



Media Release

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SLIGHT IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF NORTHERN STREAMS AND RIVERS

The fourth annual report by Northern Waterway Assessment (NWA) has found a slight overall improvement in the health of rivers and streams in northern Tasmania for 2008, compared to 2007.

Thirty seven sites retained the same ranking as the 2007 report, eleven sites improved their rating and five sites declined.

NWA assessed 40 sites for river health across northern Tasmania in 2007, while the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and the Environment assessed 23 sites.

Of these, 31 received a rating of A (more biologically diverse than or similar to reference), 24 sites received a B rating (significantly impaired), two sites received a C rating (severely impaired) and two sites received a D rating (extremely impaired).

Some of the sites to receive an A rating were the Brid River at Bridport Road, Brumbys Creek at Saundridge Road, Lobster Rivulet at Mole Creek Road and Rocky Creek at Lilydale.

The Kings Meadows Rivulet at Punchbowl again received a D rating, along with the Rubicon River at Avenue Road.

NRM North's Project Officer, Monitoring and Improvement, Debbie Searle, said overall the results were pleasing.

"An example of a waterway that has improved is the North Esk River at Corra Linn. It received a C rating in 2007, indicating it was severely impaired. In 2008, the rating has increased to a B." Ms Searle said.

"There is a riffle at this site where the water rushes over cobble and boulder shaped rocks. Riffles generally provide good habitat for stream life, but in 2007 this riffle was heavily silted making it less favourable habitat.

"In 2008, some reasonable flows following rainfall had flushed away a lot of the silt."

The results of this report provide a guide to areas in good condition which need to be preserved and maintained as well as areas which could be improved by on-ground works and changes to management practices.

These include the fencing of riparian zones, the provision of off-stream watering for stock, soil conservation measures and improved storm water and waste water management.

The Chief Executive Officer of NRM North, James McKee, said a feature of this report was the inclusion of volunteer data.

"This has been made possible by ensuring community water quality monitoring in the region meets national standards." Mr McKee said.

"The NWA team has expanded the volunteer network in recognition of volunteers' capacity to deliver high quality, cost effective, consistent and accurate data.

"This network has raised community awareness and participation in improving the health of rivers and wetlands."

NWA was a joint project between NRM North and the Launceston Environment Centre, funded by the Australian Government.

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