



Media Release

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CLIMATIC CONDITIONS BEHIND IMPROVEMENT IN TAMAR ESTUARY HEALTH

The Tamar Estuary 2016 Report Card shows an overall improvement in the health of the Tamar River estuary compared to last year's grades, with the exception of one zone.

The fifth ecosystem report card for the Tamar River estuary was undertaken by NRM North's Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program and launched today by Federal Member for Bass Andrew Nikolic.

The report card shows zone two from Legana to Swan Point remained stable while there was a slight improvement for the three zones from Swan Point to Low Head.

NRM North's Operations Manager, Amanda Locatelli, said climatic conditions were thought to have played a major role in the improvement.

"Climatic conditions have a large influence on waterway health, this is evident from the recent floods in Launceston which will have transported high pollutant loads to the Tamar but will also have provided a significant flushing effect," Ms Locatelli said.

"The report card's good result from Swan Bay to Low Head is likely due to the influence of lower flows through the North and South Esk catchments resulting in less pollutants delivered to the estuary."

Consistent with past reporting years, zone one from Launceston to Legana received the poorest grades with a slight decline in health compared to the previous year.

"The poor health of this zone is due to relatively constant high pollutant loads delivered from a number of sources. This is compounded by the influence of the tidal regime which traps pollutants in the upper reaches of the estuary," Ms Locatelli said.

"NRM North would like to acknowledge the community commitment to improve the health and amenity of the estuary and the TEER Program will continue to work with a number of stakeholders including landholders and industry in an effort to reduce pollutants entering the system."

The Tasmanian Government, which contributes funds to the report card, is pleased to continue its ongoing contribution to the TEER Program and fostering important partnerships such as the Ecosystem Health Assessment Program to monitor and report on the health of TEER waterways.

The past two Tamar estuary report cards have included data relating to pressures impacting on the health of the Tamar, including sewage treatment plants, stormwater and silt raking.

NRM North's Chief Executive Officer, Rosanna Coombes, said it was important to monitor and understand the health of the Tamar River estuary.

"The TEER Program is committed to releasing these report cards which provide a snapshot of the health of the Tamar and are a valuable tool to assist the community and management agencies with information to guide future management."

The TEER report card and monitoring partners include NRM North, Tasmanian Government, Environment Protection Authority, Department of Health and Human Services, City of Launceston, West Tamar Council, George Town Council, Meander Valley Council, Northern Midlands Council,

Launceston Flood Authority, University of Tasmania, Australian Maritime College, Hydro Tasmania, TasWater, Bell Bay Aluminium, Van Diemen Aquaculture, BCD Resources and South 32.

The Tamar Estuary 2016 Report Card can be downloaded from the NRM North website:
www.nrmnorth.org.au.

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