

## Media Release

### Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2015

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## New plan promotes a positive future for Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers

NRM North is proud to be launching the inaugural Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) for the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers catchments today, which will become a blueprint for how water quality is managed in the area. The Plan sets the future path for how we can encourage and support sustainable development and industry growth while minimising impacts on water quality.

The highly anticipated catchment to coast long-term plan has been developed by NRM North's Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) program which is a partnership between state and local government and industry, and is the culmination of several years' worth of research and public consultation.

The catchment comprises approximately 15% of Tasmania and is going through a rapid transition in its landscape, with investment in new irrigation schemes, expansion of dairy and cropping industries, and urban growth. NRM North Water Theme Manager and TEER Program Coordinator Amanda Locatelli said while intensification and growth in the agricultural sector and urban communities brings many opportunities, it can have a significant impact on water quality.

"The Tamar estuary is a focal point for our community and a commercial hub for industry groups, businesses, tourism operators and agricultural enterprises in northern Tasmania. As we look to continually grow and develop agricultural and urban areas we must also look for ways to minimise impacts on the environment. This Plan provides the first clear picture of what actions we need to take to improve water quality in the region", Ms Locatelli said.

Importantly, the TEER WQIP addresses many of the future pressures on water quality as well as land use changes throughout the region and highlights:

- Dairy expansion threats and opportunities
- TasWater's preferred option for upgrades to sewage treatment plants in the Launceston area
- Impacts from sewer overflows into the Tamar
- Managing agriculture and aquaculture
- Irrigation expansion
- Urban growth and development

Ms Locatelli said the TEER WQIP has been developed using the best available science and evidence based data, and provides us with the confidence needed to ensure we can achieve sustainable development in the future.

NRM North Interim CEO Scott Schilg said the success of the TEER Program relies on a cooperative partnership approach between the three tiers of government, industry, community and other stakeholders.

"The WQIP is an excellent example of the success of the TEER Program bringing together a wide range of partners to work collaboratively towards management of the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers systems".

Partners include the State Government, TasWater, Tasmanian Irrigation, Van Diemen Aquaculture and northern councils. This project is supported by NRM North through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme. The TEER WQIP will be launched **TODAY** at the Boathouse on North Bank at 10am.

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For more information please contact NRM North Interim CEO Scott Schilg on 6333 7777 or Communications Officer Biba Bell on 6333 7776 or 0458 666 609. Biba works Tuesdays/Wednesdays.