

# River Health Action Plan - Tamar Action Grants

## FUNDING APPLICATION GUIDELINES



City of  
**LAUNCESTON**



**Australian Government**



**Tasmanian  
Government**



This project is supported with funding provided by the Australian and Tasmanian Governments through the Launceston City Deal and the Australian Government Tamar Estuary River Health Grant.

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## 1 Background

The Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (the Taskforce) was established under the Launceston City Deal with an aim of identifying investments to improve the health of the Tamar Estuary. As part of this work, the Taskforce was charged with delivering a River Health Action Plan (RHAP) by the end of 2017.

The RHAP identified a series of influences for the Tamar Estuary not meeting modern expectations of health and amenity. The influences include the City's combined sewerage and stormwater system, the inability of the Estuary to flush sediment due to marine tides meeting freshwater river flows, agricultural practices in the catchment, historical industrial practices, outflows from multiple waste water treatment plants, floods and man-made changes to the flow and channels of the Estuary.

Dairying, grazing and urban areas were identified as the three largest landuse contributors to pathogen loads in the greater Estuary catchment, and as major controllable sources of nutrient and sediment loads. Large benefits were determined available from limiting stock access to streams to minimise input of faecal matter, while improved effluent management practices in dairying, and the implementation of riparian zones on grazing properties were also assessed to have good potential for pollutant load reduction.

## 2 What is the purpose of the River Health Action Plan?

The plan aims to improve public health measures related to water quality in Zone 1 (Launceston to Legana) by reducing pathogens entering the system through changes in land use practices in the catchment and from reducing combined sewer overflows. The Tamar Action Grants provide funding to assist land owners grazing stock or running dairy cows within the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers catchments to undertake works that will help reduce pathogen loads entering the Estuary.

Modelling of the effect of pollutants from the different subcatchments, stream flow times and distance from Zone 1 of the Estuary, has been used to establish priority areas (Figure 1 and Table 1). Figure 1 identifies the North Esk catchment and Zone 1 of the Tamar Estuary as the highest priority area. Priority area two incorporates the lower catchments of the Meander, Brumby's-Lake, Macquarie and South Esk as areas to have the most influence over pathogen concentrations in the upper Tamar Estuary. However, all landholders within the greater Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers catchments are eligible to apply for funding.

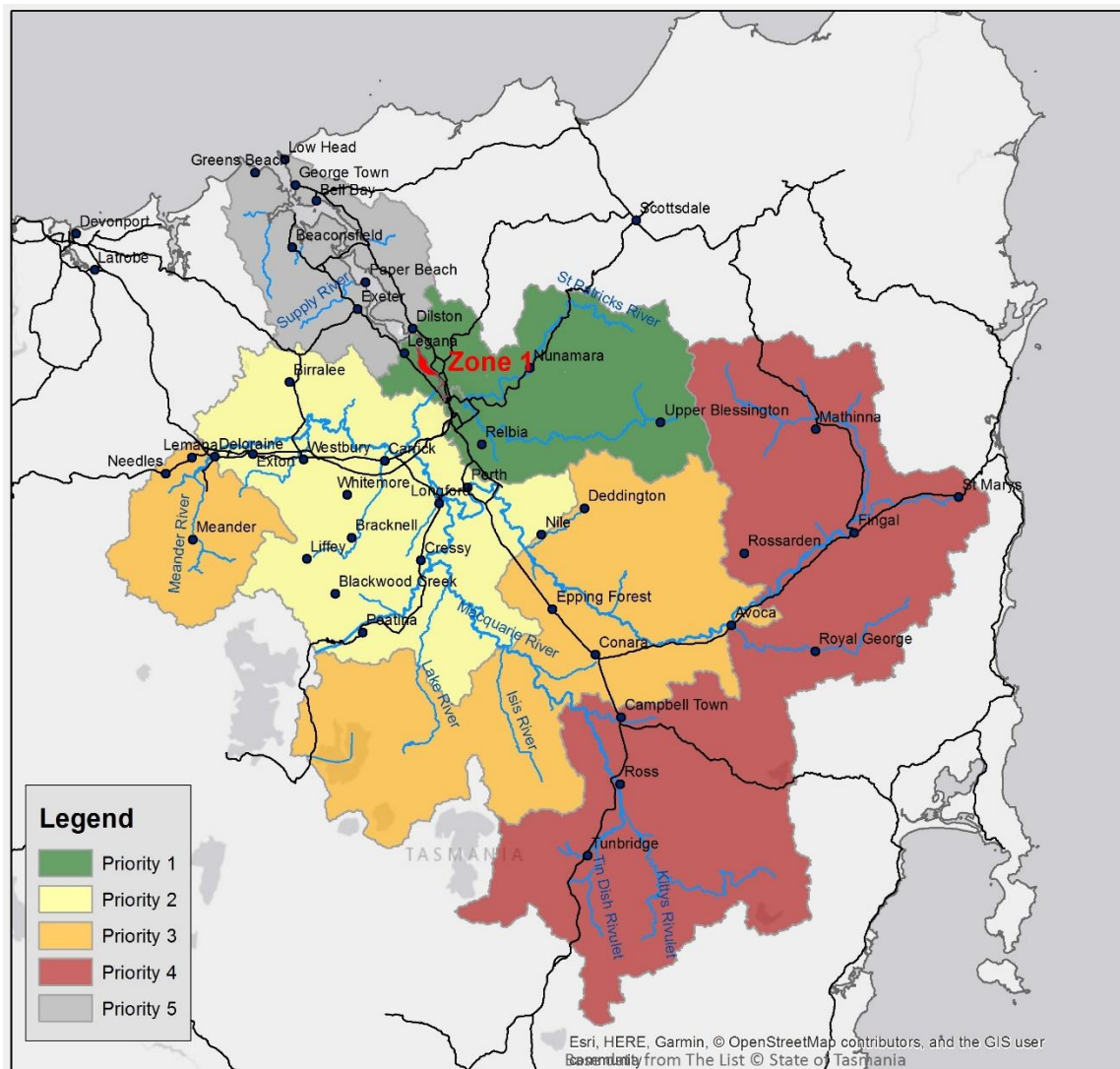


Figure 1. Priority areas in the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers catchments

Table 1. Description of catchment priority areas

Priority	General description	Detail
1	North Esk and Upper Tamar Catchments	All North Esk Upper Tamar foreshore catchment to Legana
2	Above Trevallyn dam extending to approx. 80km above the dam wall by river	Meander River to Deloraine Liffey River South Esk River to below Nile River confluence Brumbys Creek Lake River (agricultural areas) Macquarie River to the confluence with the Isis River
3	Mid to Upper catchment areas above the dam extending approximately 80-130km from dam wall	Meander River above Deloraine South Esk River from Nile River confluence to upstream of Avoca Macquarie River from confluence Isis River to downstream of confluence with Elizabeth River
4	The upper South Esk and Macquarie catchments	South Esk River above Avoca Macquarie River above Elizabeth River confluence
5	Mid and Lower Tamar foreshore catchment	Tamar foreshore catchment below Legana

### 3 Applications and evaluation

The application period will be open from April 2019 until June 2023. Eligible applications will be assessed using a benefit cost ratio from data collected during the application process. Any unsuccessful applications can be modified and resubmitted in a future evaluation round throughout the life of the program. Assessment round dates can be found on the NRM North website at: <https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/tamar-action-grants/>

### 4 Who can apply for works?

**Funding is available for landholders in the Tamar Estuary, Brumbys-lake, Meander, Macquarie and Esk Rivers Catchments, see Figure 1.**

**Applicants must be:**

- Individual landowners or landowner groups; or
- Companies, Partnerships or Trusts who are landowners or partner investors in the project

**To be eligible for funding, applicants must have stock on the property where the works are proposed.**

### 5 How much money is available?

There is no specified funding cap on individual project proposals. However, the overall program has limited funds, and nominations will be assessed and prioritised competitively using a benefit cost ratio. Not every application that meets the eligibility criteria will necessarily receive funding.

Projects can be staged over several years until the end of the program to develop better long-term outcomes (e.g. starting a project by fencing out stock and managing the weeds in the first 12 months, then revegetating in following years). In-kind contributions may be made in the form of cash, materials or labour. Projects which demonstrate a higher level of in-kind contribution will generate a better benefit cost ratio and therefore, have a greater likelihood of approval.

Offered funds will be exclusive of GST. If the applicant has an ABN and is registered for GST, the funding amount will be increased by 10%.

### 6 Proposal Development and Technical Support

A Catchment Coordinator will be available to provide advice through group workshops and individual one-on-one sessions.

It is the applicant's responsibility to seek quotes for goods and services, including contractors to estimate the costs of works proposed.

**It is the applicant's responsibility to seek any regulatory approvals for works should their project be approved for funding. This includes contacting local government in relation to any proposed works.**

There is an expectation that all revegetation works should achieve a 70% survival rate after the first year. Some infill planting maybe required to achieve this rate, which should be factored into a long-term maintenance plan and budget.

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure any works undertaken are not in breach of the Tasmanian **Aboriginal Relics Act 1975**. Please search the property address where proposed works are taking place using the online search tool <https://www.aboriginalheritage.tas.gov.au/propertysearch/> and submit the search record with the application.

If nominated works are on Crown Land it is the landholders responsibility to contact staff at **Crown Land Services** for advice on works via their General Enquiries Message Service on (03) 6169 9015 or by email at [cls.enquiries@dpipwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:cls.enquiries@dpipwe.tas.gov.au)

The **Working Near Waterways Guide: Understanding Your Legal Obligations** document can be found online at: <http://www.edotas.org.au/waterways/>. The guide is designed to help landholders work out what legal obligations may apply to proposed activities, how to meet those obligations, and where to find out more information.

**Working in Wetlands and Waterways Works Manual** provides environmental best practice guidelines for undertaking works in these sensitive areas. To download the manual go to: <https://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/conservation/flora-of-tasmania/tasmanias-wetlands/wetlands-waterways-works-manual>

## 7 What can the funding be used for?

The program is intended to provide funding for projects to reduce or remove stock access to waterways and improve effluent management practices in the TEER catchment.

Upgrades to dairy effluent systems will also be funded. Please see Appendix 1 for further details specific to effluent upgrades.

### **The funding is for actual financial expenditure incurred for activities such as:**

- The purchase of fencing materials to protect waterways
- Purchase of plants, stakes and guards for revegetation activities along waterways
- Herbicides for treatment of weeds along the river banks and adjoining areas
- Purchase of water troughs, poly pipe and fittings for stock water purposes
- Payment for labour/contractor for fencing, revegetation, weed management, and/or installation of water trough/s
- Purchase of materials directly related to the installation and/or upgrade of stock crossing/s
- Payment for labour/contractor for the installation and/or upgrade of stock crossing/s
- Other works and activities may be considered based on project merit and subject to technical advice and approvals.

### **The following are NOT eligible for funding:**

- The purchase of tools, machinery and/or fuel
- Purchase of crop or pasture seed
- Purchase of herbicide for crops and/or pasture
- Gravel for laneways
- Activities considered to have a purely commercial or private benefit or for fundraising
- Any general operating expenses - funding will not cover expenses such as electricity, lease/rent payments, telephone, wages, uniforms, etc. that are part of the ongoing expenses of the landowner

- Projects or activities which are the individual or group's legal responsibility to maintain, or which provide significant or purely private benefit
- Retrospective funding, i.e. projects commenced before the program opening date

The funding scheme will be reviewed over the life of the program and may be modified. Therefore, updated guidelines may be released.

## 8 What is information is used to calculate the Pathogen Reduction Score?

The amount of pathogen entering a stream from a grazing or dairy property is affected by a range of factors which are listed below;

- Type of livestock
- Number of stock
- Amount of manure defecated per animal in a day
- The concentration of pathogens in the faeces of the livestock type
- The amount of time each animal spends in and around the stream

The amount of pathogen which survives in the water to reach the estuary is influenced by several factors which are listed below;

- Distance of the property from the estuary
- Flow rate of the stream

Stock type and numbers are recorded in the application form and combined with the property location within the catchment to calculate the Pathogen Reduction Score. This score is used as the benefit component in a benefit cost analysis.

## 9 Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed and prioritised competitively using a benefit cost ratio, then evaluated by an independent assessment panel for site risk using the first four criteria below and incorporated into a final benefit cost ratio score. An environmental values score will also be calculated and used as a tool to prioritise projects.

**There are five evaluation criteria:**

### 1. Landholder Capacity

This is the ability of the applicant to demonstrate their capacity to deliver the proposed project, including previous experience delivering a similar size project/s.

### 2. Project Planning

The RHAP is a multi-year plan to improve public health by reducing pathogens from entering Zone 1 of the Tamar Estuary. Project applications must detail activities to support this outcome. Where appropriate, activities can be scheduled over a multi-year or staged implementation plan (e.g. site fencing and managing weeds in the year prior to revegetation, guarding of revegetation, and maintenance planning in the years after planting).

Applicants should describe the approach for the proposed works and have sought appropriate advice from contractors and/or services providers to identify best practice methods and provide accurate costing and timing.

Note: NRM North Catchment Coordinators are available to assist in the planning and preparation of the application.

### 3. Erosion Risk

Projects will be evaluated on existing or potential erosion issues, and the appropriateness of proposed mitigation actions (e.g. including: appropriate riparian buffer widths, revegetation to suit location to reduce erosion impacts, hard or soft engineering solutions instream supplementary to the project).

### 4. Flood Risk

Projects will be evaluated on potential flood related issues and the appropriateness of mitigation actions (e.g. appropriate riparian buffer widths, revegetation to suit location which will help reduce flood impacts, appropriate design and location of infrastructure i.e. fencing and water troughs).

### 5. Environmental Values

Proposals will be evaluated on their enhancement of environmental values of the waterway. This includes the connectivity of the riparian vegetation at a local and landscape level, improving stream health for aquatic fauna, improving water quality by reducing other pollutants from reaching the stream (e.g. nutrients, pesticides, herbicides & sediment), and improving the biodiversity and habitat conditions for native flora and fauna through revegetation.

Successful projects may be showcased to promote best practice approaches to river rehabilitation and stock exclusion.

## 10 How to apply?

Expression of Interest process:

1. **Register Interest** - Please call or email NRM North to register interest in the program on P:03 6333 7777 or E: [admin@nrmnorth.org.au](mailto:admin@nrmnorth.org.au)
2. **Development of proposal with a Catchment Coordinator** – After registering interest a Catchment Coordinator will be in contact to organise a meeting and site visit to assist in the preparation and submission of the project application form.
3. **Application Submittal** - the landholder submits application with signed declaration by email.

For more information go to <https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/tamar-action-grants/>

## 11 What happens after the application is submitted?

- An email confirming receipt of the application will be sent to the primary email address. If the confirmation email is not received within two business days, please contact NRM North directly.
- Applications will be reviewed by a Catchment Coordinator to check for appropriate attachments and regulatory compliance.
- Applications will be evaluated by an independent assessment panel and prioritised competitively, using a benefit cost ratio. Applicants will be advised on assessment panel meeting dates through the <https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/tamar-action-grants/> website.
- Applications will be ranked according to their cost benefit ratio, then assessed against the evaluation criteria which identifies risk related to the long-term success of each project.
- Successful applications may be funded in full or funded partially subject to condition(s) or modification(s) according to the assessment panel review.
- Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email within five business days after assessment.



- Successful applicants will be contacted by a Catchment Coordinator who will then negotiate a **Management Agreement**. The Management Agreement is a contract between the landowner and NRM North which stipulates the proposed works, budget and a timeframe for works to be completed, reporting milestones and signoff requirements.
- Successful applicants must provide a '**Certificate of Currency**' stating the type of insurance cover and expiry date for the property. **All landholders must have current and adequate insurance appropriate to the project funded.**
- Before commencing works, the landowner needs to review NRM North's *Statement of Expenditure* reporting requirements.

### **Financial arrangements**

The program is an incentive scheme, with landowners paying up front for goods and services then submitting an *NRM North Tax Invoice* and *Statement of Expenditure* to receive payment. Supporting evidence including a *Statutory Declaration* will also need to be submitted along with either site photos or a site visit from a Catchment Coordinator before payment is released.

All the required paper work for reimbursement can be obtained through a Catchment Coordinator.

Note: Completing the *Statement of Expenditure* document as the project works are completed maybe an easier way of tracking expenditure.

There is an expectation that all revegetation works should achieve a 70% survival rate after the first year. Some infill planting maybe required to achieve this rate and should be included in the maintenance plan and budget. If a 70% survival rate is not met, then on-going funding may be withheld. However, if all practical and reasonable measures have been taken to achieve a 70% survival rate and unavoidable or unpredictable weather conditions have influenced survival, ongoing funding will not be withheld.

Upon negotiation and under certain circumstances, NRM North may be able to pay for goods and services directly. However, this needs to be agreed upon by both parties and arranged prior to receiving an invoice.

Funds will be paid within 30 calendar days of receiving a valid invoice.

### **GST**

The Australian Taxation Office considers grant funded projects to be a taxable supply under the GST act. If the applicant is registered for GST, the grant amount will be increased by 10%. If the applicant is not registered for GST, no additional amount is payable beyond the amount awarded.

It is recommended that applicants seek professional advice on their tax obligations or contact the Australian Taxation Office on 13 24 78 or via their website on [www.ato.gov.au](http://www.ato.gov.au)

### **ABN**

If the applicant does not have an ABN or isn't registered for GST, then a *Statement by a Supplier* form will need to be submitted. This can be downloaded from the Australian Tax Office website: <https://www.ato.gov.au/forms/statement-by-a-supplier-not-quoting-an-abn/>

### **Insurance**

All landholders must have current and adequate insurance appropriate to the Project funded. The Landowner must provide a *Certificate of Currency* for the insurance and/or a warranty from the insurer that the policy extends to and will cover

potential liability arising under the proposed project. Applicants must have current and adequate insurance for the life of the proposed project.

It is the responsibility of the landholder to ensure that all contractors have appropriate insurance.

## 12 Who can provide assistance?

For assistance in developing a project plan and completing an application form please contact NRM North directly by phone on: 03 6333 777 or by email: [admin@nrmnorth.org.au](mailto:admin@nrmnorth.org.au)

### **For more information about the River Health Action Plan**

Visit the NRM North website <https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/river-health-action-plan-overview> or go to the Department of State Growth website [https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/infrastructure\\_tasmania/tamar\\_estuary\\_management\\_taskforce](https://www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au/infrastructure_tasmania/tamar_estuary_management_taskforce)

### **For more information on the Launceston City Deal**

Visit the City of Launceston website <https://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/Launceston-City-Deal>

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## Appendix 1 – Guidelines for Dairy Effluent Projects

In addition to the guidelines for *all* Tamar Action Grants provided in this document, the following guidelines are specific to dairy effluent projects.

### **The program will fund a range of improvements to dairy effluent systems including:**

- Improving capture of effluent from yards and laneways
- Increasing effluent storages
- Increasing effluent irrigation/reuse areas
- Improving management and spreading of effluent solids
- Technologies for improving monitoring and management of effluent systems
- Technologies and innovations which will provide opportunities to trial new approaches to effluent management in Tasmania, provided they are based on good science and deemed worthy of trialling by at least three accredited effluent designers
- Costs to engage an accredited effluent designer to assist with system design, if significant upgrades are planned and professional design advice is required

### **The program will not fund:**

- Soil testing for preparation of nutrient management plans
- Annual routine maintenance costs e.g. excavator to clean solids pond, slurry tanker for spreading costs, routine repairs and maintenance costs
- Farms currently issued with compliance notices by Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority, milk supply company, local Council or Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Farm development costs
- All other items listed as NOT eligible in Section 7 of this document

**It is expected that the farm effluent management plan will be updated to reflect the project works undertaken as part of the *Tamar Action Grant*. This will be the grantee's responsibility.**

If the project involves upgrades to a dairy effluent system AND if grantee is issued with a notice relating to effluent compliance by the Tasmanian Dairy Industry Authority (TDIA), grantee's milk supply company, local Council or the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at any point in the project time frame, the grantee must immediately contact NRM North to discuss the nature of the compliance notice and to determine any required revisions to the project outcomes, tasks and budgets. NRM North reserves the right to withdraw funding for effluent projects where compliance issues arise.

Contact details for effluent designers and information resources regarding effluent management in Tasmania (including a copy of the Effluent Code of Practice) is available at <https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/tamar-action-grants/>

Queries regarding dairy effluent projects should be directed to Rachel Brown, Dairy Tas Sustainable Dairying Adviser. Phone 0409 333 381.