

Review of Natural Resource Management Achievements since 2005: Southern Tasmania

A review of natural resource management (NRM) achievements throughout the region revealed numerous activities undertaken by a range of regional stakeholders demonstrating that there has been much activity in NRM in the region since 2005. This review was undertaken by RARE Consulting and exposed seven principal achievements for the region as a whole since 2005:

1. Positive examples of engagement of stakeholders and community;
2. Positive collaborations and successful partnerships developed;
3. Awareness raising about NRM issues and sustainable practice in a number of sectors;
4. Development and application of integrated and holistic approaches to NRM;
5. Improvement in NRM information and data consistency and access ;
6. Progress in working towards better monitoring, evaluation, and reporting for improvement; and
7. Capacity building across NRM and the region and in sectors of the community.

1. Positive engagement of stakeholders and community across sectors

A core goal of the 2005 strategy is the recognition that good on-ground outcomes in NRM require the effective engagement of all sectors of the community. The following examples highlight achievements in engagement:

- The engagement of farmers leading to the protection of 1470ha of vegetation, 16 conservation agreements and some 144 threatened species recorded (Midlands Biodiversity Hotspots project, led by Southern Midlands Council)
- Engagement of the Bruny Island community in Threatened Species and weed management, and the dissemination of natural resource management information for on-ground management activities (*Bruny Island Threatened Species and Weed Management*, led by Kingborough Council and the Bruny Island Weeds Committee)
- Involvement of landholders in the Dew Rivulet in developing a Rivercare Action Plan (*Dew Rivulet Rivercare Plan*, led by Greening Australia)
- Engagement of potential local government 'end-users' of landscape-scale biodiversity planning methodologies to determine needs (*Expanding BioLinks*, led by NRM South)

2. Positive collaborations and successful partnerships developed

Many NRM challenges require work at the wider landscape scale and across jurisdiction, and in a financially constrained world require innovative partnership approaches. Many different partnerships have been formed across the region strengthening relations with, and between, landholders, community groups and catchment committees, councils, state government departments, industry groups, researchers and NRM organisations. Examples of collaboration and partnerships include:

- Strengthened partnerships between Kingborough Council, Huon Valley Council and NRM South, mobilising a broad section of the community to work across council boundaries and embrace a whole-of-landscape planning approach (*Huon-Kingborough Landscape Linkages*, led in partnership between Kingborough Council, Huon Valley Council and NRM South)

- Working together to improve consistency of data access and interpretation, particularly relating to NRM data across the 12 Southern Tasmanian councils (*Improving Council-based Information and Data Systems*, led by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority)
- Multiple stakeholders across different sectors engaged in effective planning for river recovery works, community engagement, 'learning by doing' education and on-ground rivercare work (*Derwent River Recovery*, led by Greening Australia)

3. Awareness raising about NRM issues and sustainable practice

Awareness raising about environmental condition problems, development pressures on natural resources, better practice NRM options and solutions, and behaviour change to reduce the human footprint and protect environmental values are just some examples of the many awareness-raising activities that have been undertaken throughout the region. Highlights include:

- Self diagnosis and awareness of waste practices by fishermen. Slipway managers with a better understanding of the environmental impacts associated with waste management practices and the need to change behaviour and supporting infrastructure. Improved awareness of the planning processes when upgrading port, marina and slipway facilities (*Best practice management of point source pollution at ports, marinas and boat repair and maintenance facilities*, led by the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council)
- Multiple community events have focused on awareness raising, information sharing and communication of environmental and sustainability challenges and their solutions (*Mountain Festival, Tread Lightly Envirofest, Tasmanian Youth Environment Conference, Sustainable Living Expo, Ocean Planet events*)
- Since 2004, over 80 schools have been engaged in awareness-raising activities, school waste audits, learning-by-doing education and the development and implementation of school environmental management plans (*Resource Rite/Clean Schools Challenge*, led by the Southern Waste Authority through the Aust Govt AuSSI initiative)

4. Developing and applying integrated and holistic approaches

NRM frequently requires system-wide approaches as many individual issues are intertwined with each other (such as water quality and aquatic species health, or river health and land management in catchments). There is often not one single solution to natural resource pressures, and thus there are often a range of stakeholders who require engagement in management of issues. Examples of integrated and holistic approaches that have been applied include:

- Engagement of the broader community in whole-of-catchment scale activities to achieve outcomes sought in the Little Swanport Catchment Management Plan, and in the review of the plan. This experience has subsequently informed a best practice model of landscape planning, engagement and implementation (*Developing a whole-of-catchment and whole-of-ecosystem planning model*, led by Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council)
- Development of a holistic environmental flow assessment methodology for Tasmanian rivers (led by DPIWE)
- Engagement of key stakeholders and the community in integrating the management of land for conservation purposes with existing farm practices (*Huon-Kingborough Landscape Linkages*, led in partnership between Kingborough Council, Huon Valley Council and NRM South)

5. Improving information and data consistency and access

A major achievement in the region has been attention to the improvement in information and data in order to plug gaps in knowledge, improve consistency in data collection and access across the region and develop new decision information tools (e.g. spatial analysis or mapping information tools). There have been a number of

important projects addressing data and information insufficiencies and needs, some of which are outlined below.

- Collaboration across 12 councils to develop a consistent approach to data and information access and management (*Improving council-based information and data systems*, led by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority)
- Development of a soil condition evaluation and assessment methodology (led by DPIPW)
- On-going development of landscape-scale NRM planning methodologies (Tas Land Conservancy, NRM South, Greening Australia, Forestry Tas, Wilderness Society and others)
- Near-shore seabed mapping (TAFI)
- Coastal and foreshores values mapping (DTAE, Aquenal)

6. Working towards better monitoring, evaluation and reporting for improvement

Adaptive management requires the capacity to evaluate in order to review and adapt management approaches and practices. Similarly it is important to know how the region is progressing towards improvement. The following projects are a sample only of a number of important MERI oriented projects:

- Development of a methodology for integrated assessment of river condition (*Tasmanian River Condition Index*, led by NRM South)
- Capacity building in program logic, performance story reporting and most significant change evaluation techniques (led by the Australian Government)
- Development of the vegetation condition assessment methodology (led by DPIWE)
- Dew Rivulet and Derwent River performance story report (led by the Australian Government)
- Investment in the Tasmanian NRM data library, providing a central server for storage of NRM data and information (*NRM data library*, led by DPIWE)
- Improved collaboration across 12 southern Tasmanian councils in relation to data and information access and use (*Improving council-based information and data systems*, led by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority)

7. Capacity building across NRM and the region and in sectors of the community

There has been much building of capacity across the region around many different NRM issues. Much capacity building has occurred through active learning processes linked to on-ground works and has involved the building of capacity in a number of different community sectors. The following demonstrate the range of capacity building activities and outcomes that have occurred in the region:

- The improved awareness of the Pittwater–Orielton Ramsar site and the increased capacity of local councils to understand the management challenges in order to better deal with them (*Implementing the South East Coastal Management Strategy*, led by the South East Coastal Working Group)
- The enhanced awareness of fishermen and slipway managers to identify point source pollution and develop strategies to reduce the impact of their activities (*Best Practice Management of Point Source Pollution at Ports, Marinas, Boat Repair and Maintenance Facilities*, led by the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council).
- The engagement of landholders and groups of landholders (farms) to work collaboratively through incentives and technical support to identify improved land management techniques on individual sites and across rural landscapes (*NRM Incentives*, led by Greening Australia).
- The sharing of information and data across the region, between councils, state government departments and natural resource management organisations to enhance the capacity in natural resource management across a range of sectors (*Improving Council-based information and data systems*, led by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority).