

Understanding drivers of change in waterway health

FACT SHEET – November 2024

Tasmanian communities rely on healthy waterways and catchments for their wellbeing, recreation, economic prosperity, and social and cultural connection.

Tasmania is home to many unique freshwater ecosystems and managing the health of the State's waterways requires a detailed understanding of how activities in catchments influence them. Effective and adaptive management of the State's freshwater resources relies on targeted monitoring and research to build knowledge of our waterways.

Key points

- Managing waterway health is challenging, especially as demand for freshwater is increasing and our climate is becoming more variable.
- NRE Tas freshwater scientists are undertaking research to help us to understand the cause of any changes in waterway health.
- This project will provide important scientific information that will help us manage our rivers.



Photograph by Scott Hardie, NRE Tas

How are changes in waterway health being assessed?

Research into the causes of changes in waterway health is being undertaken at two scales, with focused studies in four case study catchments (Mountain River, Ringarooma River, Pipers River, River Leven) and broader work across Tasmania.

Field sampling focuses on waterbugs (aquatic insects), riverbed sediment and algae at 75 sites in rivers every autumn and spring over a two and a half-year period (2023-2025).

Additional water quality sampling (including water temperature, dissolved oxygen, suspended sediment and nutrients) is also being undertaken monthly at 50 sites across the State from July 2023 to July 2025.

This project is also examining the status of the riverbank vegetation, and assessing land and water use activities in the case study catchments to provide a more complete understanding of any impacts on waterway health.

What are the benefits of the project?

The benefits of this project include:

- Greater understanding of any likely causes of changes in waterway health across Tasmanian catchments.
- Development of a consistent approach to identifying the causes of changes in waterway health.
- Linking the results of long-term water resource monitoring to management strategies and actions.

Timeline

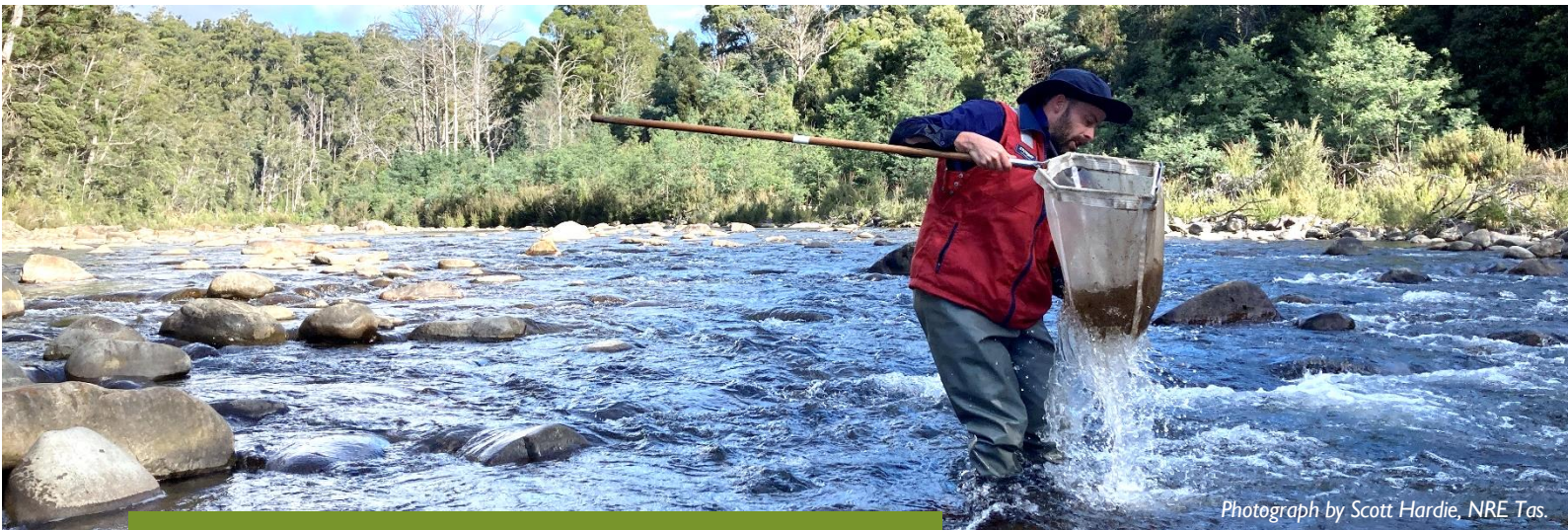
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| 2023-2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research in four catchments, focusing on waterbugs, sediment and algae• Water quality sampling across the State |
| 2024-2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of riverbank vegetation, and land and water use activities |
| 2025 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project reporting and stakeholder consultation |

This project is being delivered under Tasmania's Rural Water Use Strategy.

More information

Learn more about this project – www.nre.tas.gov.au/water/water-legislation-policies-and-strategies/rural-water-use-strategy/activities-underway/looking-after-the-health-of-our-waterways

Read more about the Rural Water Use Strategy – www.nre.tas.gov.au/rural-water



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