

Rural Water Roundtable

22 February 2022

COMMUNIQUE

Members of the Rural Water Roundtable met on 22 February 2022 as part of their ongoing discussions to guide the implementation of Tasmania's Rural Water Use Strategy. The focus of the meeting was on providing feedback on the Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania's (NRE Tas) draft Rural Water Use Strategy Implementation Plan 2022-25.

The Roundtable provides an opportunity to explore greater collaboration, coordination and alignment of government, industry, environmental and natural resource management values to improve the sustainable management of Tasmania's water resources and waterways.

Rural Water Use Strategy Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan will be released in March 2022. Roundtable members viewed a draft of the Implementation Plan and were generally supportive of the approach which sets new initiatives and priorities for NRE Tas's workplan in water resource management for the next four years. Suggestions were made to better highlight partnerships and collaborations more broadly across water sector stakeholders and to ensure these are captured in annual reporting of implementation. This approach will better reflect the collective effort that goes into managing the state's freshwater resources and waterways.

Collaborations and partnerships

Whilst Members of the Rural Water Roundtable have highlighted that new collaboration and partnerships are required to achieve better outcomes for water resource and waterway management in Tasmania, it is clear that many ongoing partnerships within the water sector already exist and are delivering good outcomes. Some key examples include:

- major regional partnerships such as the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers (TEER) Program and the Derwent Estuary Program, improving science and evidence to inform decision making; and coordinated management – catchment to coast;
- water monitoring and collaboration in data sharing between NRE Tas, Hydro Tasmania, the Bureau of Meteorology and others for a range of ongoing water management outcomes such as inputs to water resource assessment, flood warning systems, managing sustainable water access and water use restrictions;
- partnership between the Tasmanian Government, Australian Government and Tasmanian Irrigation delivering high reliability irrigation water supplies across the state.

There is strong potential under the Rural Water Use Strategy for building on this existing work and partnerships, by establishing new partnerships and adding value to existing partnerships through further coordination and alignment of goals, priorities and activities.