



Media Release

Wednesday, 19th June, 2013

TEER RELEASES FIRST FRESHWATER REPORT CARD FOR THE TAMAR CATCHMENT

A new report card launched today shows the river systems in the Tamar catchment are in relatively good condition.

The Tamar Catchment 2013 Freshwater Report Card is the first baseline report for the condition of freshwater ecosystems in the Tamar catchment released by NRM North's Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program.

It is an historic assessment of the catchment's health, based on data collected by the TEER partners over a ten year period – 2001 to 2011.

It uses an easy to understand grading system of A (very good) through to E (very poor) for six catchments: Tamar Estuary, North Esk, South Esk, Brumbys-Lake, Macquarie and Meander.

The main indicators were water quality, streamside zone vegetation and aquatic macroinvertebrates.

TEER Program Manager, Amanda Locatelli, said the report card provided the community and natural resource managers with access to reliable information related to the health of the Tamar catchment.

"The report card shows the health of the river systems in the higher altitude areas are in better condition than the lowland areas," Ms Locatelli said.

"This is largely the result of higher retention of streamside vegetation which leads to better aquatic life and water quality results.

"There is more industrial, agricultural and urban development in the lowland areas which has lead to more clearing of streamside vegetation and associated impacts on water quality."

The TEER Program has also released three report cards looking specifically into the health of the Tamar estuary and this latest report card will complement that work.

The new report card was launched today at the Tamar Yacht Club by the Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage, Brian Wightman.

Mr Wightman said that since the TEER Program was established by NRM North, the State Government, councils and other stakeholders, it had provided a wealth of information about the wider Tamar and Esk Rivers catchment area.

"The State Government has strongly supported the program over the past four years and is pleased to see a good foundation being set for ongoing monitoring and important onground works to improve the environmental health of the catchment.

"Initiatives like the report card make it easier for the community to get a quick snapshot of the health of the catchment and its rivers."

NRM North Chief Executive Officer, James McKee, said NRM North and the TEER Program continued to work towards improving river health.

“One of the greatest opportunities to work towards improving the health of the freshwater systems in the catchment will be through the development of a Water Quality Improvement Plan,” Mr McKee said.

“The development of this plan is being lead by the TEER program and supported by the State Government, local government, industry and research partners and will provide the future blueprint for maintaining and improving water quality from the catchment through to the Tamar estuary.

“Work is already underway with program partners to improve the condition of our rivers and streams through activities such as improving streamside vegetation extent and condition, fencing stock out of waterways and reducing nutrients and sediment input into rivers.”

The Tamar Catchment 2013 Freshwater Report Card can be downloaded from the TEER website: www.nrmnorth.org.au/TEER

Ends

For more information contact:
Melissa Lewarn, Manager – Community Engagement & Communications, NRM North,
6333 7776 or 0427 354 058