

# A draft vision for the future of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary



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## Executive summary

- Sediment impacts both navigation and recreational use in the upper kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary and for many in the community the mudflats are aesthetically objectionable.
- However, the mudflats are also a natural feature of the estuary and an important part of the habitat for migratory birds and fish life. They are not a sign of poor estuary health and do not increase flood risk.
- The Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce notes that the Tasmanian Government is taking immediate action focused on improving access to the upper estuary for recreational users by carrying out site-specific dredging at key access points.
- We believe the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary can be a world-class waterfront destination that attracts both locals and visitors. Our draft vision is focused on liveability, amenity and the environment and being a place belonging to and enjoyed by the local community.
- We will be engaging with the community beginning in August 2021 to finalise this vision for the estuary to inform future decisions by all levels of government.
- Register your interest in the upcoming consultation at [tamarestuary.com.au](http://tamarestuary.com.au)





## A new vision for the estuary

The kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary is an iconic part of the Tasmanian landscape and as the longest navigable estuary in Australia, it plays an important part in our cultural and natural heritage. Over recent decades, the upper estuary has evolved from a working port to a focal point for community events and recreation.

We believe that the potential of the estuary is yet to be fully realised and a shared vision can secure its future.

We want the estuary to be an inspiring public destination that:

- brings people to the water's edge
- connects key areas of the city and region
- creates new cultural and recreational precincts
- educates users and visitors about environmental importance of the estuary, and
- enhances opportunities for businesses and tourism.

This is an introduction to our vision for the estuary.

We will soon be engaging with the community to determine exactly how the final vision will look and to define the priorities that will inform future decision-making by all levels of government.

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## Why this vision is needed

For more than 130 years, the state of the estuary has been a matter of contention. From as early as the 1880s letters to the editor in *The Examiner* have made calls to “get rid of the mud”.

Sediment impacts both navigation and recreational use in the upper estuary and for many in the community the mudflats are aesthetically objectionable. However, the mudflats are a natural feature of the estuary and an important part of the habitat for migratory birds and fish life. They are not a sign of poor estuary health and do not increase flood risk.

Localised and proportionate actions can be taken both in the immediate and longer-term to help realise the potential of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary.

Done in a coordinated way, we can make the estuary more attractive and accessible for the community while enhancing and celebrating its internationally recognised environmental values.

## The journey to reach the vision

Since the creation of the Taskforce in 2017 we have focused on working together to improve the overall health of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary through the Launceston City Deal investments in the River Health Action Plan.

With significant work already underway to improve the health of the estuary, we extended the focus to opportunities to improve peoples' experience of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary.

There has been a range of ideas put forward over the years, as well as a number of studies and reports which have focused on sediment management. In 2020 we commissioned the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program to conduct an independent and comprehensive evaluation of the available options to address sedimentation.

The TEER Report looked closely at nine of the most commonly offered ideas. The Report does not make any specific recommendations, but rather considered technical feasibility, and assigned indicative costs, social benefits and environmental impacts to each of the proposals considered.

The Taskforce has been informed by the science from the TEER Report in identifying a number of the future priorities set out in our draft vision. However, the TEER Report also shows that there is no easy solution to the management of sediment. Instead, we need to find a way to work with nature that benefits the community, business and the environment.

Taking all of this into account, and drawing on the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, we have identified a combination of new and innovative approaches that aim to make the estuary a place that brings alive the heart of Launceston and the broader region in the medium- to long-term.

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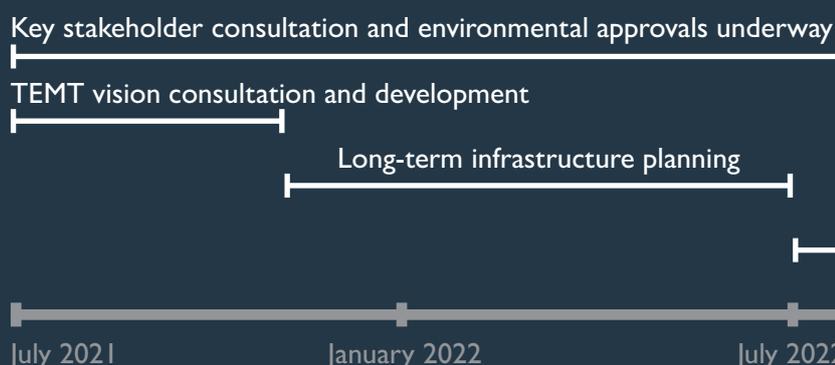
## What we want to achieve

We want to engage in a discussion with the community on the long-term future of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary.

A shared vision for the estuary will help guide future planning and decision-making across all levels of government as well as the actions that could be implemented in the short, mid or long-term.

We recognise that implementing the vision will require funding commitments and support from all three levels of government, a range of planning and environmental authorities, and buy-in from local businesses and the community.

## Timeline...



# Immediate actions already underway

While we work with the community on finalising the vision for the future of the estuary, the Tasmanian Government is taking immediate action focused on improving access to the upper estuary for recreational users.

The government has committed to carrying out site-specific dredging at key access points. The dredging will focus on recreational access to the Tamar Rowing Club, the Tamar Yacht Club, and the Seaport Marina.

The Department of State Growth is currently working to determine how and where the dredging will take place, what will be done with the sediment that the dredging removes, and pursuing the necessary environmental approvals.

The dredging will commence once all environmental approvals are received and is funded to continue for at least two years. Work will also be done to ensure that navigation channels continue to have accurate channel markers.

This work is in addition to the \$140.7 million River Health Action Plan jointly funded by the Australian and Tasmanian governments, the City of Launceston and TasWater. The River Health Action Plan is working to improve the long-term health of the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary by delivering improved catchment management actions and infrastructure upgrades to Launceston's combined sewerage and stormwater system.



# A vision for the estuary

We want the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary to be a world-class destination that attracts both locals and visitors. Our vision is focused on liveability, amenity and the environment and being a place belonging to and enjoyed by the community.

The key priorities to achieve this vision are improving amenity by creating a cultural and recreational precinct and managing sediment by promoting long-term sustainable management.

The Taskforce believes these priorities are achievable and together will result in significant aesthetic, recreational and environmental improvements to the estuary across the short and long-term.

Tasmanian Government dredging program

Long-term infrastructure delivery

January 2023

July 2023

January 2024

July 2024  
and beyond

# Future priority I: Creating a cultural and recreational precinct

This precinct would see new infrastructure designed and built to create a foreshore that is connected, accessible and draws people to the estuary by the creation of a series of local public spaces.

It will also restore and enhance the landscape through revegetation of inter-tidal areas.

Ultimately this will result in a vibrant and thriving community with potential to further connect with other areas of the broader estuary.



*Creation of a cultural and recreational precinct that promotes Launceston's already established strengths – arts, culture, tourism and its natural beauty.*



# Artists impressions of how the vision might transform the waterfront

## Recreational and cultural precinct 1

Potential for a connected recreational and cultural precinct, that could change our relationship with the estuary. It could do this by providing stimulating social, community, outdoor event and dining opportunities, while also achieving environmental restoration.

## Getting around 2

Potential for interconnected shared pedestrian/cycle ways, that might also include a river taxi service to improve accessibility to, and between, the enhanced areas of the city heart, river area and our two regional parks.

## West Tamar Walkway 3

Explore the possibility for a meandering boardwalk connecting the Tailrace to the sculpture walk with wetland vegetation in an open recreational space.



## Kings Wharf 4

Experiences could include a cultural hub with an integrated community arts and performance facility linked by a waterfront boardwalk, covered outdoor eating precinct and a new array of bars, cafes and restaurants to bring people together.



## Seaport Marina 5

Potential to enhance public space with interconnected decks and integrated plant life, with an intimate and multipurpose park-like environment for social gatherings.



## Tamar Yacht Club 6

A welcoming park and picnic location that could be serviced by the existing seafood restaurant and Yacht Club. This space could even include cadet sailing training and timber boat building facilities to nurture the next generation of estuary users.

## Between the bridges

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Imagine a multi-use recreational space that includes street furniture and other recreational infrastructure between the Charles and Tamar street bridges that could link the UTas development and QVMAG with Riverbend and the Seaport Marina.

## Riverbend

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Picture the experience of an estuary sculpture trail with viewing decks and integrated sculptures set among native water edge plant life enhancing Riverbend Park. It will offer a chance to step out beyond the river's edge to experience a new view of Launceston.



## Future priority 2: Managing sediment by promoting long-term sustainable management

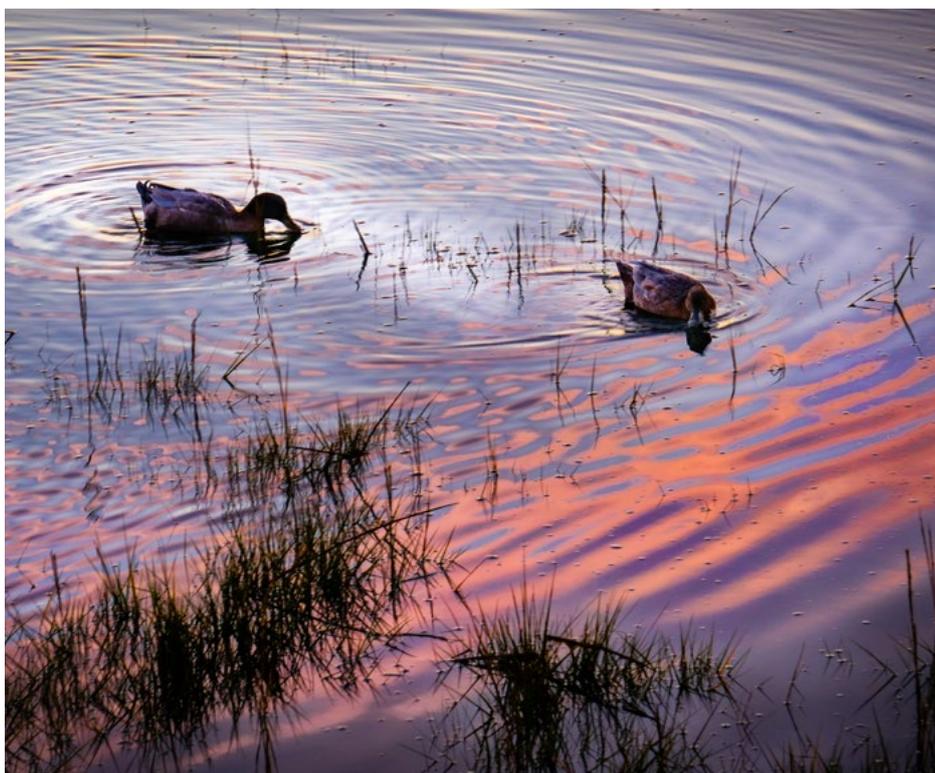
Perhaps the most challenging aspect of this vision is to manage the sediment in order to encourage and maintain investment in the infrastructure and precincts we want to develop.

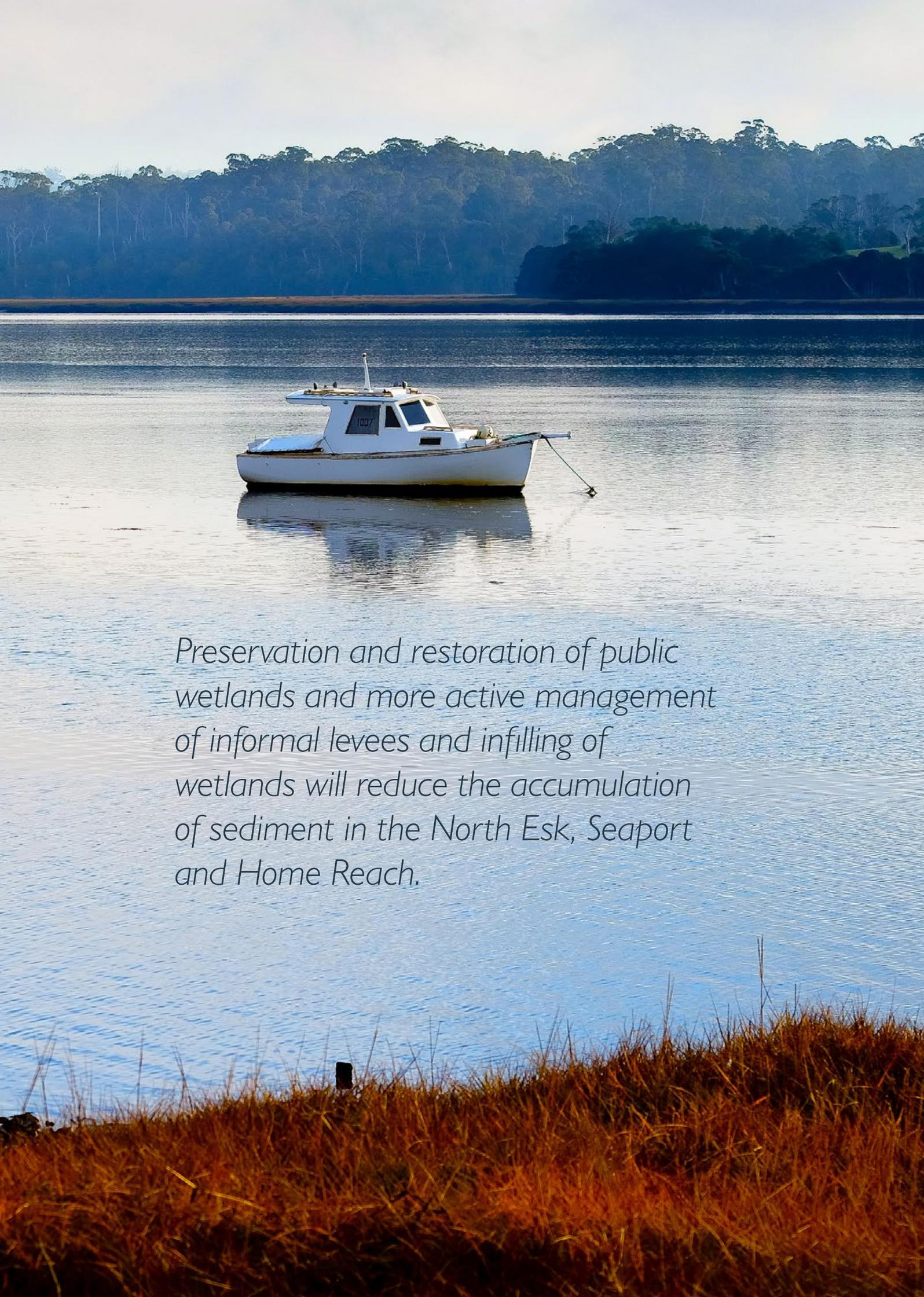
A significant factor is the tidal prism, which is related to the amount of water that comes in and out of the estuary with the tide. It affects the amount of sediment that accumulates in the upper estuary.

Since European settlement, large areas of wetlands in the North Esk and around Launceston have been filled in causing the loss of more than 1,000,000m<sup>3</sup> of tidal prism. This has resulted in more sediment settling out in the upper estuary around Launceston, particularly around the lower North Esk, Seaport and Home Reach.

Ceasing construction of informal tidal levees will stop this cycle of more sediment accumulation. Restoring wetlands on publicly owned land in the North Esk will go further and increase tidal prism. This should reduce the levels of sediment in the lower North Esk, Seaport and Home Reach, decreasing the extent of visible mudflats at low tide and creating more navigable channels. These wetlands will also enhance the environmental values of the upper estuary, building on the estuary's international recognition as a Key Biodiversity Area.

This priority contributes to a sustainable long-term approach to managing the kanamaluka/Tamar Estuary for the future.





*Preservation and restoration of public wetlands and more active management of informal levees and infilling of wetlands will reduce the accumulation of sediment in the North Esk, Seaport and Home Reach.*



## How can I have my say on the draft vision?

It is important that everyone in the community play a role in determining future priorities for the estuary.

Public consultation on our priority areas is expected to commence in August 2021 and will allow local businesses, residents, and organisations to have their say. We are aiming to finalise the vision in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Following consultation, and after consideration of the ideas and submissions received, the final vision for the estuary will be provided to government.

Go to [tamarestuary.com.au](http://tamarestuary.com.au) to register your interest in the public consultation process.

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## How will this vision be implemented?

Once we have considered the community feedback on this draft vision and its priorities, the final vision will be provided to government.

Before the vision can be implemented it will likely require:

- public consultation on more details of the priorities in this draft vision, the proposed developments and how they could be implemented
- the agreement of government at the state and local level
- relevant regulatory and permit approvals
- funding contributions from all three levels of government, and
- detailed technical design and planning for the infrastructure elements that make up the cultural and recreational precinct, especially to consider flood resilience and impacts.

It is expected that the priorities in the draft vision would be planned and implemented in stages as funding becomes available.

\* Images courtesy of Richard Strong (West Tamar Council), Lusy Productions, Adam Gibson and Tourism Tasmania.

\*\*All other images contained in this document are for illustrative purposes only. Specific infrastructure and vegetation plans and designs will be developed through community consultation processes.

