



# Media Release

Friday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012

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## **NRM North and students join forces to tackle stormwater pollution**

Natural resource management organisation, NRM North, and Star of the Sea College in George Town are working together to raise awareness of stormwater pollution.

NRM North staff will hit the streets of George Town with year 7 students and their teacher today to paint drain heads with the simple message 'Drains to the Tamar, when you litter the streets you litter the estuary.'

NRM North's Education Officer, Michael Black, said the purpose of the project was to raise awareness in the community that what we do on our streets, in backyards, and across the wider landscape has an impact on water quality in the rivers and estuaries downstream.

"Stormwater pollution has serious impacts on water quality and aquatic life. The most effective way to reduce stormwater pollution is to stop it entering the system in the first place," Mr Black said.

"Public awareness is crucial for this to happen, so getting the message out on the streets is a great way to raise the topic and increase awareness."

The message 'Drains to the Tamar, when you litter the streets you litter the estuary' was chosen to ensure that the wider community made the link between their behaviour on-land and water quality issues in their local waterways and the estuary.

Year 7 teacher, Cassie O'Neill-King, has been involved in the project from the outset.

"This has been an excellent opportunity for my students to do something practical about water conservation," Mrs O'Neill-King said.

"They've been researching water use and water wastage in our school, homes, community, and region for quite awhile and have come up with some innovative and creative ways to both save water and protect water habitats.

"It'll be empowering for them to see results from something they've put in place, rather than just brainstorming."

NRM North's Chief Executive Officer, James McKee, said the organisation was pleased to be able to support local schools to take action on the ground.

"Encouraging school students to think about the natural environment and our reliance on it is a crucial step towards sustainable resource use in the future.

"Projects like this can make a big difference and it is fantastic northern Tasmania has so many school students who are passionate about doing something positive for the environment," Mr McKee said.

The drain stencilling kits were developed by NRM North in conjunction with the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program.

It is planned to roll out the drain stencilling program to other schools in the northern region later in the year.

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**Photo / Interview opportunity:** NRM North's Education Officer, Michael Black, and Star of the Sea students and teacher, Cassie O'Neill-King, will be stenciling stormwater drains in Macquarie Street, George Town, from 11:30am to 1pm today.

**For more information contact:**

Michael Black, NRM North Education Officer 0458 666 609

Cassie O'Neill-King, Star of the Sea College, 0407 810 420

Melissa Lewarn, Manager – Community Engagement & Communications, NRM North, 0427 354 058