

# EHAP



Tamar Estuary  
and Esk Rivers

## Ecosystem health assessment program

*The Tamar Estuary is one of the highest profile sites in Northern Tasmania. It is focal point for the City of Launceston and a commercial hub for industry groups, businesses, tourism operators and agricultural enterprises in northern Tasmania.*

*Approximately 15% of Tasmania drains into the Tamar Estuary and water quality issues such as sedimentation, high nutrient and bacteriological levels remain issues of community concern for reasons of public amenity, recreational use, aesthetics and the environment.*

### About EHAP

The TEER Ecosystem Health Assessment Program (EHAP) for the Tamar Estuary covers an area extending 70 kilometres from the Tamar yacht basin at the confluence of the North and South Esk Rivers to the mouth of the Tamar Estuary at Low Head. The EHAP is a joint partnership between fourteen monitoring partners including state and local government, industry groups and the community.

The EHAP operates on a four year cycle including two years of intensive monthly ambient monitoring of the Tamar Estuary, followed by two years off, when the data is analysed and priority areas are identified and targeted works programs are implemented to improve waterway health.

A Tamar Estuary report card and technical report are developed for each of the two years of the intensive monitoring program. These reports are available to download from the NRM North website

[www.nrmnorth.org.au](http://www.nrmnorth.org.au).

### EHAP Monitoring Partners

- NRM North
- Tasmanian Government
- Launceston City Council
- West Tamar Council
- George Town Council
- Meander Valley Council
- University of Tasmania
- Hydro Tasmania
- Ben Lomond Water
- BCD Resources
- BHP Billiton TEMCO
- Rio Tino Alcan
- Van Diemen Aquaculture
- Australian Maritime College

### Why Monitor?

It is important to monitor and understand the health of the Tamar Estuary so that natural resource managers can better evaluate the condition of our waterways and target investment and on-ground works to improve waterway health.

The Ecosystem Health Assessment Program (EHAP) will also enable managers to better evaluate the effectiveness of future activities undertaken to improve waterway health such as sewage treatment plant upgrades, stormwater controls, and wastewater treatment.

### What is Ecosystem Health?

Ecosystem health is determined by the response of the environment to natural and human inputs and is defined as the degree to which the actual state of an ecosystem diverges from an ideal state as defined in management objectives. A healthy estuarine and marine ecosystem will have the following characteristics: key processes operating to maintain stable and sustainable ecosystems, zones of human impacts that do not expand or deteriorate, and aquatic ecosystems (critical habitats) which remain intact. As these characteristics are complex and difficult to measure, there are more easily measured parameters that are used to infer ecological health which have been used in the EHAP. These parameters include water quality (nutrients, pH, chlorophyll a, metals), and recreational water quality (bacteriological counts).

