

Rural Water Roundtable

20 August 2021

COMMUNIQUE

Members of the Rural Water Roundtable met for the first time on 20 August 2021 to help guide the implementation of Tasmania's Rural Water Use Strategy. The Roundtable provides an opportunity to explore greater collaboration, coordination and alignment of government, industry and environmental natural resource management values to improve the sustainable management of Tasmania's water resources and waterways.

The Rural Water Roundtable is made up of representatives from peak bodies and organisations with a state-wide focus in this area including – TasWater, Tasmanian Irrigation, the Local Government Association of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, Hydro Tasmania, DairyTas, the Inland Fisheries Service, NRM North, Landcare Tasmania and the Tasmania seafood industry.

The Minister for Primary Industries and Water, the Hon. Guy Barnett MHA, addressed the meeting, outlining his priorities for sustainable water management, growth in the agricultural and renewable energy sectors and protecting our water dependent environments for current and future generations in a changing climate.

Partnerships and collaboration

Members of the Rural Water Roundtable noted that their organisations play a role in managing Tasmania's water resources and waterways and expressed goodwill to find practical short term opportunities for enhancing information and data sharing, and to also look, longer term, at where there may be future project and program alignment and opportunities for greater collaboration and coordinated efforts.

The focus was on the multiple benefits that can come from various works.

Rural Water Roundtable members noted that experience from past and existing programs such as the Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program provide a useful framework for collaboration in the river health and water quality space and are useful to inform collaboration in the future.

Sustainable development

There was discussion about the opportunity we have in Tasmania, to see the changes and challenges coming and to ensure we have a robust water management framework that can underpin sustainability, resilience and adaptation. This included discussion about better understanding the potential impacts of climate change on the state's water resources.

The Rural Water Roundtable also discussed water demand management and the need for clear expectations for new industries and urban development about water availability, limits for allocation and the potential infrastructure investments and costs required for secure and reliable water supplies.

There was also discussion about the importance of responsible and sustainable irrigation practices and water use.

The focus of the Roundtable's second meeting, to be scheduled in the next six weeks, will be on river health and the River Health Project.