Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce

Phase One: Implementation Plan 2023-2027

Find out more at tamarestuary.com.au

Acknowledgement to Traditional Custodians

In recognition of this country's deep history and culture, we acknowledge the palawa/pakana people as the traditional owners and ongoing custodians of the land and waters of lutruwita/Tasmania. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and all Tasmanian Aboriginal people who belong to the oldest continuing culture on earth.

The kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary has provided rich food and cultural resources for Aboriginal people for over 40,000 years, and it continues to be a significant cultural landscape today.

We value the expertise and knowledge of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. We commit to listening, learning, and working together to improve the health of our waterways and create a strong and connected community in the future.

Chair's foreword

The Tamar Estuary means different things to different people. It's a place of active recreation and enjoyment, a meeting place, a place for commerce and a place of environmental importance to restore and preserve.

The Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (TEMT) has been charged with advancing these interests over the long-term, through a series of projects and programs delivered with the support of partner organisations – and we are making progress.

The following pages outline the first stage of a long-term Implementation Plan for the management of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary that will bring to life the Taskforce Vision, as previously endorsed by the Tasmanian Government. This document steps out our priorities, key action areas, projects and initiatives, existing funding commitments, and ongoing funding requirements for the next five years.

We've made some great progress already, and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of our delivery partners for their dedication, contribution, and collaboration as we continue to work together to improve the health of the estuary and make it a place for community to celebrate.

kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary

The kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary is an iconic part of the Tasmanian landscape. Stretching over 70km from Low Head to Launceston, it plays an important role in our cultural and natural heritage.

The estuary is strongly influenced by tides from Bass Strait that flow upstream twice a day bringing saltwater to meet the fresh water near Legana. These large tidal movements, along with the inflows from the South and North Esk Rivers, affect how the kanamaluka/ Tamar Estuary works.

Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce (the Taskforce) was established to provide options and advice to the Tasmanian Government on how to enhance connectivity and amenity and manage the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary. As an advisory body, its members include government departments, local government, natural resource management and bodies with responsibilities or interests in the management of the estuary. Working with the community, the Taskforce is focused on improving the health of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary, while creating a world-class destination for locals and visitors alike. In mid-2022, the Taskforce released a 10-year Vision (the Vision) for the kanamaluka/ Tamar Estuary.

The Vision sets the direction for the long-term recreational, community and cultural use of the upper kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary, with scalable options that can be implemented over time.

The Vision focuses on two priorities to develop the estuary as a focal point for community events and recreation, while supporting its natural ecology to better manage sediment and water quality.

Priority one

Focused on creating a cultural and recreational precinct.

Priority two

Focused on the long-term sustainable management of sediment.

To achieve these priorities, the Vision outlined 16 key actions across seven focus areas:

- 1 Connectivity, accessibility, and amenity
- 2 People
- 3 Place
- 4 Environment
- 5 Culture
- 6 Sediment management
- 7 River health.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan is the Taskforce's commitment to action – that is, to improve the health of the estuary with a view to improving overall amenity for better community enjoyment.

Taking the above focus areas forward, the Implementation Plan Phase One: 2023-2027 is the first phase in a long-term delivery strategy. Delivering the Vision is an incremental process that is likely to extend beyond 10 years, and many of the priority actions require funding commitments from Australian and Tasmanian Governments and other partners before they can progress.

The *Implementation Plan Phase One: 2023-2027* focuses on actions to be delivered over the next five years. It will be updated each year following an iterative review process.



Implementation plan

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4. Identify gaps in connectivity and amentify along the vaters edge, develop a connectivity plan for upgrades and extensions to pathways linking to amentifies, and work with local councils to deliver general maintenance upgrades at existing waterfront precincts. North Esk River, and work with local councils to deliver general maintenance upgrades at existing 1 Infrastructure Master Plan. Image: Council Sto deliver stop stop stop stop stop stop stop stop	
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 4.5 Implement the landscape design and vegetation management plan for areas above the high-tide mark. 5. Technical investigations for major boardwalk and infrastructure projects and, in parallel, develop a competitive design process for the infrastructure treatments. North Esk River, South Esk River and Tamar Estuary 5.2 Design of infrastructure projects. S. Design of infrastructure projects. 	\$4.0m
5. Technical investigations for major North Esk River, 5. Design of infrastructure projects and, South Esk River and in parallel, develop a competitive design Tamar Estuary 5.2 Design of infrastructure projects. South Esk River projects.	
In parallel, develop a competitive design Tamar Estuary process for the infrastructure treatments.	Investment in 5 year
\$1.3m	implementation plan \$24.0m
5.3 Regulatory and Development Approval process in the Tamar Conservation Area.	investment is estimated at \$78.0m and will be
6. Construction of infrastructure in a precinct based approach. North Esk River, and Tamar Estuary 6.1 Commencement of procurement and construction of infrastructure.	refined as the design process progresses
7. Work with local councils and relevant stakeholders to ensure that the Vision and its values are considered as part of broader master planning activities for Northern Tasmania. North Esk River, South Esk River, and Tamar Estuary 7.1 Develop links from the Infrastructure Master	Nil for this 5-year implementation plan period
8. Develop a long-term program of high-quality events and activities that align with the Vision and work towards transforming key locations. North Esk River, South Esk River and Tamar Estuary 8.1 Work with key stakeholders to collaborate on this action, and incorporate enabling infrastructure into the master plan, and identify opportunities and funding requirements. Image: Coll Coll Coll Coll Coll Coll Coll Col	Nil for this 5-year implementation plan period

Implementation plan

Vi	sion Action	Location of Action	Pro	epject Initiative or Phase	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	Government Fund Already Commit
Ре	ople/Culture									
9.	Consult with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community about developing an Aboriginal cultural narrative of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary.	North Esk River, South Esk River and Tamar Estuary	9.1	Develop links to ensure the Aboriginal cultural narrative of the estuary is incorporated into the master plan.	\oslash	\oslash	\oslash	\oslash	\oslash	
10.	0. Develop future interpretation trails for the upper and lower estuary, incorporating Aboriginal cultural narrative, maritime heritage and the area's shared history, in consultation with the community and other key stakeholders.	North Esk River, South Esk River and Tamar Estuary	10.1	Initiative to be considered as a part of the master plan and include: Install 'Fluker posts' to support photo point monitoring and educational information.						
			Interactive online map including key points of interest, activities agencies are doing in that area, images/videos, and regular updates	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\oslash	\oslash		
				Interpretative signage at key community/public spaces that detail the story and program life cycle. Adopt a whole of estuary approach including QR codes that link to available information.						
11.	1. Identify opportunities to involve the local community in relevant Vision initiatives. North Esk R South Est R Tamar Esture	North Esk River, South Esk River and Tamar Estuary	11.1	Develop an engagement plan to identify and provide opportunities for the community to participate in regeneration of the estuary. Develop communications plans for all elements of the implementation plan including frequently asked questions and public explanation documents.	\odot					Tasmanian Governm \$150,000
			11.2	Purther consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to understand the cultural narrative and importance of the estuary and surrounding areas.	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\oslash	
			11.3	Install interpretive panels to educate people about the animal, bird and plant life associated with the estuary and surrounds.	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\bigcirc	\oslash	\bigcirc	
			11.4	Investigate digital and virtual reality tools to demonstrate further the work of the Taskforce.	\oslash	\oslash	\oslash	\oslash	\oslash	
En	vironment	D:								
12.	 Deliver a trial project focusing on water-edge revegetation and weed removal at a key pa location(s) in the upper estuary. Bri Bri 	Riverbank and parkland areas between Charles St Bridge and Victoria Bridge, Tamar St	12.1	Undertake riparian and intertidal vegetation assessments, and review restoration methodologies to support a landscape design.	\bigcirc					Tasmanian Governm
			12.2	P Develop landscape design plans for the trial water-edge revegetation site (including areas above the high-tide mark) and obtain regulatory approvals.	\oslash	\oslash				\$100,000
			12.3	Implement the trial water-edge revegetation project in North Esk between Charles St Bridge and Victoria Bridge, Tamar St.		\oslash	\bigcirc			
			12.4	Implement the landscape design and vegetation management plan for areas above the high- tide mark in the North Esk between Charles St Bridge and Victoria Bridge, Tamar St.	\oslash	\oslash				
13.	 Design and deliver unique and interactive ways to educate the community about the animal, bird and plant life within the estuary and surrounds. 	North Esk River, South Esk River and Tamar Estuary	13.1	Videos to educate the community about the estuary and surrounds.	\bigcirc	\bigcirc				
			13.2	2 Develop a stakeholder communications and engagement strategy including details about existing information/educational material and options for interactive ways to educate and raise awareness about the estuary.	\oslash	\oslash				
			13.3	B Develop, release and promote content including an interactive online map of the estuary and interpretative signage that fits with the master plan and ways to celebrate Aboriginal artwork etc.	\oslash	\bigcirc	\oslash	\oslash	\oslash	

nding itted	Partner/Private Funding Already Committed	Estimated Project Budget
		\$250,000
		\$500,000
nent		Nil for this 5-year implementation plan period
		\$700,000
nent		Nil for this 5-year implementation plan period
		\$1.0m
		\$500,000



Community, accessibility, amenity and place

To enhance community access to the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary and North Esk River and their surrounds, improve recreation and lifestyle opportunities, create economic development opportunities, and enhance the aesthetic values of Launceston's urban waterways.

The kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary and its tributaries around Launceston are central to the city's identity. Our Vision is for a revitalised upper estuary that will inspire locals and visitors alike to connect to the waterways. Along the water's edge, we want to see more people enjoying more features of the estuary, more often.

We want the estuary to become one of Tasmania's premiere destinations for recreation, entertainment, community connections, natural values, and cultural and creative events, and create opportunities to connect with our environment, history and culture through storytelling and interactive learning.

Well-designed and aesthetically pleasing recreation spaces, amenities, walkways, and multi-use paths around the upper estuary and North Esk River are critical for enhancing recreational and lifestyle activities, and creating unique economic development opportunities.

We have started building on this Vision with several important initiatives, including the Riverbend Park (which has transformed a former industrial precinct into a major new recreational area) and North Esk Trail improvements (which create a more functional and safer shared pathway).



Artists Impression of potential boardwalks.

A key next step in this process is to develop an infrastructure and revegetation master plan focussing on the foreshore area around the upper estuary and North Esk River – with an aim to connect recreational areas with revegetation and wetland projects further up the North Esk. It will also be important that this master plan aligns with any adjoining council master plans more broadly, connects surrounding uses to our waterways and improves aesthetic values. A master plan will facilitate the development of potential infrastructure projects that encourage residents, businesses and tourists to have better access to and enjoyment of the estuary. During development of the plan, input from the community will be sought regarding desired uses, amenities, and priorities. Identified infrastructure projects will take some time to implement. A master plan will allow for development to occur in a staged manner and as funding becomes available, but within a considered long-term Vision for the estuary.

What we need to do to implement our Vision:

- 1 Develop an Infrastructure Master Plan for the upper estuary and lower North Esk River
- 2 Detailed infrastructure design and regulatory approvals
- 3 Clean up the eastern foreshore of the estuary
- 4 Revegetate and construct recreation spaces, amenities, walkways, and multi-use paths that improve access and aesthetics of the upper estuary and North Esk River
- 5 Create opportunities to connect with our environment, history and culture through storytelling and interactive learning.

We estimate that the Vision for the upper estuary and North Esk River Master Plan will cost over \$70 million to implement. The Master Plan will be implemented in priority stages as funding becomes available.



River Health Action Plan

To improve the health of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary and North Esk River by reducing overflow from the combined sewerage system during rainfall events and reducing effluent runoff into waterways from adjoining urban and agricultural land.

Where did it come from?

The Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program has one of the longest ongoing water quality data series for a major waterway in Tasmania. Beginning in 2008, the TEER Program is a partnership between agencies which aims to improve the scientific understanding and issues that impact the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary and Esk rivers. Building on the water quality monitoring data, the TEER Program developed a Water Quality Improvement Plan in 2015, which was the foundational blueprint for improving water quality throughout the catchment. Catchment and estuary modelling was used to develop an understanding of current pollutant loads and sources, and the related pressures and opportunities associated with land use change. Following extensive engagement and scenario testing with key stakeholders and the wider community, targets and recommended management actions to improve the quality of the estuary were refined and developed.

From this work came the River Health Action Plan, an initiative of the Taskforce. The plan seeks to address the long-term health of the estuary and identifies priority projects and recommendations for investment and policy actions.

Infrastructure upgrades

Outcome

In an average rainfall year, benefits from reducing overflows from Launceston's combined sewerage and stormwater system will include:

Targeting the **reduction** of combined **Sewage** and **stormwater overflow volumes.**

A reduction of greater than



in human waste-related bacteria concentrations.

Outputs

Delivered by TasWater, the infrastructure upgrades will improve the operation of Launceston's combined system which, manages the flow of both sewage and stormwater. The projects will help to divert sewage and stormwater flows away from the estuary, reducing the frequency and volume of overflow events.

These improvements include:

- Upgrades of pump stations to increase pumping capacities
- Constructing new storages to reduce overflows
- Building additional pipelines to transfer greater flow volumes.

The following activities and milestones are scheduled over the next few years to deliver this important project:

- Esplanade/St John Street rising main pipeline upgrade

 complete
- Margaret Street diversion works
 substantially complete

- 10 megalitre covered storage at Ti Tree Bend Sewage Treatment Plant

 works scheduled to commence in 2023
- Margaret Street Sewage Pump Station upgrade

 works commenced
- Pipeline from Margaret Street Sewage Pump Station to Ti Tree Bend Sewage Treatment Plant

 works scheduled to commence in 2023.

Funding and investment

Together, the Tasmanian Government, Australian Government, City of Launceston and TasWater are investing a total of \$140.7 million to implement key actions across two programs:

- \$129.2 million is allocated to deliver infrastructure upgrades to reduce overflows from Launceston's combined sewerage and stormwater system.
- 2 \$11.5 million is allocated to the Catchment Works Program to reduce the level of pathogens from entering waterways across the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary and Esk rivers catchment including Launceston's separated stormwater system.

Catchment works program

Outcome

As at 30 January 2023, the program has worked with and achieved a co-investment of \$4.4 million from grazing and dairy landholders. This will exclude an estimated 222,200 sheep, 18,600 cattle and 7,500 dairy cows from waterways. Councils have been involved to prevent an estimated 13.5 million litres of untreated sewage from reaching the estuary through the separated stormwater system.

So far, the program has **achieved a modelled**

7.3% reduction of pathogens in the estuary from Launceston to Legana – already in excess of the program target of 4.7%.

Outputs

The Catchment Works Program, delivered by NRM North, provides funding to support grazing and dairy landholders to reduce pathogens in the estuary and support councils to find and remediate crossconnections of sewerage into stormwater in the separated system.

Working with dairy and grazing industries and councils, the program aims to reduce pathogens from entering the estuary by:

- installing of stock exclusion fencing along waterways
- revegetation and associated weed management buffers on dairy and grazing farms
- improving effluent management on dairy farms
- mitigating sewage intrusions into the stormwater in Launceston's separated system.

Progress is being made across all areas of the Catchment Works Program with works completed including (as at 30 June 2023):

- 2,667ha of dairy milking platform with improved effluent management
- 84.1km of waterway stock
 exclusion fencing on dairy farms
- 419.1km of waterway stock exclusion fencing on grazing properties
- 13 catchments of the Launceston separated stormwater system investigated and mitigated for sewage intrusions, three times the original target within the funding investment.

Sediment management – trial wetland

To develop a trial wetland restoration area to demonstrate the effect by which such a project can reduce visual impacts of sedimentation in the upper estuary and deliver environmental benefits. A successful outcome will help build a case for further investment in wetland restoration areas and, in turn, visual amenity and environmental outcomes.



Area between Henry Street and Hoblers Bridge identified for the trial wetland restoration site.

What is sedimentation?

The kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary is a tidal-dominated estuary where fine and coarse sediments are transported from inland and marine sources. When sediment in fresh water hits saltwater in the estuary, it settles temporarily before being carried back upstream on the strong incoming tide and settling on the mudflats in the upper estuary. The mudflats won't continue to increase indefinitely; they increase and decrease with large flows but are generally steady over time. The volume of water flowing into the estuary on each high tide is called a 'tidal prism'. This is a critical factor affecting the amount of sediment that gathers in one place in the upper estuary.

The volume of tidal prism decreases when intertidal areas that were previously part of a waterway are restricted or filled in, so that tidal water is no longer able to spread out in that area.



Why a wetland?

Restoring wetland areas will increase the amount of water that can spread out with the tides. This will have a flushing effect on sediment and change the steady state shape of the estuary, which will potentially reduce the size of mudflats.

There are several ways that we can restore tidal prism. These include the removal of informal levees and infill from floodplains, restoring wetland areas that have been degraded or destroyed, and removing weeds from waterways.

Restoring wetland areas on the North Esk River supports broad environmental benefits and aims to reduce the sedimentation we see downstream.

Project staging

The trial wetland restoration project will be several years in the making and delivered in phases, allowing for the collection and assessment of data to support a design that will achieve environmental benefits and potentially reduce sediment downstream.

The trial revegetation project between the Charles St Bridge and Victoria Bridge, Tamar St will provide information on intertidal vegetation that thrives in the North Esk River that can be used in the wetland restoration.



Wetlands can deliver significant environmental benefits that include:

- improved water quality downstream from the filtering effect of wetlands
- increased intertidal habitat with benefits for biodiversity, including threatened and important plants and animals
- enhanced value to migratory birds, for which the estuary is internationally recognised.

Restoring areas on the North Esk River to a more natural state would allow more water to spread out with the tides, potentially reducing sedimentation downstream and decreasing the size of the visible mudflats in portions of the estuary. The area that has been identified for a trial wetland restoration project is between Henry Street and Hoblers Bridge. This area is on Crown Land and is not being used for housing, industry or agriculture.

The success of this trial will help build a case for further investment in wetland restoration areas and, in turn, improved sediment reduction and environmental outcomes.



kanamaluka/Tamar wetland. Image credit: Sam Jack.

The mudflats will not disappear entirely, and it's important to remember that birds, fish and many other types of flora and fauna have made the estuary their home for thousands of years. Restoring some of their wetland habitat is an important step in promoting a long-term sustainable approach to managing sediment so that we may enjoy it for years to come.

People/Culture

To improve understanding of the importance of the estuary and surrounds to Tasmanian Aboriginal history and culture, and improve understanding and value of the animal, bird and plant life. This is an important step for improving connection between nature, culture and communities and ensuring that we value and look after one of the state's unique and important natural assets - kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary.

Where did the Vision come from?

The kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary is an inspiring landscape that connects and celebrates our community, environment, culture and history.

Based on feedback from the community, the Vision is underpinned by three values that help to guide the future direction of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary:

- 1 Creating community spaces to bring people together
- 2 Enhancing recreational connections around the estuary
- 3 Preserving natural values for future generations.

The actions in the Vision set the direction for the long-term recreational, community and cultural use of the upper estuary, with options to be implemented over time by the Taskforce, partners and other organisations.

Outputs: Tamar Action Grants

As part of the Catchment Works Program under the River Health Action Plan (see previous pages), NRM North has been administering the Tamar Action Grants since 2019. These grants assist grazing and dairy farmers in the Meander, North Esk, South Esk, Brumbys, Lake River, Macquarie and Tamar catchments to improve waterway health by restricting stock access to waterways and reducing effluent runoff.

As at 30 January 2023, the Tamar Action Grants have:

- 1 Facilitated 152 landholders in planning and implementing water quality improvement projects
- 2 Contracted 636.8km and completed 503.2km of livestock exclusion fencing
- 3 Protected 2,209 hectares of streamside riparian area
- 4 Contracted 2,986 hectares of dairy milking platform for improved effluent management
- 5 Will exclude an estimated 222,200 sheep, 18,600 cattle and 7,500 dairy cows from waterways at the completion of all contracted works.

Co-investment from landholders to January 2023 was \$4.4 million, which allows landholders to achieve environmental outcomes that not only benefit the broader community but hold significant personal value to landowners as stewards of the land.



"The grant helped to add to my property's conservation value... it's good to know you are looking after something." – Will Green

At Will Green's farm near Cressy, on-ground works to exclude stock from 4km of watercourse have improved habitat for one of the most threatened native freshwater fish species in Tasmania – the Swan Galaxias.

Sourced from: https://www.naturalvaluesatlas.tas.gov.au/

Education and awareness

The Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) program, a partner organisation to the Taskforce, has produced a series of informative videos and factsheets about healthy waterways and the connections that people have to the land.

Videos

Big picture – highlighting natural values of the estuary

Aboriginal connections to the kanamaluka/ Tamar Estuary

The North Esk River – local farmers protecting and enhancing riparian vegetation and ecosystems

The South Esk River – water quality, water supply and electricity to Launceston, and pathways to the sea for migratory species

The upper kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary – water quality and wetlands

Paper Beach – improving local ecological habitat and recreational opportunities

Beauty Point - recreational fishing

Diving and underwater habitats at Low Head

Factsheets

Natural history and values of the kanamaluka

What is an estuary?

Aboriginal connections

Riparian vegetation

Flows through the South Esk

Wetlands

Modification to the upper estuary

Saltmarsh

Protected areas

Marine habitats

Ongoing and future actions

The Taskforce is working on further ways to share knowledge and stories with the community about the estuary and to engage with the community on a way forward.

Ongoing and future actions include:

- Develop an engagement plan to identify and provide opportunities for the community to participate in the regeneration of the estuary
- Further consulting with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to understand the cultural narrative and importance of the estuary and surrounding areas
- Installing interpretive panels to educate people about the animal, bird and plant life within the estuary and surrounds
- Investigation into digital and virtual reality tools to demonstrate further the work of the Taskforce.



Environment – trial water-edge revegetation project

To develop a trial intertidal water edge revegetation project that provides multiple benefits, including – improved river health, habitat for native and threatened species, enhanced amenity and aesthetics of the estuary, and improved resilience of riverbanks.

The Taskforce will deliver a trial water-edge revegetation and weed removal project in the upper estuary.

The trial aims to have a number of positive social and environmental outcomes, including:

- expected increase in wildlife
 habitat
- improved water quality
- help to stabilise the mudflats
- visually improve the aesthetics of the estuary.

A section of the North Esk River between Victoria Bridge, Tamar St and Charles St Bridge has been chosen as the trial project site. A landscape design and vegetation plan will be developed for the riverbank and parkland areas on both banks, and the information gathered will inform proposed works in other parts of the estuary. A key element of the trial will be to assess riparian and intertidal vegetation to help us understand which species will thrive in the area.

A landscape design will be developed for areas above the high tide mark to support revegetation planting, weed management and recreational use of the area. This project will also consider vegetation in other sections of the estuary including Charles St Bridge to Kings Wharf, West Tamar mudflats from Tamar Marine to Tailrace, and the West Tamar silt ponds to understand future water edge revegetation options.



Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce partners:







Find out more at tamarestuary.com.au