovery Day brought together 13 stallholders from a range of industry groups, environmental organisations, government agencies, and community groups. Held at Seahorse World at Beauty Point, over 300 attendees highly rated their experience in a post-event feedback survey.

Positive community engagement continued throughout the year, with high school presentations reaching over 200 students and participation in several community events. Attending the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) World Wetlands Day event and the National Day of Action event hosted by Conservation Volunteers Australia provided an opportunity to connect with the community, and to strengthen collaborative relationships with other stakeholders.

NRM North also actively participates in and promotes Tamar NRM's Catch-it-in-the-Catchment clean-up day. The annual event was established to remove harmful debris before it enters waterways, and to raise community awareness about how and why rubbish (both large and small) is harmful to our environment and the species that live there. The TEER Program proudly supports this initiative alongside community volunteers. More than 300 pieces of rubbish were collected in 2022 at Royal Park alone.

In celebration of the varied natural, social, and cultural values of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary, the TEER Program released a series of eight videos with accompanying factsheets for community members that want to dive deeper into topics. The video series connected with a wide audience, with the first video reaching over 30,000 people on social media and shared 23 times across social media accounts.

To view the 'Natural values video series' visit teer.org.au/videos/natural-values-video-series

Everyone has a role to play in caring for waterways. Through connecting with people, we motivate and inspire positive action for aquatic ecosystems, as well as the unique and diverse species that rely on them.

Catch-it-in-the-Catchment: Volunteers help clean-up a popular recreation space to prevent harmful rubbish from entering our waterways.

River Health Action Plan - Catchment Works Program

Jesse Webster, Water Program Manager

The River Health Action Plan (RHAP) is funded by the Tasmanian and Australian governments to improve the health of the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. The objective of the program is to improve public health by reducing pathogen concentrations in Zone 1 of the estuary (Launceston to Legana) by more than 4 per cent.

NRM North is delivering the RHAP Program in partnership with the City of Launceston, DairyTas, and the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA) to engage the community and implement catchment works. Reducing pathogens introduced from both urban and rural landscapes, the program was designed with a rural component - the Tamar Action Grants, and an urban component - the Sewage Intrusion Program. The Sewage Intrusion Program was completed in 2021 following the rectification of 44 identified intrusions (from the greater Launceston area), which is estimated to prevent 13.2ML of untreated sewage entering the estuary every year.

A second major mid-term program evaluation was conducted in March 2022 to measure the success of investment in on-ground works to date. Using data collected from completed works, the evaluation found an estimated reduction of 7.3 per cent in median enterococci concentration in Zone 1 of the estuary.

NRM North has achieved a significant co-investment of $4.4 million by partnering with landholders through the Tamar Action Grants.

This reduction exceeded the project target of 4.7 per cent. In addition, modelling identified significant reductions in pollutant loads such as nitrogen (22 per cent), phosphorous (28 per cent) and sediment (14 per cent) in the same zone because of works completed in both the urban and rural components of the RHAP program.

NRM North has achieved a significant co-investment of $4.4 million by partnering with local landholders through the Tamar Action Grants (TAG). Despite this significant co-investment, a revision of the outputs and funding model was necessary to address rising costs of materials and labour associated with delivery of the grants. This enabled the program to provide a larger financial incentive to new applicants and existing contracted landholders to complete project works over the remainder of the program (June 2025).

In October 2022, heavy rainfall caused significant flooding across northern Tasmanian. Through a phone survey, 70 per cent of TAG landholders reported being impacted, with an estimated 146 kilometres of funded fencing damaged by flood waters. A significant amount of contracted fencing was delayed due to landholders prioritising recovery works ahead of constructing new TAG-funded fencing. Landholders reported damage to farm infrastructure such as pumps, sheds, irrigation equipment, roads, dams, stock crossings (including bridges), and troughs, as well as crop, pasture, fodder and revegetation losses, extensive erosion to banks, flood plain scour and waterway fencing.

Some landholders reported losing stock, and estimated damage in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

It is estimated that of the 146 kilometres of funded fencing damaged, 62 kilometres (43 per cent) have been repaired, and repair works on another 78 kilometres are in progress.

The Tamar Estuary River Health Action Plan – Catchment Works Program provides funding to support a range of activities to improve water quality by reducing pathogen concentrations in the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.

Floodplain fencing can minimise infrastructure damage during high rainfall events.

River Health Action Plan - Tamar Action Grants

Jesse Webster, Water Program Manager

The Tamar Estuary River Health Action Plan – Catchment Works Program provides funding to support a range of activities to improve water quality by reducing pathogen concentrations in the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary.

The Tamar Action Grants (TAG) Program was established to improve water quality across the greater Tamar catchment by excluding stock from waterways, protecting and rehabilitating riparian revegetation buffers on dairy and grazing farms, and improving effluent management on dairy farms. Tim and Katherine Reed have seen first-hand how beneficial the TAG Program is.

The Reeds run approximately 65 beef cattle and goats on their 95 hectare property at Rosevale. When they purchased the property 10 years ago, Pipers Lagoon Creek and two other unnamed waterways that traverse the property were unfenced, used for stock water, lacked significant vegetation, and had areas of bank erosion.

Mr Reed developed a farm plan, changing various aspects of property management including fencing all three waterways to exclude stock access. Stock water is now provided through troughs. He also planted around 4,500 stems which will provide benefits for years to come. Assisted by various funding grants including the TAG Program, Mr Reed said the improvements have allowed him to achieve his goals sooner, and with less financial pressure.

"HAVING ACCESS AND SUPPORT FROM ORGANISATIONS LIKE NRM NORTH HAS HELPED US ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES WE WANTED ALONG OUR RIPARIAN AREAS SOONER THAN WE PLANNED AND WITHOUT THE PERSONAL FINANCIAL BURDEN. FUNDING MADE THESE PROJECTS A 'TO DO' RATHER THAN 'WHEN WE HAVE SPARE MONEY'. WE NOW HAVE SIGNIFICANT RIPARIAN BUFFERS AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS IN PLACE THAT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO BIODIVERSITY VALUES ON OUR PROPERTY."

Tim Reed

Since its inception in 2019, the Tamar Action Grants Program has (as at June 30, 2023):

- ***completed over 503 km of fencing on grazing and dairy farms to exclude stock from waterways***
- ***managed more than 2,200 ha of riparian area for regeneration outcomes***
- ***completed 2,667 ha of effluent management improvements across dairy farms***
- ***excluded 253,000 sheep, 19,800 cattle and 7,500 dairy cows at the completion of contracted works.***

Water Program Manager for the TAG Program Jesse Webster said while on-ground works such as stock exclusion activities and installing alternative water sources go a long way to improving water quality, creating resilience across the landscape through innovative fencing design has long-term benefits as well.

"Fence damage from flood waters is usually caused by the build-up of flood debris against the fence, which provides a wide surface area for the flowing water to push against and can cause the fence to fail. Hence, floodplain fencing should be designed to minimise the collection of debris," said Mr Webster.

By designing and building flood resilient fencing and maintaining appropriate riparian buffers, the fences were relatively unscathed in recent high rainfall events.

Mr Reed is now considering his options to increase the buffer, to provide greater on-farm habitat and biodiversity benefits as well as improved water quality and resilience to erosion and flooding.

Projects like this are being implemented across the catchment to restore on-farm waterways, which in turn improves riparian vegetation cover leading to an increase in resilience to flooding. Waterways with weed management and revegetation will provide more native habitat - enhancing biodiversity and connectivity, and provide shade and shelter for aquatic flora and fauna for years to come.

The Tamar Action Grants Program is supported by funding from the Tasmanian and Australian governments through the Launceston City Deal 'working together for healthy waterways'.

Before and after: waterway fencing and riparian restoration works have contributed to improved water quality and biodiversity values as well as resilience to erosion and flooding at the Reed's property at Rosevale.

Land Program

Program Aim

The aim of the Land Program is to improve the condition of northern Tasmania's agricultural, natural, and cultural landscapes by partnering with landholders to promote the adoption of best practice management of soil health, on-farm native vegetation, and priority invasive weeds. The Land Program also aims to partner closely with Tasmanian Aboriginal communities to enhance awareness of Aboriginal cultural heritage in the landscape, and to promote the concept of Healthy Country in natural resource management.

The northern region is one of the most important agricultural regions in Tasmania, contributing 43 per cent of the $3.52 billion gross value of Tasmania's agriculture to the economy[1].

The region also encompasses the lands of several traditional owner groups and supports a number of threatened vegetation communities, which in turn support a range of threatened flora and fauna species.

Creating awareness of innovative, sustainable and traditional land management practices, and promoting the adoption of such practices that lead to increased resilience, is critically important in the face of increasing economic, social and biophysical pressures such as climate change, and uncertainty in global market trends.

[1]Tasmanian Agri-Feed Scorecard 2020-21
Tasmanian Agri-Food SCORECARD 2020-21.PDF (nre.tas.gov.au)

Achievements 2022/2023

The following points outline key goals achieved in the 2022/23 financial year:

- partnered with the Tas Farm Innovation Hub, enabling the Soil Extension Program to continue offering valuable services with funding support through the Future Drought Fund
- launched Round 3 of the Weeds Action Fund in the form of targeted small grants. This round invested $348,000 to leverage $837,000 toward projects that contain or eradicate threats to production and biodiversity values across the state
- supported delivery of the Farming Forecaster Project in partnership with NRM South, enabling farmers to make timely management decisions that mitigate climate change risk and enhance 'whole of farm' resilience
- engaged experts to present at field days including Robin Tait on Regenerative Agriculture, and Graeme Sait on 'Soil Health is Your Wealth'
- NRM North's Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator held three Property Management Planning Workshops, and grew the Ag-Talk Facebook page membership by 20 per cent
- secured improved management practices of biodiversity values in over 700 ha, which is 10 times more than targeted
- produced three Decision Support Tools available through the Soil Extension Program:
  - Land Drainage for Farming in Tasmania
  - Nutrient Management for Farming in Tasmania
  - Soil Test Interpretation Guide

Soil sampling support is available for landholders through the Soil Extension Program. Photo: Liz Mahnken.

Moving Forward

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, native vegetation on-farm, preserve Aboriginal cultural heritage in the landscape, and to promote the adoption of best management practices to help mitigate soil degradation and economic loss.

In 2023/24 the Land Program will:

support

landholders through the Soil Extension Program for sustainable management of soil health, and building resilience into farming systems and communities

maintain

delivery of the Farming Forecaster Project in partnership with NRM South to support farmers in drought-prone areas to improve long-term productivity through the adoption of innovative farming methods

continue

to deliver Stage 2 of the Tasmanian Government's $5m Weeds Action Fund supporting 'shared responsibility' by facilitating collaborative partnerships and value-adding to existing projects by broadening the geographical range of successful actions

build

on the achievements, networks and knowledge developed in the Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farm Project to build resilient landscapes that support productive and sustainable farming practices

provide

extension services to improve farmers' knowledge and uptake of climate-smart practices and understanding of carbon and biodiversity markets to inform critical investment decisions for future sustainability

facilitate

implementation of on-farm projects to successful applicants through the Australian Government's Agricultural Stewsardship Pilot Program to support access to carbon and biodiversity market opportunities.

Healthy Country Achievements 2022/2023

The following points outline key goals achieved in the 2022/23 financial year:

- attended workshops and launch celebrations for the Melythina Tiakana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation (MTWAC) Tebrakunna Rangers Workforce Development Program and supported the Rangers to participate in NRM North project activities such as revegetation
- provided the opportunity for staff to attend Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness training through MTWAC
- engaged traditional knowledge holders in sharing traditional land management practices on-farm in northern Tasmania
- provided financial and staff support to Mannalargenna Day 2022
- began consultation with Aboriginal community members and key stakeholders in the development of an organisational Aboriginal Participation Plan.

NRM North will continue consultation with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations to optimise opportunities to work together.

Healthy Country Moving Forward

NRM North will continue consultation with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations, community members and stakeholders to optimise opportunities to work together to achieve mutual goals. For Tasmanian Aboriginal people to participate in a meaningful way and have appropriate opportunity to influence project delivery from the ground up, NRM North will develop an organisational Aboriginal Participation Plan through consultation with Aboriginal partner organisations and community.

The NRM North Aboriginal Participation Plan will:

provide

opportunities for Aboriginal organisations, businesses and community to participate in project planning and delivery

continue

to provide opportunities for staff to experience and build an understanding of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and practices through training opportunities delivered by Aboriginal community Elders and traditional knowledge holders

support

Tasmanian Aboriginal community events that share traditional knowledge or commemorate significant events such as Mannalargenna Day, National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week celebrations

offer

opportunities to incorporate traditional land management practices across program / project areas such as cultural burning

work

alongside Aboriginal communities at events including the Tamar Forum and the Small Farm Living Field Day.

Weeds Action Fund

Stuart King, Land Program Manager

NRM North has continued to deliver the Tasmanian Government's $5 million Weeds Action Fund to support farmers and community organisations to tackle weeds impacting valuable agricultural and environmental assets. An overarching principle of the fund focuses on 'shared responsibility'.

In 2023, NRM North opened Round 3 of the second stage of the fund as Targeted Small Grants. With a value of up to $50,000, the aim of these targeted grants is to eradicate or halt the spread of target species. Investment in this round was available for either new projects demonstrating cross tenure collaborative partnerships, or, in value-adding to existing projects by broadening the impact or geographical range of successful actions.

NRM North's Land Program Manager Stuart King said strong co-investment has been a program highlight.

"NRM North has achieved significant outcomes through this stage of the Weeds Action Fund, now involving over 600 participants and an average 67 per cent co-investment from project proponents."

Species including besom heath, meadow parsley, bridal creeper, seeding willow, and New Zealand sedge are among the weeds targeted under the latest round.

Support for managing highly invasive grasses such as Chilean needle grass, serrated tussock (pictured), African feather grass, African love grass and Paramatta grass can be accessed through the Tasmanian Highly Invasive Grasses Project lead by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania[1].

During 2022/23, the Weeds Action Fund continued to be delivered in partnership with Cradle Coast NRM and NRM South providing critical support in extension and project development. Eleven projects have been funded through the most recent round generating a value of $837,000 from an investment of $348,000. Mr King said 10 of these projects have an on-ground weed eradication focus and three of them also include mapping and preparation of management plans.

The Tasmanian Weeds Action Fund is funded until June 2024. In May 2023 the Tasmanian Government announced another $1.4 million to continue the program.

1. Tasmanian Highly Invasive Grasses Project | Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (nre.tas.gov.au)

The Tasmanian Government's $5 million Weeds Action Fund supports landholders to tackle invasive weeds such as serrated tussock.

Vegetation & Biodiversity On-Farm

Stuart King, Land Program Manager

NRM North's Vegetation and Biodiversity On-Farm Project was established to promote the protection of remnant vegetation and planting of biodiverse native species to improve biodiversity on-farms, and to enhance agricultural productivity by providing shade, shelter, and wind protection, and mitigating dry land salinity.

In 2018, three priority areas were selected: the north east coastal plains (Bridport, Waterhouse, Musselroe area), Flinders Island, and the Northern Midlands based on risk factors including *Phytophtora cinnamomi* infestation, wind erosion, low native vegetation retention, prevalence of threatened species and communities on private land, and land use changes likely to impact remnant native vegetation.

Within those regions, it was estimated that 60 per cent of producers engaged by the project would benefit from increased awareness of biodiversity values on their property, enabling them to better incorporate those values into daily management decisions. Management agreements to secure improved practices on more than 75 hectares of native vegetation on agricultural land were contracted. NRM North Land Program Manager Stuart King said results of the 5-year project have outweighed expectations.

"At the end of the project, 24 management agreements had been established covering an area of over 700 hectares – that's nearly 10 times greater than targeted."

All of the landholders who had entered into management agreements noted an increase in awareness of biodiversity values on-farm. The landholders also had access to advice for related works such as revegetation, fencing, and weed control works. Attendance was high at various workshops on digital mapping and farm planning, as well as field days on revegetation techniques, shelterbelt design and weed control.

During the project, landholders were given the opportunity to provide feedback to assess change in awareness. Twenty landholders (approximately 55 per cent of participants) took part in the 'voluntary skills and knowledge survey'. Now at the completion of the project, a second survey has been developed to determine if attitudes toward biodiversity conservation have changed as a function of engaging in targeted actions.

This project has been supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Shelterbelts improve biodiversity on-farm and enhance agricultural productivity by providing shade, shelter, and wind protection.

Soil Carbon Project

Bonnie Nesbitt, Regional Agricultural Landcare Facilitator / Agricultural Officer

NRM North's Soil Carbon Project facilitated an increase in the capacity of agriculture systems to adapt to significant changes in climate as well as demands for information on sustainable production in emerging markets.

Recognising that cropping and grazing sectors have significantly differing values, the Soil Carbon Project was delivered through two sub-projects: Soil Carbon in Crops and Soil Carbon in Pastures.

Soil Carbon in Crops

The Soil Carbon in Crops sub-project engaged with grain producers in the intensive long-term cropping region between Westbury and Ross in northern Tasmania. Field trials were conducted at five sites with similar soils under different management strategies. The sites were sampled for organic carbon, bulk density, gravel content, fractionated carbon, and a full 'standard' soil test.

The trials demonstrated that building carbon in soil extends beyond potential for financial gain. Results showed that increasing organic carbon builds resilience to various issues including soils prone to waterlogging, cracking, and erosion, while making the soil more structurally stable which is beneficial to management and productivity. This was highlighted at a number of field days including four held in partnership with Farmers for Climate Action.

Soil Carbon in Pastures

The Soil Carbon in Pastures sub-project engaged beef and sheep producers in the Westbury, West Tamar, Fingal, and Scottsdale areas.

Four farm demonstration trials of highly diverse pastures were established. These were compared against 'control' sites of two to three species, with the aim of demonstrating improvements in soil health and carbon inflows in the diverse pasture.

The trials continued over four seasons with feed quality and dry matter production regularly assessed, which gave farmers a more complete picture of the long-term costs and benefits of diverse pastures.

Results revealed a significant amount of variation in the areas of feed quality and dry matter production which is likely to be a function of site-specific values. This proved to be an important lesson for selecting management actions based on 'locality' with relatively minor variations between localities significantly impacting outcomes.

The Soil Carbon Project concluded in June 2023.

This project has been supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Livestock performance and soil health in broadacre cropping across northern Tasmania has been a key focus of the Soil Carbon Project.

Soil Acidification Project

Peter Heading, Agricultural Officer

NRM North's Soil Acidification Project was developed to increase awareness of soil acidification and to facilitate the adoption of practices that optimise soil pH to achieve improved soil health, productivity, and resilience.

Many coastal agricultural soils in northern Tasmania, including Flinders Island, experience limited productivity due to an acidic nature. This naturally occurring condition inhibits growth by restricting plant nutrient availability, particularly among leguminous pasture species.

To mitigate acidity issues, farmers have a regular program of surface liming - typically with aglime. While the surface layer of soil is often adequate in lime, pH levels further down the profile can decline to the point where some subsoil layers are toxic to plant root growth.

Compounding the problem, many pastures on farms in north east Tasmania and Flinders Island have been in use for 20 to 30 years, resulting in a thatch build up (non-decomposed dead matter) at the soil surface. This is common in coastal regions where salt-laden winds can inhibit plant decomposition. The thatch layer can restrict lime reaching the root zone which affects amelioration at the subsurface level.

NRM North's Agricultural Officer Peter Heading said data collected reinforces there are challenges in getting adequate levels of lime into the subsurface layer using traditional surface liming practices, but the adoption of innovative methods has proven promising.

"One farmer recently renovated a paddock applying lime through his seed / fertiliser box to get the necessary lime down at the seed level instead of on the surface … from all indications he appeared pleased with the results," said Mr Heading.

Since the Soil Acidification Project began in 2019, NRM North has worked with pasture consultant Eric Hall who has undertaken pasture composition assessments at various farm sites over the trial period. Mr Hall said the trial results reaffirm the history of pasture composition change from liming.

"… as well as an increase in the frequency of sub and white clovers and cocksfoot, we have also seen an increase in the physical size of clovers, and the leaves exhibiting a healthier green in the limed strips," said Mr Hall.

The latest trial results were presented at two events in June 2023, one on Flinders Island and another near Tomahawk with Eric Hall and Agricultural Soil Scientist Christian Bannan.

NRM North staff involved in the Soil Acidification Project would like to thank the farmers and farming groups who have generously provided paddocks for establishing trials and to those who have attended and contributed to information sessions.

The project concluded in June 2023.

This project has been supported by NRM North, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Many coastal agricultural soils in northern Tasmania, including Flinders Island, experience limited productivity due to an acidic nature.

Soil Extension Program

Tahlia Kinrade, Soil Extension Coordinator

The Tasmanian NRM Soil Extension Program was established to support landholders in sustainable soil health management and to promote the benefits of soil sampling and soil test interpretation. Lead by NRM North, the program is a collaboration between the three NRM regions in Tasmania. Working alongside industry and other soil extension activities, soil extension officers provide soil sampling support, and collaborate with farmers and industry to hold events on a variety of soil health topics.

In 2022/23 the program:

- took over 30 soil samples in the north east
- provided information on soil health topics via workshops and field days including nutrient management, soil pit field days, soil salinity management, soil biology monitoring and soil test interpretation
- formed a Program Reference Group with representatives from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, Tasmanian Farm Innovation Hub, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, RM Consulting Group, Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, Soil First Tasmania, Southern Farming Systems, and the Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group
- published three soil decision support system tools: Nutrition Management for Farming in Tasmania, Land Drainage for Farming in Tasmania, and a Soil Test Interpretation Guide for Dryland Pastures.

This program, initially delivered with funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program to 30 June 2023, will continue to be delivered by NRM North, NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM in partnership with the Tasmanian Farm Innovation Hub through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund until June 2024.

Workshops and soil pit field days have provided a wealth of information about soil health management.

Farming Forecaster

supporting farmers for drought resilience

Peter Heading, Agricultural Officer

The Drought Resilience Innovation Project was developed to support farmers in drought-prone areas improve long-term productivity through the adoption of innovative farming methods.

The East Coast Primary Producers Association was the initial driver of the project, with members eager to develop a predictive pasture tool that could help them make early decisions when difficult seasonal conditions were looming. NRM South has taken the lead with the project, with strong support from NRM North, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) and other representative organisations.

Farming Forecaster

The Farming Forecaster tool was developed to give graziers in drought-prone areas a better insight into current pasture conditions and forecasts on likely pasture production and livestock performance.

The initial stages of the pilot involved the installation of soil moisture probes at seven locations in the Fingal Valley and on the east coast. Installation of the probes was completed in 2022. NRM North's Agricultural Officer Peter Heading said the rollout of Farming Forecaster has been well received.

"It is exciting to know that there are at present 29 fully installed soil moisture probes and model sites across dryland grazing regions in Tasmania (including Flinders Island) with the aim of approximately 35 sites installed for the whole project," said Mr Heading.

Exceeding expectations, the project is currently over subscribed for host sites.

Information sessions discussing the benefits of Farming Forecaster have been held with advisor Phil Graham (Graham Advisory) and more sessions will take place in 2023/24 to disseminate information to new farmers and existing host farmers.

Data generated through Farming Forecaster is updated on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis and is free for anyone to use. Tim Ackroyd from NRM South said Farming Forecaster can take a level of risk out of the decision making process.

"Farming Forecaster uses leading-edge technology to provide a roadmap of pasture availability, giving graziers a better understanding of conditions over the next three to four months which allows for forward planning," said Mr Ackroyd.

At some sites, farmers have installed full weather stations to add value to the network, making predictive modelling for future pasture potential more rigorous.

The Farming Forecaster pilot has been conducted in partnership with NRM North, NRM South, TIA, the East Coast Primary Producers Association and the Upper Esk Landcare and Productivity Group through funding from the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund.

The Farming Forecaster pilot involved the installation of soil moisture probes in the Fingal Valley and on the east coast of Tasmania.

Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator

Bonnie Nesbitt, Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator / Agricultural Officer

The role of the Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator (RALF) is to support an increased awareness and adoption of sustainable land management practices in agricultural and landcare communities. The RALF also supports building climate resilience in rural communities and assisting farmers, environmental community groups, and landholders to meet market expectations. Direct engagement with grower and farmer-based groups has been critical to establishing important relationships and facilitating knowledge transfer between the RALF, farmers, and industry partners.

Since commencing the role in January 2023, RALF Bonnie Nesbitt has facilitated several events within the agricultural community, including three LISTmap (Tasmanian mapping resource) training sessions with data analyst experts from the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. The sessions are designed to enhance landholder capacity in property management planning and to assist with the management of natural assets on property. Over 31 landholders attended the LISTmap sessions, targeting 24 different properties across north east Tasmania.

An important part of the role is to deliver information on best practice management in various agricultural industries, and to provide monthly updates on grant opportunities and regional sustainable agriculture events. The RALF has had a presence at annual community events, including AgFest, the Tasmanian Garlic and Tomato Festival, and the Ag Innovation Day hosted by TAPG and the TFGA.

Ms Nesbitt said participating in events strengthens community engagement.

"It's a great opportunity to hear from farmers and the community on pressing land management issues, as well as providing insight into where future engagement efforts should be focused."

The RALF also supports several other sustainable agriculture projects funded through the Australian Government including the Soil Extension Program, Soil Carbon in Crops, Soil Carbon in Pasture, Vegetation On-Farms, and Small Farm Living.

This year, in partnership with Farmers for Climate Action, great success was achieved with the Diverse Pastures Paddocks Hops (pictured) with pasture and soil experts Robin Tait and Eric Hall. Visiting trial sites in Rosevale, Westbury and Scottsdale (each with differing soil types), the results of the 5-year Soil Carbon Project were discussed and host farmers spoke about how the project changed their livestock behaviour and farm productivity.

From 2022 to 2023, the RALF helped to promote awareness of sustainable agriculture practices and built capacity within the community. Feedback from events indicated many landholders intend to change their practices in response to attending events.

The Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator is supported by NRM North, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare program.

Workshops and field days facilitated by the RALF have delivered valuable information about best practice land management.

Healthy Country

Ben Slingsby, Operations Manager, Land and Sustainability

Aboriginal Participation in NRM North programs and projects

In February 2023, NRM North began discussions with Tasmanian Aboriginal organisations about how to optimise opportunities to work together to achieve mutual goals, and how Elders and knowledge holders can inform decision making, be included in planning processes, and help deliver projects that contribute to mutual goals and aspirations. NRM North values and supports inclusive and culturally informed investment in critical natural and cultural resources in northern Tasmania. We are committed to providing meaningful opportunities to engage with Tasmanian Aboriginal stakeholders to assist us to strategically inform project design and support decision making on their terms. For Tasmanian Aboriginal stakeholders to participate in a meaningful way and to have an appropriate opportunity to influence project delivery, NRM North will develop an Aboriginal Participation Plan with input and consideration from our Tasmanian Aboriginal partners and stakeholders.

Supporting the Tebrakunna Ranger Workforce Development Training Program

NRM North is pleased to support the team at Melythina Tiakana Warrana Aboriginal Corporation (MTWAC) in developing the 14 volunteer rangers through their Tebrakunna Ranger Workforce Development Program. NRM North staff attended the launch in March 2023, and has provided opportunities for engagement in NRM activities linked to revegetation on farmland near Tebrakunna.

Cultural awareness

Cultural events provide NRM North staff with the opportunity to gain valuable insights from Aboriginal Elders and other members of Aboriginal communities who share their knowledge, cultural skills, and traditions, taking the time to come together to educate and make connections.

In March 2023, NRM North staff participated in cultural awareness and sensitivity training. Delivered by Aunty Patsy Cameron AO and the team at MTWAC, staff learnt about the rich history of Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, and present and future paths to address challenges faced. We also had a visit to Tebrakunna Country to learn how traditional owners listen to Country and use natural resources to provide for their communities.

NRM North staff are proud to support traditional celebrations including Mannalargenna Day. The annual festival at Tebrakunna celebrates revered ancestor and warrior Mannalargenna. NRM North will continue to embrace cultural practices and values at various events held throughout the year.

Cultural awareness display of bush tucker and medicinal plants.

Biodiversity Program

Program Aim

The aim of the Biodiversity Program is to maintain and enhance landscape function for biodiversity, with a focus on protecting habitat for Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) species and communities and Ramsar wetland values in northern Tasmania.

Natural landscapes make up around 60 per cent of the northern region. These biodiversity-rich landscapes support native species, communities, and ecosystems, and 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 pressure 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.

Achievements 2022/2023

The following points outline key goals achieved in the 2022/23 financial year:

- over 20 ha of habitat for eastern barred bandicoot was created through revegetation projects in the West Tamar and Northern Midlands regions, with an additional 18 ha of existing habitat protected from livestock access. The total area of habitat protected or restored over the 5-year project was more than 125 ha
- the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project provided support and advice to rural and urban community members to help reduce threats to the species, including through the development of the Urban Refuges bandicoot garden program, and development of habitat management plans for over 65 rural landholders
- 5 km of waterways in priority catchments were protected and rehabilitated to benefit giant freshwater crayfish, bringing the total for this project to 17 km of streambanks restored - an over-achievement. Surveys of giant freshwater crayfish populations in project areas yielded promising results
- TassieCat, the public education program for the Cat Management Project, continued to produce practical and user-friendly resources to promote responsible cat ownership, including conveying recent legislation changes in an accessible way
- on-ground works were completed at the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River Ramsar site for a 4-year project. This included the control of over 120 ha of weeds in the internationally listed wetland complex, and stock exclusion and rehabilitation of 6.5 km of waterways which drain from agricultural land into the wetlands
- the Tasmanian Cat Management Project made progress in supporting local governments to implement practical solutions to cat management challenges, including declaring cat management areas, addressing cat hoarding and colony cases, and holding events for subsidised microchipping
- with support from NRM North, community members on the east coast and Flinders Island continued to work to protect the threatened hooded plover through a Nest Warden Program, community monitoring, and over 60 km of beach weed surveillance and control
- the Small Farm Living Program continued to deliver workshops (seven) and resources for smallholders in the region, including the development of an interactive online property planning tool and resource centre
- 4 multi-year projects funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program were completed in June 2023, with all targets met or exceeded.

Moving Forward

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.

In 2023/24, the Biodiversity Program will:

implement

high priority actions and continue to support community education initiatives for responsible cat ownership in collaboration with state government, local councils and key stakeholders

complete

comprehensive evaluations of major projects completed in 2023, to capture achievements and to provide recommendations for implementation of future projects

deliver

the sixth biennial Small Farm Living Field Day in October 2023, in partnership with Lilydale Landcare

commence

implementation of new projects funded through the Australian Government's National Landcare Program

source

investment for ongoing implementation of biodiversity priorities in the NRM North Strategy, beyond current funded programs.

Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project

Stephen Izzard, Biodiversity Coordinator

Since 2018, NRM North has collaborated with local landholders, community groups and councils to deliver the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project with the aim of 'Safeguarding northern Tasmania as a refuge for eastern barred bandicoot and other threatened species and communities'. It has been a fitting end to the 5-year project, with an impressive amount of habitat improvement works being completed in the final year.

In 2022/23, 34 hectares of new, enhanced, or protected priority eastern barred bandicoot (EBB) habitat in the West Tamar and Northern Midlands regions was created, bringing the total area over the project lifespan to almost 120 hectares. Far exceeding planned targets, the project has also funded 42 Urban Refuges - gardens designed to provide essential habitat for bandicoots in an urban or peri-urban environment.

Riverside resident Robyn Reid has been involved in monitoring bandicoots throughout the project. Last year she planted an Urban Refuge garden and said the hard work has paid off.

"The bandicoot seedlings have worked their magic and I now have EBB in my backyard! … I haven't seen them here before and I'm delighted that even when feral cats are around, the EBB still seem to be able to appear. This is really a wonderful success story," said Ms Reid.

Urban Refuge gardens have also been planted at highly visible sites on council land at Riverside, Exeter and Longford. NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator Stephen Izzard said partnerships and collaborations fostered during the project have played a key role in successful outcomes.

"Our native revegetation and regeneration sites are now maturing and providing valuable habitat for threatened wildlife," Mr Izzard said.

As well as strong support from local government, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy has provided expert habitat planning advice to project landholders and managed wildlife monitoring activities, and West Tamar Landcare has promoted bandicoot conservation activities and held well-attended volunteer tree planting days.

Mr Izzard said it's encouraging to see more people wanting to find out about bandicoots on their property.

"While it's a little sad that this project is concluding, it's also an exciting time for us as we're just beginning to see the benefits of the work we've done over the last five years."

West Tamar Landcare has also delivered messaging including responsible cat management to mitigate threats to the species, and findings from two UTAS PhD students sponsored by the project will help inform future conservation activities for eastern barred bandicoots in the project area.

Mr Izzard remains optimistic that the partnerships developed, research funded, and community engagement fostered will have a lasting legacy on the landscape, and a positive outlook for the species.

This project has been supported through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Almost 150,000 native seedlings have been planted as part of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project.

Giant Freshwater Crayfish Project

Kym Blechynden, Biodiversity Coordinator

Partnerships for giant freshwater crayfish recovery in north east Tasmania

Since its inception in 2018, NRM North's Giant Freshwater Crayfish Project has worked with landholders in high priority reaches of the Pipers, Brid and Boobyalla catchments to coinvest in riverbank restoration works to promote the recovery of the giant freshwater crayfish (*Astacopsis gouldi*).

The giant freshwater crayfish is the largest freshwater invertebrate in the world and is only found in rivers that flow into Bass Strait (with the exception of the Tamar catchment and the Arthur catchment in the north west).

Project Coordinator Kym Blechynden has worked with landholders and facilitated community education activities to improve native habitat and reduce threats to the species. She said key threats include habitat loss or disturbance, sediment accumulation in waterways, drought, climate change, and poaching.

"Excluding livestock from rivers, installing troughs, controlling exotic weeds, and re-establishing native streambank vegetation are really effective actions that reduce key threats to the giant freshwater crayfish," Ms Blechynden said.

More than 17 kilometres of restoration works have been completed throughout the project, which has exceeded targets by more than 2 kilometres. In addition to benefits for the threatened species and native habitat connectivity, there have been land mangement and productivity benefits as well.

Clare and Nigel Russell run a small cattle farm in Lilydale, in Tasmania's north east. Since starting river restoration activities in 2016, they've planted more than 5,000 native species, fenced 3 kilometres of waterway, and provided alternative water points for stock. The Russells are also active members of Lilydale Landcare, who are working on a community giant freshwater crayfish project in Underwood.

"We purchased the property in 2014 when stock still had access to the river which created problems such as erosion, decreased water quality, and the destruction of riparian habitat," said Mr Russell.

"From a land management point of view, although we have given up some land (for revegetation), we can now manage the land better. The fenced paddock allows for efficient grazing and more grass to be grown - therefore it's more productive and profitable. The additional shelterbelts are great for pastures and stock, and there's cleaner water for stock as well," said Mr Russell.

Throughout the project, hundreds of volunteers have attended dozens of planting days at properties across the northern region, leaving the future of the species in a much stronger position. Along with our dedicated landholders (and other partners), we do make a difference.

This project has been supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Project.

The Russells have planted more than 5,000 native species.

Hooded Plover Project

Emma Ferguson, Biodiversity Coordinator

Northern Tasmania is one of the last strongholds for the eastern hooded plover (*Thinornis rubricollis rubricollis*) with approximatey half of the remaining population calling Tasmania home. Working with coastal communities, NRM North's 'Defending the Hood' project has protected and improved critical nesting habitat for the species and raised awareness about the need to share the shorelines responsibly.

The species faces numerous threats, including coastal weeds, which reduce the nesting suitability of beaches. This year, nesting habitat was protected and improved across 26 kilometres of coastline through treatment of the weed sea spurge in Mount William National Park and the Bay of Fires Conservation Area. NRM North Biodiversity Coordinator Emma Ferguson said human disturbance can also put pressure on shorebird populations.

"Unfortunately, some of the ways people use our coastal areas, including driving vehicles on beaches, pose a threat to hooded plover habitat."

Access control structures to stop vehicles illegally accessing nesting beaches have been installed at three sites on Tasmania's east coast. Direct protection of nests and chicks was also achieved through the volunteer Nest Warden Program. Working with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS), volunteers erected temporary fencing and signage around nests at risk of trampling or disturbance by beachgoers. This year, eight nests were monitored during summer months, with five chicks reaching fledgling stage. Nat Walter has been a volunteer nest warden with the Hooded Plover Project for four years.

"I have been involved since the beginning [of the program] ... Hopefully fencing and signage has contributed to successful breeding of the hooded plovers," said Ms Walter.

Nest wardens have also played a significant role in raising community awareness for shorebird conservation, such as keeping dogs on leads. In collaboration with NRM North, PWS Discovery Ranger Lou delivered 64 activities that reached nearly 3,000 people on the east coast during summer. Surveys of beachgoers conducted over summer 2023, compared with four years ago, indicate an increase in people's awareness of the need for conservation of shorebirds, and an improvement in compliance with measures such as dog zoning on beaches. This is a positive reflection of the combined efforts of community volunteer groups, government, and non-government groups over many years to convey these messages.

Gauging the impact of management actions also depends on understanding hooded plover population trends. In 2022, more than 30 volunteers traversed over 200 kilometres of coastline in Tasmania's north east (including Flinders Island) in search of hooded plovers as part of the BirdLife Australia biennial population count. Data collected helps to better understand long-term trends and potential pressures on populations, and guide future management actions.

This project has been supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government and has worked with the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service, Break O'Day Council, BirdLife Australia, and the North East Bioregional Network.

Over 200 kilometres of Tasmania's coastline was surveyed as part of the 2022 biennial hooded plover population count.

Small Farm Living

Nikita Sarangdhar, Small Farm Living Coordinator

Over the past 12 years, NRM North's Small Farm Living Project has provided hundreds of landholders with the opportunity to network, develop skills, and to manage natural resources on their property more sustainably.

Events held throughout 2022/23 have been well attended by smallholders keen to learn more about healthy soils, animal health, planting and propagating native species, and river health management.

The Small Farm Living team also conducted LISTmap and Property Planning workshops to help landholders gain a detailed understanding about their properties and how to manage them. Based on original property management planning booklets from early in the program, the team developed an online property planning tool which was launched in June 2023. The workshops covering farm biosecurity, cat management, vegetation restoration, and plant identification were attended by more than 50 landholders. NRM North Biodiversity Program Manager Kate Thorn said it's great to receive feedback from participants who go away with a clearer vision and commitment to make changes.

"We identified a need to help property owners translate learnings into a concise and practical plan ... now they can do that online with our property planning tool."

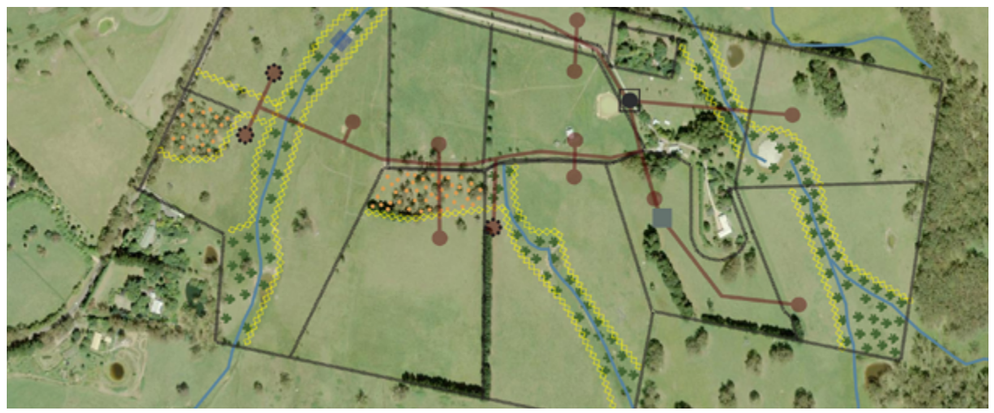
The project maintains a database of more than 700 small property owners.

Workshops and field days have proven to be a popular platform to deliver information. Every year, NRM North has a presence at the Tomato and Garlic Festival and Agfest, and also hosts the biennial Small Farm Living Field Day. Held in partnership with Lilydale Landcare, NRM North received a grant from City of Launceston to support the sixth field day to be held in October this year. More than 600 people attended the event in 2021. Ms Thorn said the Small Farm Living Field Day is a great opportunity for smallholders to gather valuable information.

"This field day will give small landholders an opportunity to network and gain knowledge on topics such as biosecurity, livestock diseases, invasive species management, and plant propagation, and to engage directly with experts regarding land management."

New to the team, Small Farm Living Coordinator Nikita Sarangdhar works across various NRM North programs to facilitate the delivery of relevant information, resources, and project funding for smallholders. Newsletters with relevant information for sustainable property management are released regularly, and workshops and field days will continue to be tailored to the needs of small landholders.

This project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program - Smart Farms Small Grants.



LISTmap and Property Planning workshops have helped landholders gain a detailed understanding about their properties.

Tasmanian Cat Management Project

Jess Taylor, Regional Cat Management Coordinator

The Tasmanian Cat Management Project facilitates improved cat management participation and education through partnerships with local government, industry stakeholders and the community.

Launched in 2018, the state government-funded project entered its second phase in 2022 with the implementation of the 'Northern Tasmania Regional Cat Management Strategy 2020-2030' to identify roles, resources and priorities at a local and regional level to realise practical cat management outcomes and to achieve the objectives of the strategy. Developed in collaboration with the Regional Cat Management Working Group, the process has so far seen individual councils and partners embark on initiatives such as trap loan schemes, addressing cat hoarding and colony cases, designating cat management areas, and holding subsidised microchipping events.

Working group meetings serve as a valuable forum for sharing information and identifying opportunities. As a result of this collaboration, several resources have been created including a factsheet outlining recommended processes for cat management within vet clinics, a Cat Management Area factsheet, and social media templates for councils to use when promoting responsible cat management. Jess Taylor is one of three Regional Cat Management Coordinators in the state. Working with NRM North, Ms Taylor said 'TassieCat' is a great way to get the message about responsible ownership out there.

"'TassieCat' offers a wealth of expert advice and useful resources to help keep your cat safe, healthy, and happy while protecting our wildlife and our communities."

Other resources made available to cat owners include a step-by-step guide to constructing a cost-effective cat enclosure (pictured) to assist cat owners to responsibly manage their pets. Attendance at the Australian Vet Association conference in Hobart was an opportunity to engage with industry stakeholders about cat management initiatives, and events such as Agfest, Flinders Island Show, and Exeter Show have provided additional opportunities to build community awareness about responsible cat management.

A key focus in 2022/23 was to effectively communicate and promote amendments to the *Cat Management Act 2009*, which came into effect in March 2022. In collaboration with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, the rollout of training workshops to regional council staff has been crucial in communicating changes to legislation. Funding has been extended to 2025 which will allow the project to continue providing resources to councils and community through education, awareness, and support of cat management initiatives and legislation.

The project is delivered by NRM North, Cradle Coast NRM and Ten Lives through funding from the Tasmanian Government.

DIY cat enclosures are a great way to responsibly manage your pet.

"'TASSIECAT' OFFERS A WEALTH OF INFORMATION ABOUT HOW TO KEEP YOUR CAT SAFE, HEALTHY AND HAPPY WHILE PROTECTING OUR WILDFLIFE."

Jess Taylor

Ringarooma Ramsar Project

Kate Thorn, Biodiversity Program Manager

Designated as an internationally significant wetland under the Ramsar Convention, the Flood Plain Lower Ringarooma River wetland complex encompasses both reserved land and private property and is located within the culturally significant tebrakunna Country in the north east.

A 4-year project aimed at protecting and restoring the ecological character of the site concluded in June 2023. The project was established to reduce threats to the condition of the wetland vegetation communities, and to improve water quality runoff from agricultural properties.

The final year of the project saw the completion of over 120 hectares of weed management work within the Ramsar site, addressing gorse, Spanish heath, foxglove, blackberry, and crack willow infestations. The eradication of crack willow from Fosters Marshes was particularly significant, with over 300 willow trees treated among native wetland vegetation. NRM North's Biodiversity Program Manager Kate Thorn said weed control outcomes were rewarding given the difficulties of working in the area.

"The project has been pretty challenging, working in a large and remote wetland area, particularly as we had almost three years of La Nina conditions across the 4-year project," said Ms Thorn.

Ms Thorn said it was fortunate that contractors were flexible with their availability and willing to tackle challenges accessing the site.

Recommendations from a Water Quality Improvement Plan developed early in the project were implemented in collaboration with landholders immediately upstream of the Ramsar site. These included excluding livestock from over 6 kilometres of waterways to reduce the impact of agricultural runoff to the wetland ecosystems. One of these projects also protected over 40 hectares of existing native vegetation along the waterways, while another saw over 2,800 seedlings planted to revegetate tributaries of Hardwickes Creek and Gincase Creek to improve buffering of waterways flowing into the Ramsar site from agricultural land.

While the project has achieved some great outcomes on the ground, there is more to be done. The Water Quality Improvement Plan and Vegetation Management Plan developed and reviewed throughout the project provide an excellent basis for future planning and management of the site and its catchment.

This project has been supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.

Hardwickes Creek in the Ringarooma Ramsar wetland complex, one of NRM North's water quality sampling sites.

Sustainability Program

Program Aim

The main initiative of the Sustainability Program is the coordination of the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Program, which provides advice, funding and education to better manage waste and recycling within northern Tasmanian communities, businesses and local governments.

Governance & interim strategy

The Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Program (NTWMP) is a regional program that was formed in 2007 and formerly hosted by the City of Launceston. Now hosted by NRM North, partners include the region's eight local councils of Break O'Day, Dorset, Flinders Island, George Town, Launceston, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and West Tamar.

Guided by the waste hierarchy, an internationally accepted guide for prioritising waste management practices, the program applies the principles of ecologically sustainable development to inform the strategy and achieve significant improvements in resource recovery.

As such, the NTWMP has developed an Interim Strategic Plan that includes:

- a review of past NTWMP strategic planning and successes
- preliminary waste targets and actions incorporating circular economy principles
- priority constraints and opportunities.

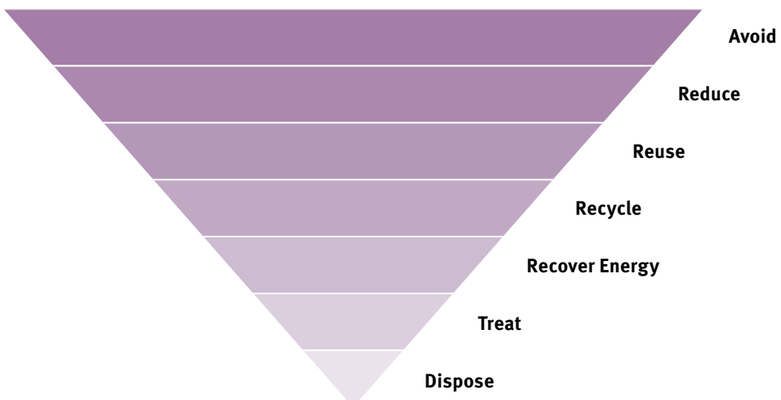
The Interim Plan is intended to provide a high-level context of the overall NTWMP strategic direction and to establish new projects to progress the region towards strategic targets.

Waste management strategic planning across Australia has sought to build upon the waste hierarchy model by introducing circular economy (CE) principles. The NTWMP has a unique opportunity to achieve a prosperous economy and better environment for the residents and businesses of northern Tasmania by working towards the following objectives:

Eliminate waste and pollution – encourage product design and strategies that increase waste avoidance and allow reuse, repair and recycling.

Circulate products and materials – ensure resources remain in the economy at their highest value (either a product or raw material).

Regenerate natural systems – transition away from a linear take-make-waste economy to one that supports natural regeneration.



The waste hierarchy is an internationally accepted guide for prioritising waste management practices.

2023/24 Resource Recovery & Circular Economy Grants

Successful applicants will be awarded individual grants of up to $50,000 to businesses, schools, councils, and other government organisations to help implement initiatives that recover valuable resources. In the past, successful applicants have implemented projects that repurpose biological farm waste through biochar, purchase equipment to allow reuse of glass jars to reduce packaging and created community recycling hubs at local primary schools.

NRM North Sustainability Program spokesperson Ben Slingsby said it's a great opportunity to showcase innovative ideas to repurpose valuable resources, and a chance to rethink how we dispose of waste.

"We know there are more great ideas out there … the Circular Economy Business Grant Program has already started to support local businesses investing in projects that decrease waste generation and increase the recirculation of resources."

Eligible businesses, organisations or schools in the Launceston, George Town, Break O'Day, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, Dorset, West Tamar, or Flinders Island municipalities were eligible to apply for funding under the Circular Economy Business Grant Program.

Development of a 5-year strategy

Following the successful transition of the NTWMP governance arrangements to NRM North as the host, a key priority for the program is to develop a 5-year strategy for waste and resource recovery in the northern Tasmanian region. The 5-year strategy will align to regional, state and federal strategies and is currently in the initial draft phase. The initial draft has been informed by regional technical expertise, along with the objectives and actions outlined in the interim strategy. Development of the 5-year strategy will continue with wider consultation in the first quarter of the 2023/24 financial year. The final strategy will be delivered in November 2023 with education, resource management, circular economy, regional planning, and partnerships expected to form key priorities.

The Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Program is supported by the Tasmanian Government.

The grants allowed UTAS to develop an on-site FOGO Waste Management System as part of their community food garden.

"THE PROGRAM IS ALL ABOUT DECREASING THE AMOUNT OF WASTE SENT TO LANDFILL THROUGH INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES AND INCREASING THE RECOVERY OF 'WASTE' … THE GRANTS ARE A GREAT HEAD START IN GETTING IDEAS OFF THE GROUND."

Ben Slingsby

Annual Report

The 2023 Annual Report provides a summary of the actions taken during FY22/23 to address the key objectives in the Corporate Services Program.

Chair's Report

"I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE NRM NORTH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE FOR THEIR CONSISTENT INTEREST IN AND SUPPORT FOR THE ORGANISATION."

Pamela Allan

NRM North has celebrated another successful year marked by the departure of our CEO, Rosanna Coombes (2016-2022).

Rosanna has been an outstanding CEO for NRM North. She represented our organisation at national, state, regional and local levels and consolidated the organisation's reputation through her advocacy and her relationships with our key stakeholders. Her influence with relevant Commonwealth agencies and with NRM Regions Australia, her work on the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary priorities through the TEER Program and the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce and the Launceston City Deal, with the state government and with local councils, led NRM North to be regarded as one of the highest performing NRMs in the country.

Rosanna built a strong staff team and reinforced Management Committee good governance. She had a singular focus on improving our sustainability by diversifying income streams and implementing financial management strategies to secure reserves and staff. Rosanna is a strategic thinker and leader. She capitalised on external emerging environmental trends and opportunities to take NRM North into new ventures such as the Federal Government's Drought Resilience Hubs and regional waste governance. Rosanna also prioritised cultural relationships and projects with Tasmanian Aboriginal communities. This has now become a national government priority and NRM North is well placed to deepen these relationships and elevate cultural landscape awareness.

Since Rosanna's departure Dr Jo Fearman has been Acting CEO. During her tenure Jo has overseen the development of a suite of new five year project proposals with the Commonwealth Government and continued to develop NRM North's response to the emerging Nature Repair Market. Jo has recently been confirmed as NRM North's CEO. Welcome Jo.

The proposed Nature Repair Market is just one of a raft of initiatives we are seeing flagged at the national level. Nature Positivity has become a catch phrase for increased biodiversity protection and overlaps action on climate change, regenerative agriculture, the creation of a national Environment Protection Authority and the implementation of a circular economy. There is also greater Commonwealth focus on regional planning for landscape protection and repair, and NRM North's 2030 Strategy for Northern Tasmania enables that approach.

NRM North has worked closely with Cradle Coast NRM and NRM South this year on direct project delivery, on statewide policy development and on consistent dialogue with state agencies and with government ministers. We have appreciated the leadership of both Peter Voller (Chair, Cradle Coast NRM) and Nepelle Crane (CEO, NRM South) at the national level with NRM Regions Australia. The national network remains fledgling given the diversity of natural resource management organisations across Australia, their workload and their limited resources.

No organisation is as successful as NRM North without good staff and good governance. I would like to thank the NRM North Management Committee for their consistent interest and support for the organisation. Like many organisations at present we work hard to attract and keep our staff. On behalf of the Management Committee I thank the CEO and her team for their superlative efforts.

Developing the vision and the strategy for NRM North, then negotiating with the Federal Government for the funds to deliver the projects are challenging tasks. The role of NRMs and similar not-for-profit organisations in the nature repair sector will increase. It is vital these organisations are well led and well resourced to deliver on the growing expectations of government and community alike.

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

The aim of the Corporate Services Program is to maintain a sustainable organisation that delivers strategic NRM results for the community and demonstrates best practice business management and governance.

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 organisations 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.

Achievements 2022/2023

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

- worked towards best practice governance by reviewing and updating contract related documents, internal policies and procedures
- enhanced branding through improvements to communications platforms including websites, webinars and video production
- expanded program delivery by:
  - commenced hosting of the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Program
  - submitting a tender for the Australian Government's Approach to Market for a Panel of Regional Delivery Partners for Environmental Protection, Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management
- supported partnership programs including:
  - the Tasmanian Governments Weeds Action Fund
  - the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce
- supported regional collaboration with:
  - the Tasmanian Land Conservancy on delivery of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot Project
  - TFGA, DairyTas and regional councils on delivery of the River Health Action Plan Catchment Works Program
  - Lilydale Landcare group to successfully deliver a series of workshops on Small Farm Living
  - local government authorities, cat management facilities, and the Australian Veterinary Association to implement the Northern Tasmanian Regional Cat Management Strategy
- improved information management by:
  - enhancements to the capture and management of spatial data through upgrades to the GIS system.

Moving Forward 2023/24

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

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

In 2023/24 NRM North will focus on the following areas of the Corporate Services Program:

- prepare investment proposals and action plans to secure projects that deliver on the 2030 Natural Resource Management Strategy for Northern Tasmania
- work with the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce on the implementation of works to restore wetlands in the North Esk River and other priority projects in the 10-year Vision for the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary
- review the 2019 – 2023 Strategic Plan and Corporate Plan
- review and continuously improve procedures for staff recruitment, onboarding, remuneration, performance management, and recognition
- conduct an ongoing review organisational policy, with a focus on workplace health and safety, risk management, information management, and financial management policies
- have a continued focus on embedding and improving project management and corporate governance frameworks.

2030 Natural Resource Management Strategy for Northern Tasmania

Tasmania's three natural resource management organisations, NRM South, NRM North and Cradle Coast NRM developed new regional strategies through to 2030 featuring a consistent, scalable, whole-of-state NRM framework that the NRM organisations will use to prioritise their investment.

Produced in consultation with specialists, industry, government, and community stakeholders, the strategies identify the natural resource management priorities and emerging issues unique to each of Tasmania's NRM regions. Leveraging investment from the Tasmanian and Australian governments, the strategies will assist the NRM organisations to plan, develop and deliver significant on-ground actions across the state.

Focusing on the three primary themes of Land, Water and Biodiversity, the strategies provide a blueprint for the actions that each NRM organisation will focus on through to 2030.

With a view to long-term outcomes that include support for Aboriginal communities, improving landscape resilience to climate change, improved waterway health, and reducing impacts on Tasmania's threatened species, the 2030 NRM Strategy for Northern Tasmania provides a framework to facilitate sustainable management of northern Tasmania's natural resources. Differing from previous regional strategies that identified natural resource management 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 on a shared commitment for:

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

In supporting the new strategies, Minister for Primary Industries and Water Jo Palmer noted the continuing efforts of Tasmania's three NRM organisations in delivering regional, state and Commonwealth priorities.

"I congratulate the regional NRM organisations on their commitment to delivering cohesive strategies that collectively support a statewide approach. There is clear alignment, and each strategy outlines regional priorities that are also consistent with state and national priorities. The Tasmanian Government values its longstanding relationship with the NRMs, and we are proudly supporting the implementation of these strategies over future years."

The strategies were officially released on 4 August 2022.

Partnerships

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

Almost all of the programs NRM North undertakes 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 where most of the transformational results occur.

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

- With the introduction of the statewide landfill levy, the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Program transferred its partnership governance arrangements to be hosted by NRM North. The NTWMP has eight member councils from the northern region and exists to provides advice, funding, and education to better manage waste and recycling within northern Tasmanian communities, businesses, and local governments. The first priority for the NTWMP has been to commence development of a 5-year strategy for waste and resource recovery in the region.
- Private landholders across the region are key partners in the delivery of on-ground outcomes for threatened species and wetland conservation projects. Landcare groups also remain critical for reaching rural community members and as delivery partners for planting days and other events.
- The TEER Program has brought together a range of local stakeholders and experts to develop a Freshwater Report Card. The report card provides a snapshot of freshwater ecosystem condition and the health of rivers and creeks that flow into the kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. It aims to educate the community about environmental and ecological factors that may affect freshwater condition and has been produced using four years of data provided by TEER Program partners, collected as part of routine sampling programs.
- The Tasmanian Government's $5 million Weeds Action Fund is coordinated by NRM North and delivered statewide in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRET), Cradle Coast NRM and NRM South. Through multi-year grant opportunities, the Weeds Action Fund has facilitated 40 partnerships with over 650 participants including individual landholders, local governments, agricultural productivity groups and private enterprise to manage priority weeds in Tasmania.
- Working with peak agricultural bodies (TFGA and DairyTas) and three of the region's local councils, NRM North is implementing key programs to reduce diffuse sources of pathogens in the upper kanamaluka / Tamar estuary. This investment assists grazing landholders to fence stock out of waterways and dairy farmers to fence cattle out of waterways and improve dairy effluent management. Over the past 12 months the programs have added to the cumulative total to:
    - exclude 253,000 sheep, 19,800 cattle and 7,500 dairy cows from waterways
    - complete 2,667 hectares of dairy effluent improvements
    - protect nearly 2,200 hectares of streamside riparian area.
- The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, Tasmanian Land Conservancy, University of Tasmania, and independent experts provide invaluable technical support and advice for monitoring and decision making.
- With funding from the Australian Government, NRM North has partnered with Cradle Coast NRM and NRM South through the Soil Extension Program to promote the importance of soil health and improve the adoption of soil testing in Tasmania, working to engage stakeholders to elicit industry input into the program, and to build a context for soil management and extension activities.

Sustainable Organisational Funding Model

NRM North has a viable and sustainable 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 2019/20 to 2024/25, NRM North has been able to nearly triple program funding compared to the previous 5-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 works:

- execution of the Waste and Resource Recovery Board's $790,000 investment in the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Program (2023 – 2025)
- execution of a further 12 months of funding for the Tasmanian Soil Extension Program through the Tasmanian Farm Innovation Hub.

Operations & 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 2022/23 NRM North received $466,000 in 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 *Natural resource Management Act 2002 (Amendments 2018)*. The Australian Government's Regional Land Partnerships also provides operational funding as a percentage of funding received. Operational funding is enough to provide baseline support to the organisation but does not provide funding for project delivery. Staff must source additional funding to deliver outcomes against the NRM North Strategic Plan.

In December 2022, the Australian Government released an Approach to Market for a Panel of Regional Delivery Partners for Environmental Protection, Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management. NRM North submitted a tender in March 2023 to be a Regional Delivery Partner to the Australian Government, which, if successful, would build on the previous five years of on-ground project delivery for protection of threatened species and communities, and adoption of sustainable agriculture practices.

Personnel

Throughout 2022/23, 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 terms and conditions determined by NRM North in compliance with the *Fair Work Act 2009* and National Employment Standards.

Dealing with Infectious Disease in the Workplace

In response to changes to government regulations regarding management of COVID-19 in the workplace, the NRM North Management Committee, in December 2022, adopted a commitment statement to dealing with infectious diseases in the workplace.

Commitment Statement

To minimise the risk of infectious diseases in the workplace, the organisation will:

- undertake regular risk assessments and implement controls
- continue to assess the health and safety risk in the workplace on a regular basis or as circumstances change
- stay informed about infectious disease risks and be aware of Public Health recommendations that may apply to the workplace
- keep workers informed about the level of risk and ways to protect themselves and others from infectious disease
- display infectious disease safety information throughout the workplace
- ensure workers are adequately supervised and supported to comply with infectious disease control precautions in the workplace
- have a plan to manage people onsite who become unwell and are exhibiting symptoms of an infectious disease
- be aware of workers with acute flu-like or respiratory symptoms including coughs or sore throat, fatigue, and signs of fever whilst in the workplace
- provide effective ventilation for indoor settings
- facilitate and encourage effective and regular hygiene practices within the workplace
- maintain business continuity plans that cover the risks of infectious disease and higher than normal workers' absences
- ensure staff are aware of any personal leave entitlements if affected by an infectious disease
- consider flexible working arrangements for staff affected by an infectious disease, so far as practicable. Each request for a flexible working arrangement will be assessed on a case-by-case basis
- regularly communicate any changes to operational rules or procedures relating to the mitigation of infectious disease in the workplace to all staff.

NRM North's policies and procedures continue to be monitored and adapted in accordance with public health recommendations and guidelines.

NRM North Staff

as at 30 June 2023

Position	Incumbent	Commencement date
Acting Chief Executive Officer	Jo-Anne Fearman	25 March 2019
Corporate Services Manager	Jenni Kew	31 March 2020
Operations Manager – Biodiversity & Strategy	Andrew Baldwin	7 March 2007
Operations Manager – Land & Sustainability	Ben Slingsby	1 July 2021
Operations Manager – Water	Vacant	
Governance Manager/Executive Assistant	Josie Grace	22 November 2021
Finance Coordinator	Sarah Presnell	10 May 2010
Administration Coordinator	St John Pound	19 January 2022
Administration Assistant	Katie Bain	2 November 2021
Communications Manager	Ashleigh Walker	11 June 2019
Communications Coordinator	Biba Archer	18 June 2018
Communications Coordinator	Juan Noriega	1 May 2023
Biodiversity Program Manager	Kate Thorn	6 August 2012
Biodiversity Coordinator	Stephen Izzard	5 October 2020
Biodiversity Coordinator	Kym Blechynden	3 October 2022
Biodiversity Coordinator	Nikita Sarangdhar	1 May 2023
Cat Management Coordinator	Jessica Taylor	11 April 2022
TEER Program Manager	Darren McPhee	26 October 2020
TEER Scientific & Technical Coordinator	Sam Jack	10 February 2020
TEER Project Officer	Emma Ferguson	17 May 2021
Water Program Manager	Jesse Webster	17 November 2014
Catchment Coordinator	Andrew Easton	18 October 2021
Catchment Coordinator	Stacey Hataier	17 November 2022
Catchment Coordinator	Katie Fuller	5 December 2022
Land Program Manager	Stuart King	23 January 2023
Soil Extension Coordinator	Tahlia Kinrade	8 November 2021
Agriculture Officer	Peter Heading	30 June 2021
Regional Agriculture Landcare Facilitator / Agriculture Officer	Bonnie Nesbitt	30 January 2023
Weeds Action Fund Coordinator	John White	17 October 2022

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
- flexible workplace arrangements
- cultural awareness and sensitivity training
- Employee Assistance Program
- annual NRM North staff performance appraisal
- implementation of WHS Committee.

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)* (the Act). Reporting, accountability, and other rules for operation are set out in the *Tasmanian Incorporated Associations Act 1964*.

Functions of NRM North Management Committee

The general functions and powers of the NRM North Management Committee as determined by the Act are to:

- identify priorities for NRM in the northern region
- prepare a regional strategy for the northern region
- facilitate implementation of the regional strategy
- facilitate planning and integration of NRM activities for the region
- seek, manage, and allocate funds according to the regional strategy
- promote NRM principles
- coordinate the northern region's participation in national and state programs relating to NRM
- monitor and evaluate implementation of the northern regional strategy
- develop and implement processes to ensure appropriate education and training in NRM.

Responsible Minister, the Hon. Jo Palmer MLC

Under Section 9 of the Act, 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. The NRM North Management Committee is responsible to the Minister for Primary Industries and Water for its accountabilities under the Act. The Hon. Jo Palmer (appointed as Minister for Primary Industries and Water 12 April 2022) oversees the Natural Resource Management Portfolio. Section 11(4) of the Act stipulates that the Minister must table NRM North's Annual Report in Parliament.

Engagement with other Ministerial portfolios

In addition to statutory accountabilities to the Minister for Primary Industries and Water, NRM North delivers programs with links to the Environment and State Development portfolios. During 2022/23, programs relating to portfolios included:

Program / project	Ministerial Portfolio during FY 2022/23
Tamar Estuary River Health Action Plan Catchment Works Program	**Hon. Guy Barnett MP** Minister for State Growth **Hon. Nick Duigan MLC** Parliamentary Secretary for the Tamar Estuary
Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program	**Hon. Roger Jaensch MP** Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Management Committee

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 areas of compliance and performance.

Composition of the Management Committee

Section 9 (3) of the Act requires that the composition of the NRM North Management Committee must consist of no more than 15 members who together have skills across best-practice governance, business administration, legal and contractual issues, and the achievement of natural resource management and conservation outcomes.

Management Committee meetings

The Management Committee meets for a minimum of six (6) 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.

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 is 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.

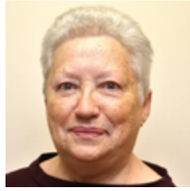
Remuneration of Management Committee members

Members may claim sitting fees for attendance and participation in all formal activities, such as Management Committee meetings, subcommittee meetings and working group tasks. NRM North meetings also include meetings that a Management Committee member has been delegated to attend on behalf of NRM North.

Eligible members may also claim reimbursement for reasonable travel and other expenses associated with formal meetings and activities. In accordance with the Constitution, sitting fees are to be set at each year's Annual General Meeting.

NRM North Management Committee Members

as at June 30 2023



Pamela Allan (Chair)
Launceston
Appointed to Management Committee: September 2019
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees
Chair/Member: Management Committee
Member: Governance & Policy Subcommittee
Member: Audit & Finance Subcommittee
Chair: CEO Review Subcommittee
Chair : CEO Recruitment Subcommittee

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held
Management Committee meetings: 6/6
Governance & Policy Subcommittee meetings: 3/4
CEO Review Subcommittee: 2/2
CEO Recruitment Subcommittee meetings: 1/1
Audit & Finance Subcommittee meetings: 3/5
AGM: 1/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 16

Allowances & Payments
Sitting Fees: $7,394.20
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $7,394.20

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups
Member: Future of Local Government Review Panel
Chair: Waste and Resource Recovery Board
Chair: Forest Practices Board
Commissioner: Tasmanian Planning Commission
Independent Chair: Industry Advisory Board Tas Farm Innovation Hub
Member: Launceston Historical Society

Qualifications/Recognition
Adjunct Professor, School of Geography, Planning and Spatial Sciences, UTAS
Bachelor of Arts (Hons.), Dip. Ed University of Sydney

Royce Aldred (Deputy Chair)
Launceston
Senior Environmental Consultant, Environmental Service & Design Pty Ltd
Reappointed to Management Committee: September 2020
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees
Deputy Chair/Member: Management Committee
Member: Audit & Finance Subcommittee
Member: CEO Recruitment Subcommittee
Participated in CEO Review Subcommittee meetings

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held
Management Committee meetings: 5/6
Audit & Finance Subcommittee meetings: 4/5
CEO Review Subcommittee meetings: 2/2
CEO Recruitment Meetings: 1/1
AGM: 1/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 13

Allowances & Payments
Sitting Fees: $1309.00
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $1309.00

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups
Lead Auditor: Exemplar Global

Qualifications/Recognition
Bachelor of Technology (Environment) UTAS
Graduate: Australian Institute of Company Directors

Tania Triffitt (Treasurer)
Launceston
Head of Accounting, JMC Group of Companies
Director Triffitt Accounting Pty Ltd
Appointed to Management Committee: September 2022
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees
Treasurer/Member: Management Committee
Chair: Audit & Finance Subcommittee
Member: CEO Recruitment Subcommittee

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held
Management Committee meetings: 3/6
Audit & Finance Subcommittee meetings: 4/5
CEO Recruitment Subcommittee meetings: 1/1
AGM: 0/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 8

Allowances & Payments
Sitting Fees: $1134.80
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $1134.80

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups
Chair: Just Cats

Qualifications/Recognition
MBA, Charles Sturt University
Chartered Accountant, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand
Registered Tax Agent, Tax Agents Board
Bachelor of Business Majoring in Accounting, UTAS

Amanda Shepherd (Secretary)
Launceston
General Manager, Theatre North
Reappointed to Management Committee: September 2020
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees
Secretary/Member: Management Committee
Member: Audit & Finance Subcommittee
Member: Governance & Policy Subcommittee (to Oct 2022)

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held
Management Committee meetings: 6/6
Audit & Finance Subcommittee meetings: 2/5
Governance & Policy Subcommittee meetings: 1/4
AGM: 1/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 10

Allowances & Payments
Sitting Fees: $1128.80
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $1128.20

Qualifications/Recognition
Graduate: Australian Institute of Company Directors

Dr Joanna Ellison
Legana
Associate Professor - School of Geography, Planning & Spatial Sciences, UTAS
Reappointed to Management Committee: September 2020
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees
Member: Management Committee
Member: CEO Review Subcommittee
Member: CEO Recruitment Subcommittee

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held
Management Committee meetings: 6/6
CEO Review Subcommittee meetings: 2/2
CEO Recruitment Subcommittee meetings: 1/1
AGM: 1/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 10

Allowances & Payments
Sitting Fees: $870.40
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $870.40

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups
Member: Tamar NRM Reference Group
Subject Editor Wetlands Ecology and Management
Member: Lilydale Pony Club
Life Member: International Society for Mangrove Ecosystems
Member: Cradle Coast NRM Rice Grass Reference Group

Qualifications/Recognition
PhD, UCal Berkeley
MSc, Simon Fraser University
MA, Cambridge University

Stuart Blom
Launceston
Director Rae & Partners Lawyers
Reappointed to Management Committee: September 2020
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees
Member: Management Committee
Chair: Governance & Policy Subcommittee

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held
Management Committee meetings: 4/6
Governance & Policy Subcommittee meetings: 4/4
AGM: 1/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 9

Allowances & Payments
Sitting Fees: $1122.80
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $1122.80

Qualifications/Recognition
Graduate and member: Australian Institute of Company Directors
Bachelor of Laws, UTAS
Bachelor of Economics, UTAS
Barrister and Solicitor, Law Society of Tasmania

Peter Sattler
Bridport
Farmer, Beef cattle & potatoes
Reappointed to Management Committee: September 2019
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees
Member: Management Committee
Member: Recognition Subcommittee
Member: CEO Review Subcommittee

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held
Management Committee meetings: 6/6
Recognition Subcommittee meetings: 3/4
CEO Review Subcommittee meetings: 2/2
AGM: 1/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 12

Allowances & Payments
Sitting Fees: $1,281.80
Kilometres: $386.13
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $1667.93

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups
Member: Bridport Lions Club
Member: Great Forester Catchment Management Consultative Group
Member: Scottsdale Irrigation Scheme Committee

Louise Clark
Launceston
Community Relations Specialist, Bell Bay Aluminium
Reappointed to Management Committee: September 2021
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees
Member: Management Committee
Member: Governance & Policy Subcommittee

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held
Management Committee meetings: 2/6
Governance & Policy Subcommittee meetings: 2/4
AGM: 0/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 4

Allowances & Payments
Sitting Fees: Nil claimed
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: Nil claimed

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups
Member: QVMAG Advisory Board
Member: Tasmanian Women's Council

Qualifications/Recognition
Graduate: Tasmanian Leaders Program 2009
Bachelor of Laws, UTAS

Leanne Sherriff

Cressy
Sustainability Consultant (self-employed)
W. Scott-Young and Sons (employed part-time on family farm)
Reappointed to Management Committee: September 2021
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees

Member: Management Committee
Chair: Recognition Subcommittee
Member: Audit & Finance Subcommittee (to October 2022)

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held

Management Committee meetings: 3/6
Recognition Subcommittee meetings: 4/4
Audit & Finance Subcommittee meetings: 1/5
AGM: 1/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 9

Allowances & Payments

Sitting Fees: $686.80
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $686.80

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups

Member: Ag Sustainability Council, TFGA
Member: Organising Committee, Australasian Pacific Extension Network Conference 2023
Member: Meat Council, TFGA
Member: Threatened Species Community Review Committee, DPIPWE
Member: Tasmanian Meat Industry Steering Committee

Qualifications/Recognition

Graduate: Tasmanian Leaders Program 2013
Graduate Diploma Sustainable Agriculture, University of Sydney
Bachelor of Science (Hons.), UTAS

Cassandre Tickner-Smith

Launceston
Environment Coordinator, Tasmanian Irrigation
Appointed to Management Committee: September 2021
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees

Member: Management Committee
Member: Governance & Policy Subcommittee

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held

Management Committee meetings: 6/6
Governance & Policy Subcommittee meetings: 4/4
AGM: 1/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 11

Allowances & Payments

Sitting Fees: $1213.80
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $1213.80

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups

Member: Australian Water Association (TAS Branch) Committee
Vice President: SwingMania
Environmental Management Systems Auditor: Exemplar Global

Qualifications/Recognition

Bachelor of Environmental Science/Bachelor of Biological Sciences, LaTrobe University

Justine Brooks

Rosevears
Manager – Specialist Homelessness Program, Department Homes Tasmania
Appointed to Management Committee: September 2022
Associated Member Status: Group B
Committee Term: 4 years

Appointments to internal Committees

Member: Management Committee
Member: Governance & Policy Subcommittee

No. of NRM North Meetings Attended/Held

Management Committee meetings: 2/6
Governance & Policy Subcommittee meetings: 3/4
AGM: 0/1
Total No. of Meetings Attended: 5

Allowances & Payments

Sitting Fees: $598.40
Kilometres: $0
Reimbursement: $0
Total: $598.40

Appointments to external Committees/Boards/Groups

Non-Executive Director and Company Secretary: Independent Living Centre, Tasmania

Qualifications/Recognition

Master of Environmental Planning, UTAS
Master of Business Administration (Leadership), CQU
Graduate: Tasmanian Leaders Program 2017

Honni Pitt

Launceston

Honni Pitt was an Independent Member of the NRM North Audit & Finance Subcommittee for the period July 2022 to May 2023. Honni resigned from the position in May 2023.

During the 2022/23 period, Honni attended one Audit & Finance Subcommittee meeting.

Honni was paid $88.40 in sitting fees.

Michael Walsh

Launceston

Michael Walsh resigned from his position on the NRM North Management Committee on 28 September 2022.

Michael was Treasurer and Chair of the NRM North Audit & Finance Subcommittee for the period July 2022 to September 2022.

During the 2022/23 period, Michael attended one Management Committee meeting, one Audit & Finance Subcommittee meeting and the 2022 AGM.

Michael was paid $150.00 in sitting fees.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees are established by the Management Committee 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 five subcommittees operated in 2022/23 to assist the Management Committee to fulfil its functions effectively.

Governance & Policy Subcommittee

Members: Stuart Blom (Chair), Pamela Allan, Cassandre Tickner-Smith, Justine Brooks, Louise Clark, and Amanda Shepherd (to October 2022).

The Governance & 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.

Audit & Finance Subcommittee

Members: Tania Triffitt (Chair), Pamela Allan, Royce Aldred, Amanda Shepherd, Leanne Sherriff (to October 2022) and Honni Pitt (Independent Member June 2022 to May 2023).

The Audit & 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.

CEO Performance Review Subcommittee

Members: Pamela Allan (Chair), Joanna Ellison, Peter Sattler, and Royce Aldred (to October 2022).

The primary responsibility of the CEO Performance Review Subcommittee 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.

CEO Recruitment Subcommittee

Members: Pamela Allan, Joanna Ellison, Tania Triffit and Royce Aldred.

The CEO Recruitment Subcommittee was appointed at the May 2023 Management Committee meeting and was responsible for the CEO recruitment process.

Recognition Subcommittee

Members: Leanne Sherriff (Chair), Peter Sattler and Joanne Fearman (Acting Chief Executive Officer).

The Recognition Subcommittee was established to develop and implement an annual program formally recognising individuals who have made a significant contribution to the Association, Management Committee, or operations of NRM North. The subcommittee assesses nominations received against the individual award category criteria for formal endorsement by the Management Committee.

NRM North Recognition Awards

The NRM North Management Committee Recognition Awards were introduced in October 2021. The awards formally recognise individuals who have provided service to NRM North or made an outstanding contribution to the Association, Management Committee, or operations of NRM North.

Outstanding Contribution Awards

The Outstanding Contribution Awards recognise an outstanding contribution to the organisation in the area of leadership, governance, or operational services.

One candidate has been selected for recognition at the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

Mrs Rosanna Coombes

Outstanding Contribution to Leadership, Governance & Operational Services (Combined Award)

Rosanna was appointed to the role of Chief Executive Officer of NRM North in 2016 and resigned in 2022.

During her time with NRM North, Rosanna focused on enhancing the reputation of the organisation and developing new relationships whilst strengthening existing relationships with regional stakeholders.

Maintaining and strengthening the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program governance and developing strong and effective engagement with the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (TEMT) was a priority for Rosanna, which led to NRM North being highly respected among stakeholders.

During her time as CEO, Rosanna also improved the organisation's sustainability by diversifying income streams and implementing financial management strategies to secure reserve funding and retain staff.

One of Rosanna's many strengths was strategic thinking. She took the organisation forward by understanding the external environment and maintaining awareness of emerging trends and opportunities to inform strategic planning. In particular, the 'Strategy to Action' process resulted in NRM North being successfully awarded the RLP tender on first offer in 2018.

As CEO, Rosanna led by example and motivated staff to deliver results of a high standard throughout the organisation and beyond the requirements of compliance.

Length of Service Awards

The Length of Service Awards recognise existing staff and Management Committee members for their dedicated service to the organisation.

The Management Committee will recognise four recipients at the 2023 Annual General Meeting.

The Length of Service Award recognition cycle is 10 years, 15 years, and 20 years of service.

Joanna Ellison (20 years of service)

NRM North Management Committee member

Joanna will be acknowledged for her contribution to the organisation receiving an award in recognition of her 20 years of service.

Joanna was recognised in 2022 with two awards in acknowledgement of her 10 and 15 years of service. Joanna joined NRM North in 2003.

Stuart Blom (10 years of service)

NRM North Management Committee member

Stuart will be acknowledged for his contribution to the organisation receiving an award in recognition of his 10 years of service. Stuart joined NRM North in 2012.

Amanda Shepherd (10 years of service)

NRM North Management Committee member

Amanda will be acknowledged for her contribution to the organisation receiving an award in recognition of her 10 years of service. Amanda joined NRM North in 2012.

Kate Thorn (10 years of service)

Biodiversity Program Manager, NRM North

Kate will be recognised for her contribution to the organisation receiving an award acknowledging her 10 years of service. Kate joined NRM North in 2012.

Summary Financial Statements

In Summary

The summary financial statements are an extract from the full financial statements of NRM North for the year ended 30 June 2023.

The summary financial statements and specific disclosures included in it have been derived from the full financial statements.

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 full financial statements.

Further financial information can be obtained from the full financial statements, which 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 2023.

	Note	2023 $	2022 $
Revenue			
Funding revenue	2	**8,039,190**	4,940,380
Interest received		**103,133**	16,032
Other income		**6,620**	6,096
		8,148,943	4,962,508
Expenses			
Employee benefits expense		**2,368,964**	2,162,631
Contract services		**3,436,741**	1,805,582
Project materials		**273,685**	285,438
Professional services		**240,092**	140,405
Communications and information technology		**118,070**	81,928
Depreciation		**153,966**	140,663
Travelling and motor vehicle		**70,198**	49,340
Other operating expenses		**224,682**	172,995
		6,886,398	4,838,982
Net surplus/(deficit)		**1,262,545**	123,526
Other comprehensive income		**-**	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		**1,262,545**	123,526

Statement of Financial Position

For the year ended 30 June 2023.

	2023 $	2022 $
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	**7,302,816**	4,919,544
Trade and other receivables	**1,240,976**	857,471
Prepayments	**60,668**	56,500
Total current assets	**8,604,460**	5,833,515
Non current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	**180,395**	113,219
Total non current assets	**180,395**	113,219
Total assets	**8,784,855**	5,946,734
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	**1,321,370**	258,458
Unexpended funding	**4,275,682**	3,815,006
Other deferred income	**25,166**	24,063
Provisions	**153,999**	159,335
Lease liabilities	**96,404**	101,960
Total current liabilities	**5,872,621**	4,358,822
Non current liabilities		
Provisions	**55,236**	48,052
Lease liabilities	**54,593**	-
	109,829	48,052
	5,982,450	4,406,874
Net Assets	**2,802,405**	1,539,860
Equity		
Reserves	**1,958,814**	1,649,592
Retained earnings	**843,591**	(109,732)
Total equity	**2,802,405**	1,539,860

Statement of Changes in Equity

For the year ended 30 June 2023.

	Operating Reserve $	Retained Earnings $	Capital Reserve $	Contingency Reserve $	Committed Projects Reserve $	Total $
Balance at 1 July 2022	**915,700**	**(109,732)**	**75,000**	**350,000**	**308,892**	**1,539,860**
Total comprehensive income	**-**	**1,262,545**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1,262,545**
Transfers to and from reserves	**-**	**(309,222)**	**-**	**387,000**	**(77,778)**	**-**
Balance at 30 June 2023	**915,700**	**843,591**	**75,000**	**737,000**	**231,114**	**2,802,405**
Balance at 1 July 2021	915,700	(286,081)	75,000	350,000	361,715	1,416,334
Total comprehensive income	-	123,526	-	-	-	123,526
Transfers to and from reserves	-	52,823	-	-	(52,823)	-
Balance at 30 June 2022	915,700	(109,732)	75,000	350,000	308,892	1,539,860

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year ended 30 June 2023.

	2023 $	2022 $
Cash from operating activities		
Receipts from Government and corporate partners	**9,056,265**	6,461,203
Contract payments	**(3,058,370)**	(2,305,889)
Payments to employees	**(2,299,932)**	(2,154,715)
Payments to suppliers	**(728,345)**	(537,316)
Other income	**6,620**	6,096
Interest received	**103,133**	16,032
GST refunded/(remitted)	**(523,993)**	(318,018)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	**2,555,378**	1,167,393
Cash flows from investing activities		
Acquisition of plant and equipment	**(16,488)**	(13,010)
Net cash used by investing activities	**(16,488)**	(13,010)
Cash flows from financing activities		
Payment of lease liabilities	**(155,617)**	(127,227)
Net cash used by financing activities	**(155,617)**	(127,227)
Net cash increase (decreases) in cash and cash equivalents	**2,383,273**	1,027,156
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year	**4,919,543**	3,892,387
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	**7,302,816**	4,919,544

Notes to the Summary Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2023.

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 2023.

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*.

The financial statements, specific disclosures and other information included in the summarised financial report are derived from and consistent with the full financial report of the Association. The summarised financial report cannot be expected to provide as detailed an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the company as the full financial report. Further financial information can be obtained from the full financial report which is available, free of charge, on request to NRM North.

2. Funding Revenue

NRM North determines whether an enforceable agreement exists and whether the promises to transfer goods or services to the customer are 'sufficiently specific'. If an enforceable agreement exists and the promises are 'sufficiently specific' (to a transaction or part of a transaction), NRM North applies the general AASB15 principles to determine the appropriate revenue recognition. If these criteria are not met, NRM North applies AASB1058.

Government grants and corporate contributions are initially recorded as a liability and then subsequently recognised as revenue once specific performance obligations arising under the respective contracts have been met. Contract liabilities represent NRM North's obligation to transfer goods or services to a customer and are recognised when a customer pays consideration, or when NRM North recognises a receivable to reflect its unconditional right to consideration (whichever is earlier) before NRM North has transferred the goods or services to the customer.

2. Funding revenue

	Opening Balance $	Funding Received $	Revenue Recognised $	Closing Balance $
Commonwealth Government				
National Landcare Program Regional Land Partnership	1,312,396	2,456,555	(3,768,951)	-
Catchment Works	866,065	1,000,000	(823,212)	**1,042,853**
Small Farms Small Living	69,902	-	(33,614)	**36,288**
State Government				
Core funding	-	467,000	(467,000)	-
Catchment Works	949,652	1,000,000	(876,300)	**1,073,352**
Event Monitoring	-	172,000	(164,551)	**7,449**
Waste Management	-	1,595,486	(262,828)	**1,332,658**
State Government				
Regional Cat Co-ordination Program	89,272	120,000	(125,211)	**84,061**
Weeds Action Fund	47,115	314,459	(201,226)	**160,348**
Weeds Action Fund Devolved Grants	480,605	991,927	(967,971)	**504,561**
NRM South				
Farming Forecaster	-	51,600	(17,488)	**34,112**
Swan Galaxias	-	5,000	(5,000)	-
Other Revenue				
Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Partnership	-	325,838	(325,838)	-
	3,815,007	**8,499,865**	**(8,039,190)**	**4,275,682**

Management Committee Declaration

The management committee declare that in their opinion:

- as described in note 1, the summary financial statements are an extract from the full financial statements of NRM North for the year ended 30 June 2023;
- the financial statements and notes present fairly the financial position of NRM North at 30 June 2023, and its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- there are reasonable grounds to believe that NRM North is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Management Committee:

Chair

Pamela Allan
Dated: 4 September 2023

Treasurer

Tania Triffitt
Dated: 4 September 2023

Photo: Clive Lohrey

Synectic

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 2023, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial report of Northern Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Association Incorporated (NRM North) for the year ended 30 June 2023.

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 – Simplified Disclosures* and the *Natural Resource Management Act (Tasmania) 2002* and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. Reading the summary financial statements and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report and the auditor's report thereon.

The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial report in our report dated 4 September 2023.

Management Committee's Responsibility for the Summary Financial Statements

The Management Committee of NRM North is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial statements on the basis described in Note 1.

Auditor's Responsibility

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*.

Synectic Audit & Assurance Pty Ltd

Benjamin Coull
Director

Date: 6 September 2023

Synectic Audit & Assurance Pty Ltd
ABN 30 146 220 215 | Authorised Audit Company 385720
info@synecticgroup.com.au | www.synecticgroup.com.au
Postal P.O. Box 6003, Devonport TAS 7310 | *Phone* 03 6424 1451
49 Best St, Devonport | Suite B, First Floor, 99-103 George St, Launceston | Level 3, Shop 34, Trafalgar Building, 110 Collins St, Hobart