

## Rural Water Roundtable

27 August 2024

### COMMUNIQUE

Members of the Rural Water Roundtable met on 27 August 2024 as part of their ongoing role to guide the implementation of Tasmania's Rural Water Use Strategy (RWUS). The focus of the meeting was to be briefed about the findings from the review of Tasmania's Water Accountability Framework and NRE Tasmania's response and approach to implementation.

The Minister for Primary Industries and Water, the Hon. Jane Howlett MHA, addressed the meeting, emphasising the Government's continuing commitment to agriculture and water sustainability. Minister Howlett spoke to the water accountability project and her recent announcement of the Agricultural Innovation Fund (AIF) Project: Growing value from irrigation for Tasmanian agriculture. Minister Howlett also released the Water Accountability Review report.

#### **Water accountability**

The review suggested the desired future policy directions, expressed through stakeholder consultation, would include:

- Clear and equitable water accountability arrangements are consistent across water managers and with national arrangements.
- Water accountability requirements and implementation are prioritised based on risks to water resources (environmental, economic, social and cultural).
- The benefits of the water accountability framework outweigh the costs (as far as practical).
- There is credible, reliable, and accurate water use information at the individual and catchment level to inform evidence-based decisions by water users and water resource managers.
- There is transparency and confidence that water use complies with individual allocations and conditions and catchment level limits, and that water resources are managed sustainably and equitably.
- Confidence and certainty about the availability and reliability of water allocations (which supports individual business management, planning and investment as well as the sustainable development of water resources).
- Water information sharing and water use accounting across different water products and shared responsibility for water management.

The review provided 23 recommendations for improvements to the water accountability framework which NRE Tas has accepted in full.

Refer to NRE Tas' website for more information on water accountability <https://nre.tas.gov.au/water/water-legislation-policies-and-strategies/rural-water-use-strategy/activities-underway/water-accountability-project>.